

## Socio-Economic Inequality in Breastfeeding Patterns in India

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**Abstract :** The promotion and support of breastfeeding is a global priority with benefits for maternal and infant health, especially in low income and middle-income countries where the probability of child survival is still very low. In India too it has been well established that breastfeeding increases the survival of the child. However, the breastfeeding levels are quite low in the country. Examining the socio-economic inequality in breastfeeding pattern can help to the causal pathways responsible for early breastfeeding termination. This paper tries to understand the socio-economic differential in breastfeeding patterns among Indian women. Data is used from nationally representative National Family Health Survey-3. Using Cox regression modelling techniques, the analysis found that the likelihood of having small breastfeeding duration increased with increasing household wealth status similarly education also has negative effect on breastfeeding duration. The considerable gender difference is also visible in India, likelihood of stopping breastfeeding was significantly higher among female children compared with male children. To understand the cultural factors or norms responsible for the early termination of breastfeeding more in depth/qualitative studies are needed.

**Keywords :** breastfeeding, India, socio-economic inequality, women education

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