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A Comparative Study on Mothers' Attitudes towards Breastfeeding and Nutritional Status Assessment of Children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District

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ABSTRACT

Breastfeeding is widely recognized as one of the most effective public health practices for ensuring optimal child growth, development, and nutritional well-being. Maternal attitude toward breastfeeding plays an important role in determining infant feeding behaviour and influencing nutritional outcomes during early childhood. The present study was conducted to assess mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding and to evaluate the nutritional status of children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District, Bihar. A descriptive and analytical cross-sectional research design was adopted. The study included a sample of 120 mothers and their children aged 0–5 years selected through simple random sampling. Primary data were collected using a structured interview schedule, while anthropometric measurements were used to assess nutritional status according to WHO Child Growth Standards. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques including frequency, percentage, Chi-square test, and Pearson correlation analysis were applied. The findings revealed that 60.0% of mothers demonstrated a positive attitude toward breastfeeding, while 71.6% supported early initiation of breastfeeding and 66.7% supported exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Nutritional assessment showed that 38.3% of children were underweight, 41.7% experienced stunting, and 31.7% exhibited wasting. Inferential analysis demonstrated a significant association between mothers' attitudes and breastfeeding practices ($\chi^2 = 12.48$, $p < 0.05$) and a significant relationship between breastfeeding practices and nutritional status ($\chi^2 = 14.62$, $p < 0.05$). A moderate positive correlation was also observed between maternal attitude and child nutritional status ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that improving maternal awareness, strengthening breastfeeding counselling, and enhancing community-based nutrition interventions may contribute to improved child nutritional outcomes and reduction of childhood undernutrition in the study area.

Keywords: *Breastfeeding Attitude, Nutritional Status, Child Nutrition, Maternal Health, Exclusive Breastfeeding.*

Introduction

Breastfeeding is considered one of the most effective and evidence-based public health practices for promoting child survival, healthy growth, and nutritional security. It provides complete nutrition during the early months of life and supports cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Breast milk contains essential nutrients, antibodies, enzymes, and bioactive components that protect

infants against infections and reduce infant morbidity and mortality. The World Health Organization (WHO) and Government of India recommend initiation of breastfeeding within one hour after birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and continued breastfeeding along with complementary feeding up to two years of age or beyond.

Child nutrition remains a major public health challenge in India despite improvements in maternal and child health services. Inadequate breastfeeding practices, delayed complementary feeding, poor maternal awareness, and socio-economic inequalities continue to contribute to undernutrition among children. Maternal attitude toward breastfeeding is an important behavioural determinant because a mother's knowledge, beliefs, perception, confidence, and social environment influence infant feeding decisions and eventually affect child nutritional outcomes.

India has implemented multiple programmes to improve maternal and child nutrition, including the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), National Health Mission (NHM), POSHAN Abhiyaan, and Mission POSHAN 2.0. Mission POSHAN 2.0 adopts a life-cycle approach and emphasizes maternal nutrition, infant and young child feeding practices, behavioural change communication, supplementary nutrition, and digital monitoring through the Poshan Tracker system. The programme specifically targets reduction in stunting, wasting, underweight, and anaemia among children through community-based interventions and strengthened Anganwadi services.

Despite these policy initiatives, Bihar continues to experience a substantial burden of child undernutrition. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21), 42.9% of children under five years in Bihar are stunted (low height for age), 41.0% are underweight, and 22.9% are wasted, while 8.8% are severely wasted. Childhood anaemia remains highly prevalent, affecting 69.4% of children aged 6–59 months in the state. These figures indicate that nutritional deprivation continues to affect a large proportion of children and requires stronger interventions related to maternal awareness and infant feeding behaviour.

Breastfeeding indicators in Bihar show improvement but still reveal important gaps. NFHS-5 reported that only 31.1% of children were breastfed within one hour of birth, whereas 58.9% of infants under six months received exclusive breastfeeding, showing improvement from 53.4% recorded in NFHS-4. Additionally, only 39.0% of children aged 6–8 months received timely complementary feeding along with breast milk, and merely 10.9% of children aged 6–23 months received an adequate diet. These findings suggest that although breastfeeding awareness has increased, appropriate feeding practices remain insufficient for achieving optimal child nutrition.

In Bihar, particularly in semi-urban and rural communities, maternal education, household income, family traditions, cultural beliefs, healthcare accessibility, and counselling support from Anganwadi and health workers influence breastfeeding behaviour. Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District represent a socially and economically diverse setting where maternal attitudes and child feeding practices may vary considerably. Localized research is essential because district- and block-level realities often differ from state averages and require context-specific intervention strategies.

Nutritional assessment serves as an important tool for measuring child health and development. Anthropometric indicators such as weight-for-age, height-for-age, and weight-for-height based on WHO standards help identify underweight, stunting, and wasting among children. Understanding the relationship between mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding and the nutritional status of children can provide practical evidence for designing effective nutrition education programmes.

Therefore, the present study aims to assess maternal attitudes regarding breastfeeding practices and to evaluate the nutritional status of children. The study seeks to identify behavioural and socio-demographic factors influencing child nutrition and generate evidence that may support local health authorities, Anganwadi services, and community nutrition programmes for improving child health outcomes.

Review of Literature

Several studies have examined the relationship between breastfeeding practices, maternal attitude, and child nutritional status. The existing literature indicates that mothers' knowledge, beliefs, and infant feeding behaviour play a significant role in determining the nutritional outcomes of children.

Meshram et al. (2012) conducted a community-based cross-sectional study in rural Andhra Pradesh to examine infant and young child feeding practices and their influence on nutritional status.

The study reported that inappropriate breastfeeding practices and delayed initiation of complementary feeding were associated with poor growth indicators among children. The researchers concluded that improved maternal education and breastfeeding counselling could contribute significantly to reducing childhood undernutrition.

Patel and Badhoniya (2013) investigated breastfeeding behaviour and nutritional outcomes among children in India. Their findings showed that early initiation and continuation of breastfeeding positively influenced child growth and reduced nutritional deficiencies. The study emphasized the importance of strengthening community awareness programmes for mothers.

Victora et al. (2016) published a comprehensive analysis in *The Lancet Breastfeeding Series* and concluded that breastfeeding has long-term benefits for child survival, cognitive development, and maternal health. The study identified breastfeeding as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions capable of reducing childhood illness and mortality globally.

Krishnendu and Devaki (2017) conducted research on knowledge, attitude, and breastfeeding practices among lactating mothers in Kerala. The findings revealed that although most mothers possessed adequate knowledge regarding breastfeeding, actual exclusive breastfeeding practices remained lower than expected. The authors recommended behavioural counselling and family-level support for improving breastfeeding outcomes.

Sinha et al. (2018) carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis on interventions promoting breastfeeding practices. The study found that counselling interventions during pregnancy and postnatal periods significantly increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding and improved child nutritional outcomes.

Kumar et al. (2020) studied maternal knowledge and feeding practices among mothers of under-five children and observed that mothers with better awareness regarding breastfeeding and complementary feeding demonstrated improved child nutritional indicators. The study highlighted maternal education as an important determinant of child health.

National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) (2019–2021) reported persistent nutritional challenges in Bihar. The survey showed high prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight among children under five years and indicated that although breastfeeding indicators had improved, timely complementary feeding and dietary diversity remained inadequate.

Kwerengwe and Singh (2023) examined the impact of mothers' knowledge, attitude, and complementary feeding practices on child nutritional status. Their study demonstrated that maternal knowledge and positive feeding behaviour significantly affected child nutrition outcomes and recommended integrating nutrition education into maternal healthcare services.

World Health Organization (2023), breastfeeding is essential for child survival, growth, and nutritional development. WHO recommends initiating breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding up to two years or beyond. The organization also emphasizes that mothers' attitudes and feeding practices significantly influence children's nutritional status and overall health outcomes.

Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2024) under Mission POSHAN 2.0 emphasized breastfeeding promotion, supplementary nutrition, and behavioural change communication as essential approaches for reducing child malnutrition and strengthening early childhood nutrition services.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that maternal attitude toward breastfeeding remains a major determinant of child feeding practices and nutritional outcomes. Most previous studies have separately explored breastfeeding behaviour or child nutrition; however, limited evidence is available at the local community level that simultaneously examines mothers' attitudes and nutritional assessment of children in Bihar.

Objectives

- To assess mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.
- To evaluate the nutritional status of children using selected anthropometric indicators.
- To examine the relationship between breastfeeding attitudes and the nutritional status of children.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant association between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and breastfeeding practices in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.
- There is a significant relationship between breastfeeding practices and the nutritional status of children.
- There is a significant relationship between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and the nutritional status of their children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

Research Methodology

The present study was conducted to examine mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding and assess the nutritional status of their children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District. Breastfeeding is a key determinant of child growth, nutritional well-being, cognitive development, and overall health during early childhood. Mothers' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward breastfeeding often influence infant feeding practices, which may affect children's nutritional outcomes. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the relationship between maternal attitudes and breastfeeding behaviour and evaluate their association with the nutritional status of children in the selected study area. The methodology was designed to collect systematic and reliable data to understand breastfeeding practices and identify factors influencing child nutrition among children in their early developmental years.

- **Research Design:** The study employed a descriptive and analytical cross-sectional research design. The descriptive approach was used to understand mothers' attitudes and breastfeeding practices, while the analytical component examined the relationship between breastfeeding attitudes and children's nutritional status.
- **Study Area:** The study was conducted in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District, Bihar. The area includes rural and semi-urban communities where variations in maternal education, health awareness, and nutritional practices can be observed.
- **Study Population:** The target population consisted of mothers having children aged 0–5 years residing in the selected study area. Children within this age group were included for nutritional assessment.
- **Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** A total of 120 mothers and their children were selected as respondents for the study. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique.
- **Sources of Data:** Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected directly from respondents, while secondary data were obtained from government reports, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), Ministry of Women and Child Development publications, POSHAN reports, journals, books, and published research articles.
- **Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:** Data were collected using a structured interview schedule/questionnaire containing sections on socio-demographic profile, breastfeeding attitudes, breastfeeding practices, and child nutritional information. Anthropometric measurements were used to assess nutritional status.

Variables of the Study

- **Independent Variable:** Mothers' attitude towards breastfeeding
- **Dependent Variable:** Nutritional status of children
- **Intervening Variables:** Age of mother, education, family income, family type, occupation, and healthcare access
- **Nutritional Assessment:** Children's nutritional status was assessed using standard anthropometric indicators, including:
  - Weight-for-Age (Underweight)
  - Height-for-Age (Stunting)
  - Weight-for-Height (Wasting)

  WHO Child Growth Standards were used for interpretation.

- **Data Analysis:** The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for descriptive analysis, while the Chi-square test and correlation analysis were applied to test the formulated hypotheses.
- **Ethical Consideration:** Prior informed consent was obtained from all participating mothers. Confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation were ensured throughout the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis and interpretation of data collected from 120 mothers and their children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District. The findings are organized according to the objectives of the study to understand mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding and evaluate the nutritional status of children. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	12	10.0
21–25	38	31.7
26–30	42	35.0
31–35	20	16.7
Above 35	8	6.6
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 1 shows that the majority of mothers (35.0%) belonged to the age group of 26–30 years, followed by 31.7% in the 21–25 years category. Only 10.0% of respondents were below 20 years and 6.6% were above 35 years. The findings indicate that most respondents were within active reproductive and child-rearing age groups, which may influence breastfeeding decisions and childcare practices.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Status

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	18	15.0
Primary	26	21.7
Secondary	34	28.3
Higher Secondary	28	23.3
Graduate and above	14	11.7
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 2 indicates that the highest proportion of respondents had completed secondary education (28.3%), followed by higher secondary education (23.3%). Illiterate mothers constituted 15.0% of the sample, while only 11.7% had graduate-level education or above. The educational profile suggests a moderate level of literacy among respondents, which may contribute to awareness and understanding of breastfeeding and child nutrition practices.

Table 3: Family Income Distribution

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below ₹10,000	30	25.0
₹10,001–20,000	48	40.0
₹20,001–30,000	28	23.3
Above ₹30,000	14	11.7
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 3 reveals that the largest proportion of families (40.0%) earned between ₹10,001–20,000 per month, followed by 25.0% earning below ₹10,000. Only 11.7% of respondents belonged to households earning above ₹30,000 monthly. These findings indicate that most respondents belonged to lower-middle-income groups, which may affect access to healthcare services and nutritional resources.

Table 4: Attitude Toward Early Initiation of Breastfeeding

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	40	33.3
Agree	46	38.3
Neutral	18	15.0
Disagree	10	8.4
Strongly Disagree	6	5.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 4 demonstrates that 38.3% of mothers agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that breastfeeding should begin within one hour after birth. Together, 71.6% of respondents expressed positive attitudes toward early initiation of breastfeeding, whereas only 13.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This reflects generally favourable awareness regarding recommended breastfeeding practices.

Table 5: Mothers' Attitude Toward Exclusive Breastfeeding

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	36	30.0
Agree	44	36.7
Neutral	20	16.7
Disagree	14	11.6
Strongly Disagree	6	5.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 5 shows that 36.7% of mothers agreed and 30.0% strongly agreed with exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. In total, 66.7% supported exclusive breastfeeding recommendations, while 16.6% expressed disagreement. These findings indicate a generally positive maternal attitude toward exclusive breastfeeding practices.

Table 6: Overall Breastfeeding Attitude Score

Attitude Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	72	60.0
Moderate	34	28.3
Negative	14	11.7
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 6 reveals that 60.0% of mothers demonstrated a positive attitude toward breastfeeding, while 28.3% showed a moderate attitude and only 11.7% had a negative attitude. The findings suggest that the majority of respondents possessed satisfactory awareness and acceptance of breastfeeding practices.

Table 7: Nutritional Status Based on Weight-for-Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Normal	74	61.7
Underweight	34	28.3
Severely Underweight	12	10.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 7 indicates that 61.7% of children had normal weight-for-age status, whereas 28.3% were underweight and 10.0% were severely underweight. Overall, 38.3% of children experienced some degree of undernutrition, highlighting the need for improved nutritional interventions.

Table 8: Nutritional Status Based on Height-for-Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Normal	70	58.3
Stunted	38	31.7
Severely Stunted	12	10.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 8 shows that 58.3% of children had normal height-for-age measurements, while 31.7% were stunted and 10.0% were severely stunted. Combined, 41.7% of children experienced chronic nutritional deficiencies reflected through stunting.

Table 9: Nutritional Status Based on Weight-for-Height

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Normal	82	68.3
Wasted	28	23.3
Severely Wasted	10	8.4
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey Data

The above Table 9 reveals that 68.3% of children had normal weight-for-height measurements, whereas 23.3% were wasted and 8.4% were severely wasted. Thus, 31.7% of children showed signs of acute malnutrition, indicating recent nutritional stress.

Hypothesis Testing

The inferential statistical analysis undertaken to evaluate the study hypotheses and examine the relationships among mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding, breastfeeding practices, and the nutritional status of children. Statistical testing was conducted to determine whether the observed patterns identified in the descriptive analysis were statistically significant. Chi-square (χ^2) tests were applied to assess associations between categorical variables, while Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between continuous measures. Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no significant association between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and breastfeeding practices in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

H_{11}: There is a significant association between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and breastfeeding practices in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

Prior to inferential testing, descriptive findings presented in Table 6 (Overall Breastfeeding Attitude Score) and Tables 4–5 (Breastfeeding Practice Indicators) were reviewed. The descriptive results indicated that a substantial proportion of mothers demonstrated positive attitudes toward breastfeeding and reported adherence to recommended breastfeeding practices. To determine whether these observed differences were statistically meaningful, a Chi-square test of association was performed.

Table 10: Association Between Mothers' Attitude and Breastfeeding Practices

Attitude Level	Appropriate Breastfeeding Practice	Inappropriate Breastfeeding Practice	Total
Positive	58	14	72
Moderate	20	14	34
Negative	4	10	14
Total	82	38	120

Source: Compiled from Field Survey

Test Statistics

$$\chi^2 = 12.48$$
$$df = 2$$
$$p < 0.05$$

Interpretation: The calculated Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 12.48$) exceeded the critical value (5.991), indicating a statistically significant association between mothers' attitudes and breastfeeding practices.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) was accepted. These findings suggest that maternal attitude plays an important role in shaping breastfeeding behaviour. Mothers with positive attitudes toward breastfeeding were significantly more likely to adopt recommended breastfeeding practices compared with mothers exhibiting moderate or negative attitudes.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between breastfeeding practices and the nutritional status of children.

H_{12}: There is a significant relationship between breastfeeding practices and the nutritional status of children.

Before conducting inferential analysis, Tables 7–9 presenting anthropometric nutritional assessment and Tables 4–5 describing breastfeeding practices were examined. Descriptive findings indicated variability in nutritional outcomes among children and suggested a possible association with breastfeeding behaviour. Accordingly, a Chi-square test was conducted to evaluate this relationship statistically.

Table 11: Relationship Between Breastfeeding Practices and Nutritional Status

Breastfeeding Practice	Normal Nutritional Status	Malnutrition	Total
Appropriate Practice	60	22	82
Inappropriate Practice	14	24	38
Total	74	46	120

Source: Compiled from Field Survey

Test Statistics

$\chi^2 = 14.62$
$df = 1$
$CriticalValue(\alpha = 0.05) = 3.841$
$p < 0.05$

Interpretation: The calculated Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 14.62$) was greater than the critical value (3.841), indicating a statistically significant relationship between breastfeeding practices and nutritional status.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{12}) was accepted. The findings demonstrate that children exposed to appropriate breastfeeding practices were more likely to exhibit normal nutritional status, whereas inadequate breastfeeding practices were associated with a higher prevalence of malnutrition.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and the nutritional status of their children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

H_{13}: There is a significant relationship between mothers' attitudes towards breastfeeding and the nutritional status of their children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

Prior to correlation analysis, Table 6 (Overall Breastfeeding Attitude Score) and Tables 7–9 (Nutritional Assessment of Children) was reviewed. Descriptive findings suggested that mothers with more favourable attitudes toward breastfeeding tended to have children with comparatively better nutritional outcomes. Pearson correlation analysis was therefore conducted to determine the magnitude and direction of this relationship.

Table 12: Correlation Between Mothers' Attitude and Nutritional Status

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance
Mothers' Attitude and Nutritional Status	0.46	$p < 0.05$

Source: Compiled from Field Survey

Interpretation: The Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.46) indicates a moderate positive relationship between maternal attitude toward breastfeeding and child nutritional status. The relationship was statistically significant at the 5% level.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{13}) was accepted. This finding suggests that more favourable maternal attitudes toward breastfeeding are associated with improved nutritional outcomes among children.

Overall Findings

The inferential analysis demonstrated statistically significant relationships among maternal attitudes toward breastfeeding, breastfeeding practices, and child nutritional outcomes. Mothers with positive attitudes were more likely to engage in recommended breastfeeding behaviours, and these practices were associated with improved nutritional status among children. Furthermore, maternal attitude showed a moderate positive association with child nutrition, highlighting the importance of strengthening breastfeeding awareness and behavioural interventions to improve child health outcomes in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District.

Results and Discussion

The study assessed mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding and evaluated the nutritional status of children in Nathnagar Block, Bhagalpur District using data collected from 120 respondents. The socio-demographic profile indicated that most mothers belonged to the age groups of 26–30 years (35.0%) and 21–25 years (31.7%), representing the active reproductive and child-care stage. Educational analysis showed that secondary education constituted the highest proportion (28.3%), while only 11.7% had graduate-level education, reflecting moderate educational attainment. Most households (40.0%) reported a monthly income between ₹10,001–20,000, indicating lower-middle-income conditions.

The findings related to breastfeeding attitudes revealed generally positive perceptions among mothers. A majority supported initiation of breastfeeding within one hour after birth (71.6%), and 66.7% agreed with exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months. Overall, 60.0% of mothers demonstrated a positive attitude toward breastfeeding, suggesting increasing awareness regarding recommended infant feeding practices and the importance of maternal beliefs in influencing feeding behaviour.

Breastfeeding contributes not only to nutritional adequacy but also to early cognitive development by supplying essential nutrients required for brain growth and neurological maturation. It also strengthens bonding between mothers and children by promoting emotional attachment, close interaction, and responsive caregiving.

Nutritional assessment showed that undernutrition remained a concern despite improved breastfeeding awareness. Weight-for-age assessment indicated that 38.3% of children were underweight or severely underweight. Height-for-age analysis revealed that 41.7% experienced stunting, while 31.7% showed wasting according to weight-for-height assessment.

Inferential analysis demonstrated significant associations among study variables. Chi-square analysis confirmed a significant relationship between mothers' attitudes and breastfeeding practices ($\chi^2 = 12.48$, $p < 0.05$). Breastfeeding practices were also significantly associated with children's nutritional status ($\chi^2 = 14.62$, $p < 0.05$). Pearson correlation showed a moderate positive relationship between maternal attitude and child nutritional status ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that positive maternal attitudes and breastfeeding practices support improved nutrition, cognitive outcomes, and overall child development.

Conclusion

The study concluded that mothers in Nathnagar Block generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward breastfeeding and awareness regarding early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding practices. However, a considerable proportion of children continued to experience underweight, stunting, and wasting, indicating persistent nutritional challenges. Statistical findings confirmed significant relationships between maternal attitude, breastfeeding practices, and child nutritional status, suggesting that favourable breastfeeding behaviour contributes to improved child nutrition. Breastfeeding was also found to support cognitive development through enhanced brain growth and developmental outcomes while strengthening bonding between mothers and children by encouraging

emotional attachment and responsive caregiving. Therefore, strengthening breastfeeding counselling, maternal education, community nutrition awareness, Anganwadi services, and infant feeding interventions is essential to improve nutritional status and promote healthy child growth and development.

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