

# Knowledge And Practice Regarding Weaning Among Mother of Children Aged Between 6 Months To 2.5 Years At Karaikal

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**Abstract-** Weaning is the process of introducing supplementary foods to the babies from 6 month in addition to breast milk. Weaning starts with introduction of supplementary food and continues until the child is taken off from mother's milk. Mother's milk alone is not suitable to give needed quantum of the essential nutrients demanded to maintain growth after the 6 months. Weaning food should be wisely chosen to meet the nutritive need of baby and maintain growth. Effective weaning requires maternal knowledge and practice. This study employed a quantitative approach with descriptive survey design, data collection done through interview method to assess the weaning practice and structured questionnaires were also used to find the knowledge level from 105 samples. Results showed that the overall maternal knowledge mean score is 18.11+3.37, Also explored high correlation between knowledge and practice score ( $p = 0.9457$ ). Result of the study handed information that maximum number of mothers had good knowledge about weaning. The findings flash lights to the need for educational intervention program in empowering maternal knowledge and skill in Weaning.

**Keywords-** Weaning; Knowledge, Practice. Mother, Children age 6month to 2.5 years.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A child is a divine gift to humankind. Children are the future citizen; they are the torchbearer of tomorrows country's development. A country's wealth is mostly determined by the nature and caliber of its children and youth, not so much by its natural or economic resources. They will design and mold a country's future. To upbringing a child in a conditional way is a prime concern of parents for ensuring a better future.

Health is a main concern for the child. Nutrition plays a vital role in child's healthy growth and development. Healthy nutritional inputs start with breast feeding, The growth and development of infant depends on the good

maternal nutrition, adequate breast-feeding and appropriate weaning. Proper infant feeding practices need to be inculcated as per the developmental stage of the child. Poor feeding practices can lead to under nutrition, which affects the child's health, and also the growth and development ultimately leading to increase mortality and morbidity of children.

Infant and young child feeding is a key area to improve child survival and promote healthy growth and development. The initial 2 to 2.5years of a child's life are particularly important, as optimal nutrition during this period fosters overall health, improves growth and development and lowers child morbidity and mortality

Parents play the vital role in nourishing the child with appropriate nutrition. Knowledge on appropriate weaning practice is therefore important for the parents for the child health. Mother's knowledge, attitude and skill regarding weaning determine the weaning process.

In India, children aged 0-6 years constituted 13.59% of the total population as per the 2011 Census. Under-nutrition is estimated to be associated with 2.7 million child deaths annually or 45% of all child deaths. Inappropriate feeding practices result in feeding difficulties and malnutrition 60% of under-five mortality occur worldwide annually due to malnutrition and over two-thirds of these are due to inappropriate feeding practices<sup>4</sup>. This study was conducted to identify knowledge and practice among mothers of children aged between 6 months to 2.5 years regarding weaning.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Study area

The study was conducted at Karaikal. Karaikal District is one of the four regions of the Union Territory of Puducherry. It covers an area of 161sq.km and 37 villages. In Karaikal, approximately 11.27% of the rural population, are

children (aged 0-6). Karaikal has the highest percentage of children in the rural areas compared to other districts in Puducherry, according to the 2011 census.

### Study design

A quantitative approach with descriptive survey design was considered appropriate research approach and research design as it aimed to assess the knowledge and practice regarding weaning among parents (6month to 2.5year of baby)

### Data Collection technique

Tool included 3 parts.

Part-A= It included information on data such as age, marital status, total number of children. Educational level, occupational status, religion, place of living, type of family, etc

Part-B= It was interviewing questionnaire. There were 13 interview questions aimed to assess weaning practice of mother. The subjects were asked to answers question related to the weaning practices they followed.

Part C= It was self-structured knowledge questionnaire. There were 28 questions on multiple choice base aimed to assess knowledge of mother regarding weaning. The right answer receives 1 point, the incorrect answer receives 0 points.

### Feasibility and reliability Study

The Cronbach's alpha method was used to find the reliability of the tool prepared for the data collection of current study. The reliability score was found to be ' $r=0.8$ ', which indicates that the instrument was reliable and considered for conducting the study.

### Statistical Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size selected in this study is 105. Purposive sampling technique was used to find the samples.

### Quantitative analysis

Statistical analysis helps the researcher to make sense of quantitative information. Statistical procedure enables researcher to summarize, organize, evaluate, interpret, and communicate numeric information. The descriptive and inferential statistics were implied to analyse the data. Standard deviation and 't' test will be used to find the effectiveness. For

data analysis the SPSS version 16 statistical package was used.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: subjects frequency and percentage distribution of practice score regarding weaning.  
N=105

S. N.	Items	F	%
1.	Have you started weaning at completion of 6 month?	89	84.76
	Yes	16	15.24
	No		
2.	Do you practice hand washing before preparing weaning food?	96	91.42
	1-Always	05	4.76
	2-Sometimes	04	3.8
	3-Never		
3.	Do you use clean utensils for weaning food preparation?	100	95.23
	1-Always	04	3.8
	2-Sometimes	01	0.95
	3-Never		
4.	Have you given liquid diet as first weaning food?	90	85.71
	Yes	15	14.29
	No		
5.	Do you prepare homemade food?	96	91.43
	Yes	09	8.57
	No		
6.	Do you give responsibility to any other family member of providing weaning food to your baby?	87	82.86
	Yes	18	17.14
	No		
7.	Do you breast-feed baby along with weaning?	58	55.24
	1-Always	28	26.67
	2-Sometimes	19	18.09
	3-Never		
8.	Do you give food		

	according to preference of child? 1-Always 2-Sometimes 3-Never	30 42 33	28.57 40 31.43
9.	Do you practice careful introduction of new foods in order to notice food allergy? Yes No	21 84	20 80
10.	Have you gradually increased the amount and frequency of feed to meet nutritive requirement of your baby? 1-Always 2-Sometimes 3-Never	75 14 9	71.43 20 8.57
11.	Do you continue weaning when your baby is sick? No Yes	19 86	18.09 81.91
12.	Do you prefer spoon for giving food to your baby? Yes No	86 19	81.91 18.09
13.	Will you continue breast-feed up to 24 months? Yes No	82 23	78.09 21.91

**Table 1** depicts that 89(84.76%) mothers started weaning at the age of 6 month for their children whereas 16(15.24%) mothers were delayed in starting weaning for their children. While preparing weaning food majority 96 (91.42%) mother perform handwashing, 100(95.23%) mothers were always using clean utensils for preparing weaning foods. In concern with type of initial weaning food, 90 (85.71%) mothers agreed that they had started weaning with liquid diet, whereas, only 15(14.29%) mothers stated that they have not started weaning with liquid diet.

96(91.43%) mothers were giving homemade food to their children whereas 9 (8.57%) mothers agreed that they were not using homemade food in starting of weaning.

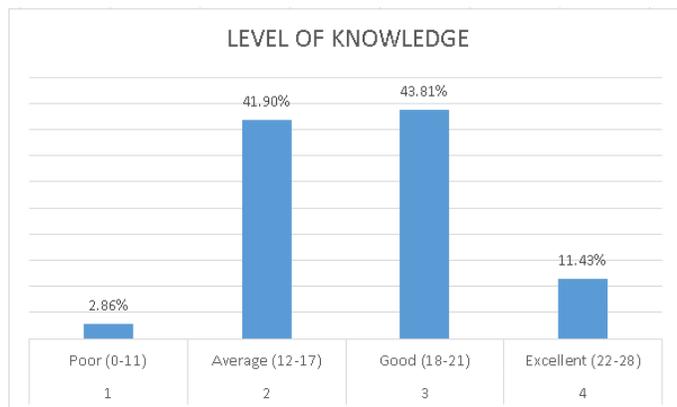
87(82.86%) mothers revealed that they were sharing responsibilities of weaning along with their family members, only 18(17.14%) mothers were not sharing this responsibility with others. In respect to breast-feeding 58(55.24%) mothers revealed that they were always breastfeeding infants during the time of weaning whereas 19(18.09%) mothers stated that they were not breastfeeding infants during weaning.

As per food preference during child weaning, 42(40%) mothers stated that sometime they were considering their children food preference during weaning whereas 33(31.42%) mothers were never considered children food preference during weaning. During weaning majority 84(80%) mothers have not noticed any food allergy, whereas, 21(20%) mothers noticed food allergy during time of weaning.

In response to question asked regarding gradual increment of amount of feed and frequency to meet the basic calorie requirement of baby, 50 (71.43%) mothers always and 14(20%) mothers sometimes whereas only 06 (8.57%) were not doing so. When question asked regarding continuation of weaning while baby get sick 57(81.43%) mothers not stopped weaning during child sickness whereas 13 (18.57%) stopped weaning. Regarding spoon usage while weaning children, majority 57(81.43%) mothers agreed that they do spoon feeding whereas 13(18.57%) were feeding children by their hands. In response to question asked regarding continuation of breastfeeding, 15(21.42%) mothers stated that they would not continue feeding their baby up to 24 months whereas 55(78.58%) were ready to breast fed their babies upto 2 years.

**Table 2: Mean knowledge score regarding weaning. (N=105)**

S. N.	Knowledge levels (score)	N	%	Mean knowledge score $\pm$ S.D
1	Poor (0-11)	3	2.86	18.11 $\pm$ 3.37
2	Average (12- 17)	44	41.9	
3	Good (18-21)	46	43.81	
4	Excellent (22-28)	12	11.43	



**Figure 1 Mean knowledge score regarding weaning. (N=105)**

Table 2 (figure 1) shows the frequency and percentage-wise distribution of level of knowledge regarding weaning among parents of children aged between 6 months to 2.5 years. 46(43.81%) mothers had good knowledge about weaning, 44(41.9%) had average knowledge, 12 (11.43%) subjects had excellent knowledge, and only 03(2.86%) of participant had poor knowledge regarding weaning.

**Table 3: Correlation between Knowledge and Practice regarding Weaning.**

Tool	$\sum d^2$	P
Knowledge score (x)	1739.85	0.9457*
Practice score (y)		

$\sum d^2$ = Sum of difference of ranks in each pair of values,  $\rho = r_{\text{rho}}$   
 Table 3: Represent correlation between maternal knowledge and practice score regarding weaning. Spearman’s rank coefficient of correlation between knowledge and practice score ( $\rho = 0.9457$ ) shows high correlation between knowledge and practice scores of weaning.

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**Conflicts of interest:** Nil

**Limitations:**

The study was confined to a limited sample size (105) which limit the generalization of the findings. The study was confined to a mother visiting well-baby clinic. Data collection tool was self- structured questionnaire.

**Recommendations:**

The study can be replicated on a large sample to validate the findings and generalization of findings.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

This study concluded that the mothers have good knowledge regarding weaning. Starting weaning at correct time, including nutritious item in diet, method and timing of weaning decides health of the infant. Maternal knowledge regarding weaning lay basic foundation for the health of the infants and prevention of malnutrition in toddler and preschool period. So adequate information regarding weaning should be given to the mothers at the time they visit to paediatric OPD and well-baby clinics.

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