

# Improving Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates in Postnatal Mothers - A Neonatologist's Perspective

**Kumar A\***

Assistant Professor, Department of Neonatology, AIIMS, India

**\*Corresponding author:** Amit Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Neonatology, AIIMS, Nagpur, India, Email: dramitkumarneo@aaimsnagpur.edu.in

**Received Date:** January 25, 2025; **Published Date:** January 30, 2025

## Commentary

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for the first six months of life is a cornerstone of neonatal health, offering unmatched benefits for growth, immunity, and long-term health. In addition to this exclusive breast feeding till 6 months has a direct correlation with intelligence and IQ of baby with respect to formula fed babies. Despite its recognized importance, global EBF rates remain suboptimal, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where cultural, logistical, and systemic barriers often prevail. As a neonatologist, I observe that focused interventions during the postnatal period are critical to improving these rates.

Effective support begins in the antenatal period by educating mothers about the benefits of breastfeeding. Counselling should include practical advice on latching, positioning, and understanding feeding cues. Extra care should be taken in Primi mother and mother with flat nipple as these mother faces maximum difficulties in establishing EBF. Once the infant is born, timely initiation of breastfeeding-ideally within the first hour-is vital. Neonatal care teams can support this by promoting skin-to-skin contact, which not only facilitates

bonding but also stimulates milk production. The role of postnatal support cannot be overstated. Many mothers face challenges such as perceived insufficient milk supply, sore nipples, or latching difficulties. Neonatal units and maternity wards must establish lactation support programs led by skilled counsellors. Teaching mothers proper positioning and good attachment has a positive relationship in early feeding establishment. Explaining benefits of breast feeding and involving family members, particularly grandmothers and partners, can also encourage adherence to EBF practices.

On a systemic level, promoting Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) accreditation ensures adherence to evidence-based practices like rooming-in and breastfeeding exclusivity. Community-level outreach, such as peer-support groups and digital tools, can sustain breastfeeding efforts after discharge. A multidisciplinary approach, combining education, systemic changes, and culturally sensitive support, is essential to improving EBF rates. Neonatologists play a pivotal role in leading these efforts, advocating for both individual and systemic interventions to optimize neonatal outcomes.