



SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL VARIATION OF EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES IN INDIA, 2019-21

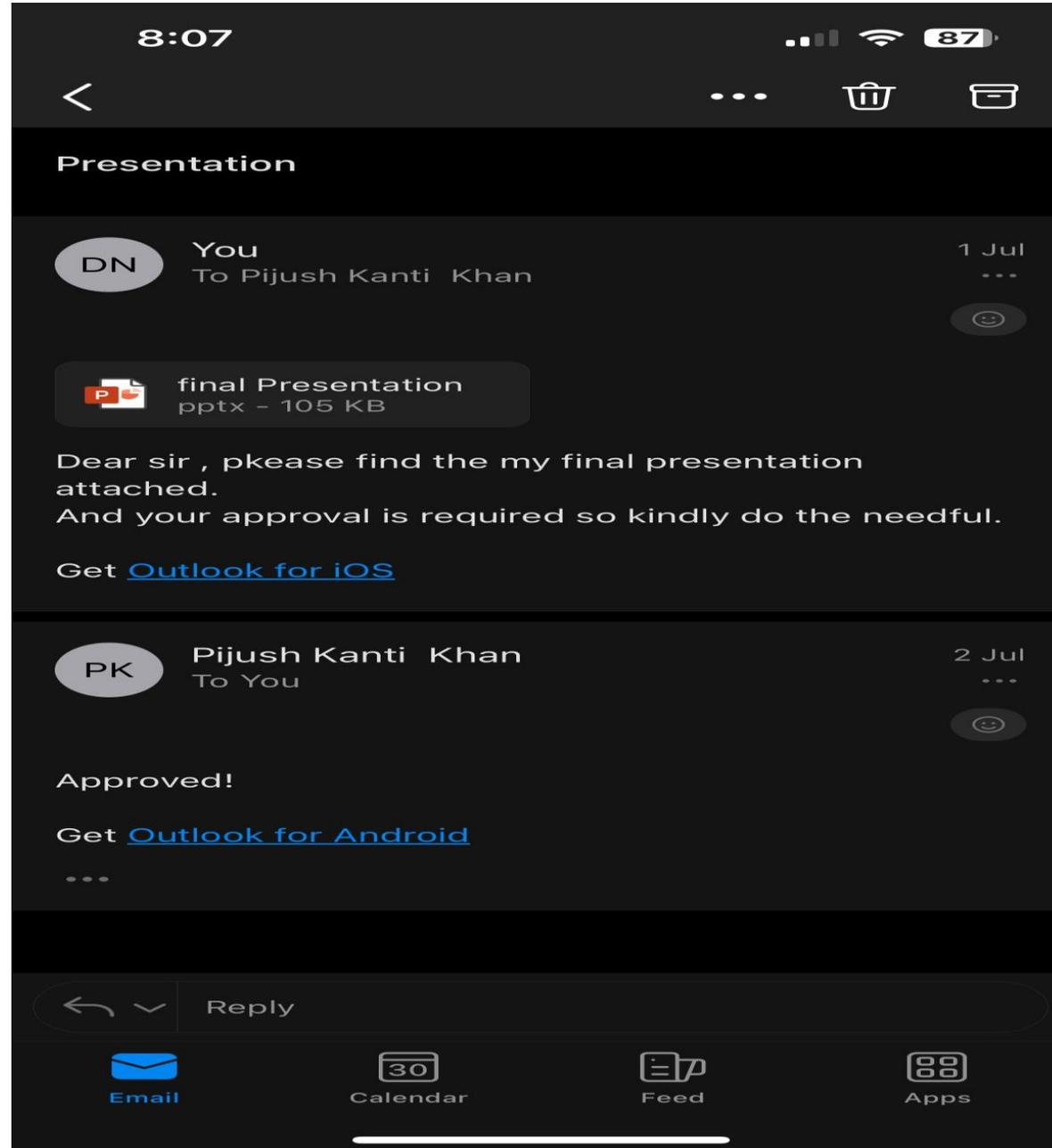
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Introduction

- Exclusive breastfeeding is the practice of feeding a baby only breast milk for the first six months of life.
- Half of Indian babies under six months aren't getting the recommended exclusive breastfeeding.
- While there's been some improvement in recent surveys, a significant gap remains.

- Over 50% of Indian mothers still aren't exclusively breastfeeding for the full six months recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Globally, the percent of infants under six months of age exclusively breastfed has reached 48%, close to achieving the World Health Assembly 2025 target of 50% (UNICEF).

Objectives of Your Study

- To examine the level of exclusive breastfeeding practices across regions and socio-economic groups in India.
- To examine the factors associated with exclusive breastfeeding practices in India

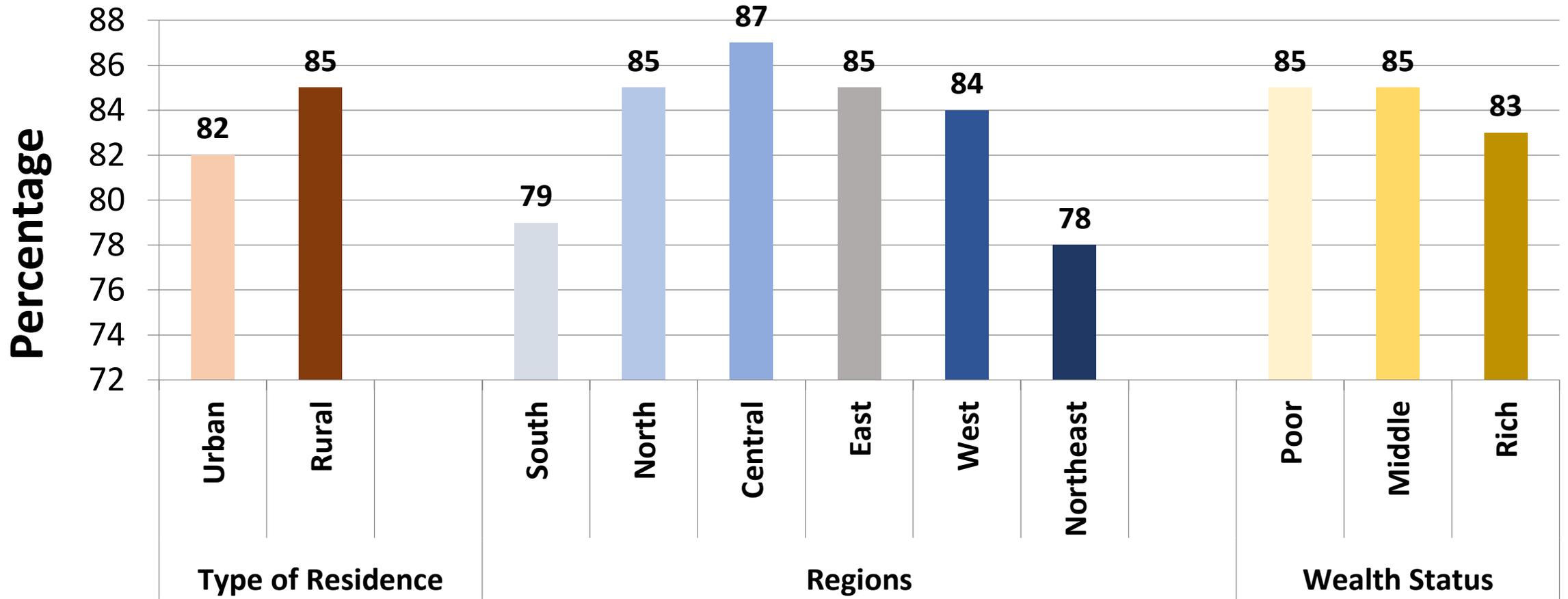
Methodology

- **Data Source:** This research utilized secondary data from the fifth rounds of National Family Health Survey, a large-scale, nationally representative survey conducted in India. The NFHS-5 provided comprehensive information on various health-related indicators, including exclusive breast feed practices among children with different socio economic and demographic factors, collected through standardized questionnaires administered to households across different states and union territories.
- **Study Design:** This study employed a cross-sectional design, utilized the most recent wave of NFHS 5 data. In the NFHS-5 survey, 636,699 households in 707 districts, 28 states and 8 union territories were surveyed, with a response rate of 98%. The analysis focused on individuals aged 15-49 years, capturing a broad spectrum of substance use behaviors and familial dynamics within households.

Methodology

- **Variables:** Our study accessed 'children recode file' from the DHS program website. We included infants aged between 0 and 6 months to study the proportion distribution of exclusive breastfeeding practices during the first 6 months. socioeconomic indicators (education, income, occupation), regional variables (state/union territory, urban/rural residence), and various medical factors were considered for our analysis.
- **Statistical Analysis**
- Descriptive statistics was used to examine the prevalence of substance use across different socioeconomic and regional categories. Multivariate analysis was employed to identify socio-demographic determinants associated with exclusive breast feeding practices controlling for potential confounders.

Socio-demographic Characteristics and Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) Rates



Factors associated with the Exclusive breastfeeding status

Characteristics	Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF)		
	OR	CI	P-value
Mother's Age (in years)			
20-34	1.87	1.52-2.31	<0.001
35-49	1.77	1.34-2.35	<0.001
Gender			
Female	0.90	0.82-0.99	0.035
Type of Residence			
Rural	0.81	0.71- 0.91	<0.001
Regions			
South	1.56	1.34-1.82	<0.001
Central	0.88	0.77-0.99	0.041
Northeast	1.61	1.37-1.89	<0.001

***Other models were also used but they did not show a significant association with exclusive breast feeding**

DISCUSSION

Sociodemographic Characteristics and Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) Rates

TYPE OF RESIDENCE

- Rural mothers had a higher EBF rate (85%) compared to their urban counterparts (82%), with a significant association ($p = 0.016$)
- This could reflect
 - Differences in lifestyle
 - Access to breastfeeding support
 - Cultural practices between urban and rural settings

REGIONS

The data indicates significant regional differences in EBF rates suggesting that regional factors play a crucial role in breastfeeding practices:

- **Central Region's (87%)** high EBF rate could be attributed to several factors:
 - More effective breastfeeding promotion programs
 - Better healthcare infrastructure
 - Higher levels of support for new mothers.
 - Additionally, cultural practices in this region may strongly support and encourage breastfeeding.

DISCUSSION

- In contrast **Northeast Region's (78%)** lower EBF rate could reflect several challenges:
 - Less accessible healthcare services
 - Lower levels of breastfeeding promotion
 - Possible cultural or societal barriers to exclusive breastfeeding
 - Geographic isolation and socio-economic factors may also contribute
- The remaining regions **Other Region's** (South, North, East, and West) show EBF rates varying between 79% and 85%, indicating moderate success in breastfeeding practices

WEALTH STATUS

- Analysis reveals that EBF rates are relatively similar across different wealth categories:
 - Poor and middle-income mothers both showing an EBF rate of 85%
 - While rich mothers have a slightly lower rate at 83%
- This uniformity indicates that wealth status alone does not have a significant impact on exclusive breastfeeding practices ($p = 0.868$)

Conclusion

- The findings highlight the significant influence of sociodemographic factors on exclusive breastfeeding practices
- Rural residence, certain regions (like the Central region) were positively associated with higher EBF rates
- On the other hand, Wealth status showed less variation in EBF rates
- These insights are critical for designing targeted interventions:
 - To promote exclusive breastfeeding
 - Addressing specific demographic segments
 - Enhancing breastfeeding support and education across different socio-demographic contexts
- Future research should further explore the underlying mechanisms driving these associations to inform more effective public health strategies.

References (Only Vancouver Style)

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Thank You