



“Knowledge And Attitude Regarding Human Milk Banking Among Mothers In Selected Hospitals Of Kamrup (M), Assam With A View To Develop An Information Booklet: A Descriptive Study”

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND:

Mother's milk is a gift for the new-born. A new born babies need Exclusive Breast Feeding till 6 months of age for all round growth and development of the baby. New born infants constitute about 35 % of the total Indian population. According to WHO, breastfeeding can save up to 80% of infant mortality as mother's milk is the best source of nutrition for the baby. Human Milk Banking represents the most institutionalized method for collecting, screening, processing, storing and donating breast milk to infants who are unable to receive breast milk from their biological mothers. Despite advances in infant's formulas, human breast milk provides a bioactive matrix of benefits that cannot be replicated by any other source of nutrition.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
2. To assess the Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
3. To find out the correlation between Knowledge and Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
4. To find out the association between Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam with the selected demographic variables.
5. To find out the association between Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam with the selected demographic variables.

METHODS AND MATERIALS:

A non - experimental research approach and descriptive research design was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. A total of 100 Mothers were selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Self-structured Knowledge questionnaire regarding Human Milk Banking and 3-point Likert scale was used as a tool to collect data through self-report technique. The collected data was analysed and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULT:

The study result revealed that out of 100 mothers, 41 (41%) were aged between 26 – 30 years, 86 (86%) were Hindus, 53 (53%) were residing in Urban area, 77 (77%) were Graduate and above, 57 (57%) were Homemakers, 27 (27%) had monthly family income of Rs10,703 – 31,977, 44 (44%) had only one baby. Out of 64 Mothers who had babies, 47 (47%) had given breast feed, 60 (60%) had not heard about Human Milk Banking and out of 40 who have heard about Human Milk Banking, majority 27 (67.5%) had received information through social media, 98 (98%) had never donated their breast milk in the Human Milk Bank and 2 (100%) stated reason as excess production of breast milk for donation. On assessment of Knowledge 35 (35%) had adequate knowledge, 61 (61%) had moderate Knowledge, and 4 (4%) had inadequate Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking. Majority 95 (95%) had desirable Attitude, 5 (5%) had moderately desirable Attitude and none had undesirable Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking. The study also identified that there was a strong positive correlation (**$r=0.622$**) between Knowledge and Attitude. The demographic variable occupation (**$p=0.001$**) had statistically significant association with level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at **$p\leq 0.001$** level. The demographic variables residence (**$p=0.019$**) and have you heard about Human Milk Banking (**$p=0.029$**) had statistically significant association with level of Knowledge among Mothers at **$p<0.05$** level. The other demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking at **$p<0.05$** level.

It was found that the demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with level of Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at **p<0.05 level**.

CONCLUSION:

The study concluded that 60 (60%) Mothers had not heard about Human Milk Banking, only 35 (35%) of mothers had adequate Knowledge, 95 (95%) Mothers had desirable Attitude and 5 (5%) had moderately desirable Attitude. Awareness on Human Milk Banking plays a major role in improving the Knowledge and Attitude on human milk donation. Thus, it is necessary to educate all Indian communities about the concept of Human Milk Banking services in order to improve infant health outcomes, especially for vulnerable newborns and also to gain widespread acceptance.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Attitude, Mothers, Human Milk Banking, Information Booklet.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Breast milk is an ideal food for infants, providing essential nutrients that infant need for over all growth and development¹ and breastfeeding is the best method of infant feeding². WHO and UNICEF recommends Exclusive breastfeeding upto 6 months of age. According to WHO, breastfeeding can save up to 80% of infant mortality as mother's milk is the best source of nutrition for the baby.³ Working mothers are more prevalent in today's world comparing with the ancient period which brought a great revolution in the lifestyle of the people so the women cannot concentrate on adequate nutrition to the child at the fullest. On the other hand, when a mother, for some reasons like mother has insufficient milk production, diseases or infections or under medication (chemotherapy) is unable to feed her infant directly her breast milk should be expressed and fed to the infant to meet the nutritional needs.⁴ If mother's own milk is unavailable or insufficient, the next best option is to use pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) as advised by WHO.

Globally, only 38% of infants aged 0-6 months are exclusively breastfed. Recent analysis shows that suboptimal breastfeeding practices like non-exclusive breastfeeding contribute to 11.6% of under-five mortality rates. India faces its own unique challenges, having the highest number of low-birth-weight babies, and significant mortality and morbidity in very low birth weight (VLBW) population. Human milk banks are primarily focused to provide donor milk to high-risk new-borns admitted in the neonatal unit.³ The National Health Mission, Government of India aims to reduce the neonatal mortality rates in India and directed that the best method for feeding babies is through the donor mother's milk which has high importance in reducing neonatal death rates. The use of donor human milk is highly increasing for high-risk infants, primarily for infants born weighing <1500g or those who have severe intestinal disorders.⁵ Human Milk Banking represents the most institutionalized method for collecting, screening, processing, and storing breast milk for later distribution.⁶

2. NEED OF THE STUDY:

Breast milk banks are essential for the control of cases of neonatal mortality and malnutrition. India is a developing country where neonatal mortality is very alarming. In our nation, around 20% of infants are born with low birth weight, resulting in severe mortality and morbidity.⁷ WHO (World Health Organization) states that the first alternative to a biological mother not being able to breastfeed is the use of human milk from other sources.

Bulut H, Aksu H (2022) conducted a descriptive study to assess the knowledge and opinions of premature infant mothers on human milk banks. The findings showed that 86.1% of the mothers have never heard about milk banks before, 90% did not know about them and, 43.9% of the mothers were indecisive about whether milk banks should be built or not. 41.3% of the mothers stated that they would not donate milk if a milk bank was to be established in their country while 66.5% stated that they would not request milk from milk banks. 48.3% of the mothers stated that they did not know whether milk banks would cause any problems in means of religion and 58.3% of the mother's request more information on milk banks.⁸

Rajeesha CH (2018) conducted a study to assess the knowledge and attitude of postnatal lactating mothers regarding human milk banking and the result showed that majority of the mother neither willing to donate their breast milk or accept others milk. Only 6.7% mothers had heard about human milk banks. Only 17.35 mothers thinks that a human milk bank is required. The major reasons were lack of knowledge about the importance of breast milk.⁹

As of 2024, there are over 125 human milk banks in India but nearly 14 are in service to society and many are less known to public and still the growth of these centres is slow. The main reason is lack of awareness among community people, lack of promotion in the industry, popularity of formula feeding, leadership deficit, infrastructural and maintenance costs and fewer neonatal set ups are some reasons for the same. It is a vital to create an awareness among parents about the opportunity for their babies to acquire human breast milk along with all of the apparent benefits as well as they must also be known about the advantages of feeding their newborn with human breast milk associated with formula feeding.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
2. To assess the Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
3. To find out the correlation between Knowledge and Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam.
4. To find out the association between Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam with the selected demographic variables.
5. To find out the association between Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M), Assam with the selected demographic variables.

4. METHODS AND MATERIAL:

A non – experimental research approach and descriptive research design was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. A total of 100 Mothers was selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique in selected hospitals of Kamrup (M) Assam on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Self-structured Knowledge questionnaire regarding Human Milk Banking and 3-point Likert scale was used as a tool to collect data through self-report technique. The collected data was analysed and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL:

In order to meet the objectives of the study, the following tools were constructed which consists of 3 sections:

Section A: Demographic Perfoma

Section B: Self-structured Knowledge questionnaire

Section C: 3-point Likert Scale

6. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

The data collection period was scheduled from 10th September 2024 to 3rd October 2024. After getting Ethical Clearance from the INS Trust Ethics Committee (GNRC complex), Dispur, Guwahati, Assam, a formal written permission was obtained from the Managing Trustee, Medical Superintendent, Nursing superintendent and HOD of Obstetrics & Gynaecology of selected hospitals. The investigator visited the selected hospitals on given dates. Subjects were selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique. Prior to data collection, brief self-introduction and the purpose, nature of the study was explained to each subject. An informed consent (verbal and written) was obtained from each subject to voluntarily participate in the study. The subjects were also assured anonymity and confidentiality of information provided by them. The Knowledge of the subject regarding Human Milk Banking was assessed through Self-structured Knowledge questionnaire and Attitude was assessed through 3-point Likert scale. On an average the data collection process took around 40-45 minutes for each subject. Once the data was collected from the subject Information Booklet regarding Human Milk Banking was distributed which were allowed to take home.

7. RESULT:**SECTION I: FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS ACCORDING TO THE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES.****Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of Mothers****n=100**

Demographic Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
21 – 25	14	14
26 – 30	41	41
31 – 35	34	34
36 – 40	9	9
41 – 45	2	2
Religion		
Hindu	86	86
Islam	12	12
Christian	1	1
Others	1	1
Residence		
Rural	47	47
Urban	53	53
Educational status		
Primary	2	2
Secondary	4	4
Higher secondary	17	17
Graduate and above	77	77
Occupation		
Homemaker	57	57
Daily wage earner	1	1
Government sector employee	24	24
Private sector employee	16	16
Business woman	2	2
Monthly family income (in Rupees)		

Demographic Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
$\geq 2,13,814$	8	8
1,06,850 - 2,13,813	15	15
80,110 - 1,06,849	17	17
53,361 - 80,109	13	13
31,978 - 53,360	14	14
10,703 - 31,977	27	27
$\leq 10,702$	6	6
Number of babies you have?		
No baby	36	36
One baby	44	44
More than one	20	20
If you have babies, what type of feed you are giving?		
Breast feed	46	46
Formula feed	0	0
Both breast feed and formula feed	9	9
Others	9	9
Have you heard about Human Milk Banking?		
Yes	40	40
No	60	60
If yes, source of information		
Social media	27	67.5
Health professional	7	17.5
Friends and families	5	12.5
Others	1	2.5
Have you ever donated your breast milk in the Human Milk Bank?		
Yes	2	2
No	98	98
If yes, what was the reason for the donation?		
Excess production of breast milk	2	100
Gave birth to a dead baby	0	0

Demographic Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Others	0	0

The data in the table 1 portrays that majority of the Mothers, 41 (41%) were aged between 26 – 30 years, 86 (86%) were Hindus, 53 (53%) were residing in urban area, 77 (77%) were graduate and above, 57 (57%) were homemakers, 27 (27%) had monthly family income of 10,703 – 31,977, 44 (44%) had one baby. Out of 64 Mothers who had babies 47 (47%) had given breast feed. Out of 100 Mothers, 60 (60%) had not heard about Human Milk Banking and those who have heard 27 (67.5%) had received information through social media, 98 (98%) had never donated their breast milk in the Human Milk Bank and those who have donated 2 (100%) had the reason for donation as production of excess breast milk.

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING HUMAN MILK BANKING AMONG MOTHERS

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers

n = 100

Level of Knowledge	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Inadequate Knowledge <33% (<7 marks)	4	4
Moderate Knowledge 33% - 66% (7 – 15 marks)	61	61
Adequate Knowledge >66% (>15 marks)	35	35
TOTAL	100	100

The data presented in the table 2 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers. It shows that out of 100 Mothers, 61 (61%) had moderate Knowledge, 35 (35%) had adequate Knowledge and 4 (4%) had inadequate Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking.

SECTION III: ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF ATTITUDE REGARDING HUMAN MILK BANKING AMONG MOTHERS

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers

n=100

Level of Attitude	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Undesirable Attitude <33% (<14 marks)	0	0
Moderately desirable Attitude 33% - 66% (14 – 28)	5	5
Desirable Attitude >66% (>28 marks)	95	95
TOTAL	100	100

The data resented in table 3 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of level of Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers. It shows that out of 100 Mothers, majority 95 (95%) had desirable Attitude and only 5 (5%) had moderately desirable Attitude and none had undesirable Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking.

SECTION IV: CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING HUMAN MILK BANKING AMONG MOTHERS

Table 4: Correlation between Knowledge and Attitude scores regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers

n=100

Variables	Mean	SD	Karl Pearson's Correlation "r" and p- Value
Knowledge	13.93	3.48	r = 0.622 p=0.0001, S****
Attitude	35.70	3.98	

*****p<0.001, S – Significant**

The data in the table 4 shows that the mean score of Knowledge was 13.93±3.48 and the mean score of Attitude was 35.70±3.98. The calculated Karl Pearson's Correlation value of r=0.622 shows a strong positive correlation, statistically significant at p<0.001 level. This clearly infers that when the Knowledge regarding

Human Milk Banking among Mothers increases or decreases then their Attitude towards it also increases or decreases respectively.

SECTION V: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE WITH SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Table 5: Association of level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers with the selected demographic variables

n=100

Demographic Variables	Inadequate		Moderate		Adequate		Fisher Exact Test p-value
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Age (in years)			-				p = 0.096 (N.S)
21 – 25	1	1	8	8	5	5	
26 – 30	2	2	29	29	10	10	
31 – 35	0	0	19	19	15	15	
36 – 40	0	0	4	4	5	5	
41 – 45	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Religion							p = 0.084 (N.S)
Hindu	2	2	54	54	30	30	
Islam	2	2	7	7	3	3	
Christian	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Others	0	0	0	0	1	1	p = 0.019 (S*)
Residence							
Rural	2	2	35	35	10	10	
Urban	2	2	26	26	25	25	p = 0.243 (N.S)
Educational status							
Primary	0	0	2	2	0	0	
Secondary	1	1	3	3	0	0	
Higher secondary	1	1	10	10	6	6	
Graduate and above	2	2	46	46	29	29	p = 0.001 (S***)
Occupation							
Homemaker	2	2	43	43	12	12	
Daily wage earner	0	0	1	1	0	0	
Government sector employee	2	2	11	11	11	11	
Private sector employee	0	0	4	4	12	12	
Business woman	0	0	2	2	0	0	p = 0.656 (N.S)
Monthly family income (in rupees)							
≥2,13,814	0	0	4	4	4	4	
1,06,850 – 2,13,813	1	1	7	7	7	7	
80,110- 1,06,849	0	0	13	13	4	4	
53,361 - 80,109	0	0	9	9	4	4	
31,978 - 53,360	1	1	6	6	7	7	
10,703 – 31,977	2	2	17	17	8	8	
≤10,702	0	0	5	5	1	1	

Demographic Variables	Inadequate		Moderate		Adequate		Fisher Exact Test p-value
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Number of babies you have?							p=0.380 (N.S)
No baby	1	1	24	24	11	11	
One baby	1	1	28	28	15	15	
More than one	2	2	9	9	9	9	
If you have babies, what type of feed you are giving?							p = 0.459 (N.S)
Breast feed	3	3	30	30	13	13	
Formula feed	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Both breast feed and formula feed	0	0	3	3	6	6	
Others (specify)	0	0	5	5	4	4	
Have you heard about Human Milk Banking?							p = 0.029 (S*)
Yes	1	1	19	19	20	20	
No	3	3	42	42	15	15	
If yes, source of information							p = 0.586 (N.S)
Social media	1	1	11	27.5	15	37.5	
Health professional	0	0	5	12.5	2	5	
Friends and families	0	0	3	7.5	2	5	
Others	0	0	0	0	1	2.5	
Have you ever donated your breast milk in the Human Milk Bank?							p = 0.569 (N.S)
Yes	0	0	2	2	0	0	
No	4	4	59	59	35	35	
If yes, what was the reason for the donation?							-
Excess production of breast milk	-	-	2	100	-	-	
Gave birth to a dead baby	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	

***p≤0.001, *p<0.05, S – Significant, p<0.05

N.S – Not Significant, p>0.05

SECTION VI: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ATTITUDE WITH SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Table 6: Association of level of Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers with the selected demographic variables.

n=100

Demographic Variables	Moderately Desirable		Desirable		Fisher Exact Test p-value
	f	%	f	%	
Age (in years)					p = 0.312 (N.S)
21 – 25	1	1	13	13	
26 – 30	4	4	37	37	
31 – 35	0	0	34	34	

Demographic Variables	Moderately Desirable		Desirable		Fisher Exact Test p-value
	f	%	f	%	
36 – 40	0	0	9	9	p = 0.199 (N.S)
41 – 45	0	0	2	2	
Religion					
Hindu	3	3	83	83	
Islam	2	2	10	10	
Christian	0	0	1	1	p = 0.184 (N.S)
Others	0	0	1	1	
Residence					
Rural	4	4	43	43	p = 0.228 (N.S)
Urban	1	1	52	52	
Educational status					
Primary	0	0	2	2	
Secondary	1	1	3	3	
Higher secondary	1	1	16	16	p = 0.725 (N.S)
Graduate and above	3	3	74	74	
Occupation					
Homemaker	3	3	54	54	
Daily wage earner	0	0	1	1	
Government sector employee	2	2	22	22	p = 0.793 (N.S)
Private sector employee	0	0	16	16	
Business woman	0	0	2	2	
Monthly family income (in rupees)					
≥2,13,814	0	0	8	8	
1,06,850 - 2,13,813	2	2	13	13	p = 0.064 (N.S)
80,110- 1,06,849	1	1	16	16	
53,361 - 80,109	0	0	13	13	
31,978 - 53,360	0	0	14	14	
10,703 - 31,977	2	2	25	25	p = 0.291 (N.S)
≤10,702	0	0	6	6	
Number of babies you have?					
No baby	4	4	32	32	
One baby	0	0	44	44	p = 0.385 (N.S)
More than one	1	1	19	19	
If you have babies, what type of feed you are giving?					
Breast feed	1	1	45	45	
Formula feed	-	-	-	-	
Both breast feed and formula feed	0	0	9	9	p = 0.704 (N.S)
Others	0	0	9	9	
Have you heard about Human Milk Banking?					
Yes	3	3	37	37	
No	2	2	58	58	
If yes, source of information					p = 0.704 (N.S)
Social media	2	5	25	62.5	
Health professional	1	2.5	6	15	
Friends and families	0	0	5	12.5	
Others	0	0	1	2.5	

Demographic Variables	Moderately Desirable		Desirable		Fisher Exact Test p-value
	f	%	f	%	
Have you ever donated your breast milk in the Human Milk Bank?					p = 1.000 (N.S)
Yes	0	0	2	2	
No	5	5	93	93	
If yes, what was the reason for the donation?					-
Excess production of breast milk	-	-	2	100	
Gave birth to a dead baby	-	-	-	-	
Others	-	-	-	-	

N.S – Not Significant, $p > 0.05$

CONCLUSION:

Based on the analysis of the findings of the study, the following inferences were drawn:

Out of 100 mothers, 41 (41%) were aged between 26 – 30 years, 86 (86%) were Hindus, 53 (53%) were residing in urban area, 77 (77%) were graduate and above, 57 (57%) were homemakers, 27 (27%) had monthly family income of Rs10,703 – 31,977, 44 (44%) had one baby. Out of 64 mothers who had babies, majority 47 (47%) had given breast feed, 60 (60%) had not heard about human milk banking, out of 40 mothers who had heard about human milk banking, majority 27 (67.5%) had received information through social media, 98 (98%) had never donated their breast milk in the Human Milk Bank and among 2 Mothers, 2 (100%) had donated their breast milk in the milk bank with the reason of excess production of breast milk.

The Knowledge of Mothers regarding Human Milk Banking was assessed by using Self-structured Knowledge questionnaire and out of 100 mothers, 35 (35%) had adequate Knowledge 61 (61%) had moderate Knowledge, and 4 (4%) had inadequate Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking. The Attitude of the Mothers was assessed by using 3-point Likert scale and the result obtained revealed that out of 100 mothers, majority 95 (95%) had desirable Attitude and only 5 (5%) had moderately desirable Attitude and none had undesirable Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking.

The study also identified that there was a strong positive correlation ($r=0.622$) between Knowledge and Attitude. It was observed that the demographic variable occupation ($p=0.001$) had statistically significant association with level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at $p \leq 0.001$ level.

The demographic variables residence ($p=0.019$) and have you heard about Human Milk Banking ($p=0.029$) had statistically significant association with level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at $p < 0.05$ level. The other demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with level of Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at $p < 0.05$ level. It was found that the demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with level of Attitude regarding Human Milk Banking among Mothers at $p < 0.05$ level.

The research study showed that although most Mothers had favourable Attitude, 61% had moderate Knowledge and only 35% mothers had adequate Knowledge regarding Human Milk Banking. The main reason behind this is because community are not made aware about the benefits of human milk and also increase popularity of formula feeds. Therefore, the investigator felt that for the sake of future high-risk neonates it is necessary the government of India collaboratively with health specialists including paediatrician, lactation experts, all nursing personnel and social worker should work together to disseminate the concept of Human Milk Bank services during the prenatal period itself in order to reduce neonatal mortality and morbidity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the basis of the findings of the study it is recommended that -

- A comparative study can be done between antenatal and postnatal Mothers Knowledge and Attitude, between mothers residing in urban and rural area for broad generalization.
- A similar study can be replicated in different in different setting.
- An exploratory study can be conducted to identify the factors influencing Knowledge and Attitude of the mothers regarding Human Milk Banking services.
- This study can be replicated and implemented with larger samples which may serve as guideline for further research.

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