



CERTIFICATE NO : **ICRESMH /2025/C0425429**

A Study of Knowledge and Practice Regarding Breast Feeding Among Mothers

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge and practice regarding breastfeeding among mothers play a crucial role in ensuring the healthy growth and development of infants. Breastfeeding is widely recognized as the most natural and beneficial method of feeding newborns, as breast milk provides essential nutrients, antibodies, and enzymes that protect infants from infections and diseases. Adequate knowledge about breastfeeding helps mothers understand the importance of early initiation of breastfeeding, preferably within the first hour after birth, and the need for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life. Mothers who possess proper knowledge are more likely to adopt correct breastfeeding practices such as appropriate positioning of the baby, proper latching techniques, and maintaining hygiene during feeding. However, in many communities, lack of awareness, cultural beliefs, and insufficient guidance from healthcare providers may lead to improper breastfeeding practices. Some mothers may introduce supplementary foods or formula milk too early, which can affect the infant's health and reduce the benefits of breastfeeding. Educational programs, counseling by healthcare professionals, and support from family members play an important role in improving mothers' knowledge and encouraging correct breastfeeding practices. When mothers are well-informed and confident about breastfeeding, they are more likely to follow recommended guidelines, which contributes to better nutritional status, stronger immunity, and overall well-being of their infants. Therefore, enhancing mothers' knowledge and promoting proper breastfeeding practices is essential for improving maternal and child health outcomes.