

SANCHAR briefs

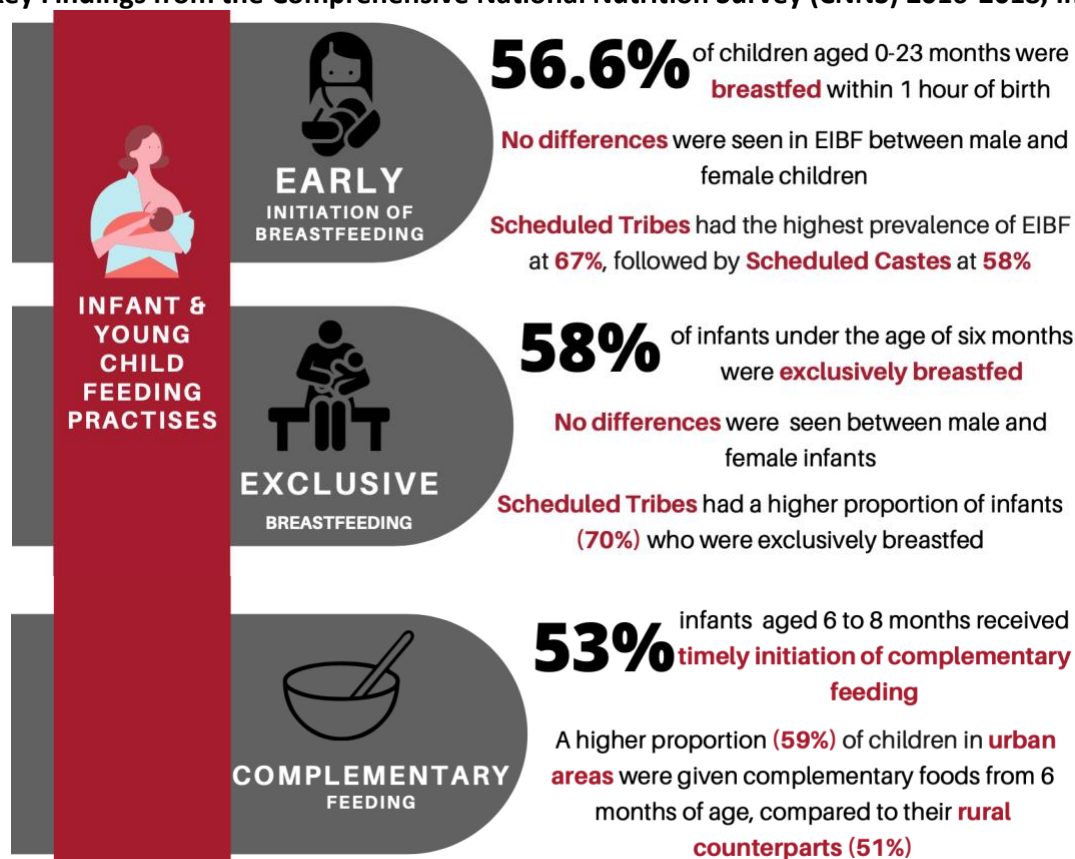
Science And News: Communicating Health And Research

Brief no. 12: Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding

The following indicators help in assessing breastfeeding practices:

- **Early initiation of breastfeeding (EIBF)** measures the proportion of children born in the last 24 months who were put to the breast within one hour of birth.
- **Exclusive breastfeeding** measures the proportion of infants 0–5 months of age who received ONLY breastmilk during the previous day. WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life.
- **Complementary feeding** measures the proportion of infants 6–8 months of age who received solid, semi-solid or soft foods during the previous day. WHO recommends to initiate complementary feeding from 6 months of age while continuing breastfeeding.

Key Findings from the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) 2016-2018, India:

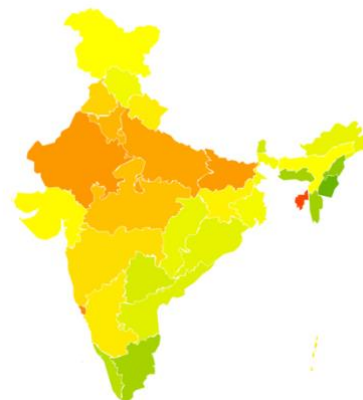


Did you know? Early initiation of breastfeeding is important as it improves mother-child bonding, stimulates breastmilk production and since the first milk produced (**colostrum**) comprises of antibodies and nutrients to protect the newborn from diseases. **After 6 months, breastmilk alone cannot satisfy the nutritional needs of an infant;** hence, complementary foods are needed alongwith continued breastfeeding.

National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4) 2015-16 data visualizations on breastfeeding and complementary feeding sourced from Project SANCHAR Portal: (click maps to access visualization)

(a) [Tree map](#) depicting children under age 3 years breastfed within one hour of birth in India (for last birth in 5 years prior to survey) (%)

(b) [Map](#) depicting children age 6-8 months receiving solid or semi-solid food and breastmilk in India (%)



(a)

(b)

LEAST PERFORMING  BEST PERFORMING

References:

- World Health Organization (WHO). [Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices. Part I: Definitions](#). Geneva: WHO; 2010
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. 2019. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) National Report. New Delhi.
- International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2017. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16: India. Mumbai: IIPS.

How can this inform your work?

Journalists play a key role in raising awareness on health and development issues. Children are the backbone of any economy and the future of the nation depends on the health and wellbeing of the young.

Breastmilk contains all the nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life and exclusive breastfeeding during this period is sufficient and beneficial for their health, growth and development. Each household must be made aware of the importance of mother's milk. An effort to propagate awareness on breastfeeding can result in strengthening India's progress towards meeting the global SDG benchmarks.

Project SANCHAR is aimed at building capacity and facilitating the adoption of practices to use or draw on evidence in public health communication and practice.

To facilitate this, SANCHAR collates and provides data from scientifically validated sources, from national datasets in easily interpretable formats, and accessible visuals that can be downloaded easily.