

Women Experiences of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract: Exclusive breastfeeding is the most ideal meal for infants aged 0 - 6 months and provides substantial benefits for the baby and the mother. Although there are many studies and publications on the benefits of breastfeeding, but the number of exclusive breastfeeding in global coverage has not increased significantly. Myths and erroneous beliefs about breastfeeding is still developing in some areas in Indonesia as well as in Aceh. This study aim to describe the meaning of exclusive breastfeeding experience of women in Aceh. This qualitative research with phenomenological approach. There were 9 participants participated in the study consist of six mothers who have succeed exclusive breastfeeding and three additional participants. Data collection was using semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The study's themes are consist of being a mother, breastfeeding resilient for sake of the baby, knowledge is the key to successful, and cultural practices is not a mistake. Mothers should be able to modify cultural practices to decrease the chance of disturbance or even fail the process of exclusive breastfeeding. Exclusive breastfeeding is believed to be the best choice for children and mother and described as a success of mothers in carrying out their role.

1 INTRODUCTION

Children is a next generation of human resources to continue our future development. Conducive development should be provided in order the children can grow and develop optimally, healthy, intelligent and has a character in accordance with the values of the Indonesian nation. The most basic effort to ensure the achievement of the quality in children development as well as fulfilling the rights of children is to provide the best food for children from birth until two years (DEPKES, 2011).

Breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding provide substantial benefits both for the baby and for the mother. Breast milk is the most complete nutrition for baby. According to Burns, et al (2010) although there have been various studies and publications on the benefits of breast milk, but there is a decline in breastfeeding rate globally, there are many mother in the world who do not breastfeeding, breastfeeding with a short duration or late in starting breastfeeding.

WHO (2010) estimates that 85% of mothers in the world do not provide optimal breastfeeding. Data from Disease Control and Preventive (CDC)

National Immunization Survey (2009) in Lowdermilk, et al (2012) indicated that the rate of breastfeeding in the United States has increased from 60% in 2005 to 70% in 2007. Data on breastfeeding in some other countries in 2010, coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in India has reached 46%, Philippines 34%, Vietnam 27% and 24% in Myanmar (WHO, 2010).

According Gizikia (2014) coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia in infants up to 6 months increased from 33.6% in 2010 to 38.5% in 2011. However, this rate is decreased from 63.4% in 2012 to 54, 3% in 2013. This rate is far away of expectations and signalled only a little Indonesian children obtain sufficient nutrients from breast milk. In fact, breast milk is a important role in the process of physical and mental growth of children with long-term effects (Risksedas, 2013).

Health profile Aceh 2012 shows the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in Aceh is only 27% and Aceh ranks in number 9 from the lowest of all the provinces in Indonesia (SDKI, 2012). As for exclusive breastfeeding coverage in Aceh Besar amounted to 33.7% (health profile Aceh, 2012). Results of a preliminary study on February 9, 2015

found the number of breastfeeding mothers with babies aged in 0-24 months in Puskesmas Kuto Baro amounted to 241 people and the exclusive breastfeeding amounted to 109 people. Many things can affect the exclusive breastfeeding among them such as influence of the older in family members, the influence of social learning, and the influence of religion (Demirtas, et al, 2011), socio-economic status, occupation and mother's education, ethnicity, shifting neighbourhood, mimic western lifestyle, influence health personnel and the availability of formula (Burns, et al, 2010) and culture (Chen, et al, 2013).

The lowest achievements of exclusive breastfeeding in Aceh is much influenced by the culture of giving food and drinks too early to infants, this is because of lack of family knowledge, incessant propaganda formula, especially in urban and maternal behaviour towards breastfeeding (health profile of Aceh, 2012). Acehnese who firmly attached to the customs and cultures that affect in their daily lives, including in the process of breastfeeding.

Acehnese people assume that breastfeeding for infants should be in two years, it is because of a religious order and the child is a mandate from Allah SWT that must be treated as well as possible. However, from the results of a preliminary study conducted by researchers by interviewing midwives and health workers at health centre district of Kuta Baro said there are still many mothers in Aceh who stopped breastfeeding before the 2 years with the reason of the milk production slightly, the behaviour of mothers who use of formula feeding in infants under 6 months and the additional of supplementary food such as rice mixed with mashed banana at an early age, worker mother, spacing pregnancies too close to focus attention with order baby, knowledge and lack of family support.

The myths associated with the practice of breastfeeding is still evolving, as considered colostrum is stale milk that are not well provided for baby, postpartum mothers must undergo restrictions to eat and not to eat / drink in large portions / lot, myths breastfeeding can affect the shape of the body, also believe that the formula for growth and intelligence of babies.

2 METHODS

This study is a qualitative research with phenomenological approach. Technique of determining the participants by using purposive

sampling to determine criterion inclusion and exclusion. Criterion inclusion of mothers with infants aged > 6 months to 12 months and managed exclusively breastfed their babies, Acehnese, the age range of mothers 20 to 35 years, women with minimal education in high school, able to communicate well, and willing to be Participants in the study. While exclusion criteria: infants with low birth weight (LBW) and pregnant mother.

The number of participants in this study were 9 people. Data collected by using a semi-structured interview or in-depth interviews and field note. The study was conducted in the district of Kuta Baro, Aceh Besar district. Data collection took place from June - August 2015.

3 FINDINGS

Based on the selected participants, participant characteristics obtained consisting of age, infants age, parity, number of children, place of birth, type of delivery, duration of breastfeeding, duration of exclusive breastfeeding, education, occupation, ethnicity and family members who live together participants. Below is the themes of the study:

3.1 Being a Mother

3.1.1 Proud as a Mother

The pride of being a mother when the mother can give life to her baby by giving exclusive breastfeeding, proud of her success in the midst of other mothers who complain about breastfeeding, proud to be able to prove to parents that mothers can successfully breast-feed, proud though babies only given only breast milk for 6 months but remain healthy baby. As expressions of the following participants:

Proud if you succeed in providing exclusive breastfeeding for children, the meant successfully becoming a mother if she had given exclusive breast milk. (P1)

3.1.2 Breast Milk is the Gift of God

Breastfeeding is a grace and favor of God that is irreplaceable and must be grateful, exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months is one way in which the mother to give favors, such as the expression of one of the following participants:

It is a gift from God and cannot be replaced by another. (P1)

3.2 Test Stand, for the Sake of the Baby Breast Milk

3.2.1 Efforts to Power

Mother made great efforts in maintaining the exclusiveness of breastfeeding, the mother carried them to learn and seek information about exclusive breastfeeding, perform management problems during breastfeeding, preparation especially before childbirth, foster goodwill and strong motivation.

I have started looking for information before pregnancy through the internet (P3)

Although breastfeeding is easy and practical. But the mother realized during breast feeding mothers need extra effort to provide exclusive breastfeeding.

For example related to time maybe hmmm... have to get up earlier that for...uh...dairy ASI... it's saved... I mean hmm... Manage the time for me ... to produce breast milk (P5)

3.2.2 Family and Social Support

Family and social investment is the mother obtained the support of her husband, family, workplace, environmental, social and health workers during exclusive breastfeeding.

Given attention, asking if I have eaten or not, remember to eat regularly. (P6)

Office mate reminded of breaks to go home so I could breastfeeding. My boss also gave attention by allowing me to go home early. (P6)

Ee...posnatal visit to the age of the baby 40 days through visits KN1, KN2, KN3 (PP2)

3.2.3 Learning from Previous Experience

Results of the research showed that the three participants had experienced a failure during breastfeeding her first child, so that the experience is a provision for the mother to be successful in providing exclusive breastfeeding her second child.

When I gave birth my second child, I was determined to give exclusive breastfeeding (emphasizing the tone of voice) want to see how the difference with the first child. (P2)

3.3 Knowledge, the Key to Success

From these results the knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding consists of understanding and perception of exclusive breastfeeding, an understanding of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for the mother, an understanding of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for infants, previously a relative understanding and Religion and breastfeeding.

All participants know about the definition of exclusive breastfeeding. Most of them considered breast milk as the source of immune system.

Exclusive breastfeeding is emmm ... breastmilk is given for 6 months without the aid of formula milk or complementary foods” (P5)

Mothers also understood that breast milk is beneficial for infant health, intelligence, endurance, increase the baby's weigh.

Baby's immune system is stronger ...rarely sick, and it's good for the baby's brain and intelligent (P3)

In addition to the benefits for the baby, the mother is also useful to know the breastfeeding mother as well, such as for natural contraception after giving birth, one of the methods to lose weight mothers, improving mother-child emotional bond and can prevent breast cancer.

Or natural diet and family planning methods.... (P5), prevent cancer. (P2), improve emotional connection with babies, (P4)

The results showed that participants know that in Islam also encourages breastfeeding. As a Muslim, the participants understand that religion is always good advice, so that breastfeeding is important.

In our religion it has been ordered to breastfeed until the baby is 2 years old. (P2)

3.4 Cultural Practices, There is No Harm

Associated with cultural practices there are three categories illustrates that not all cultural practices can hinder the success of exclusive breastfeeding, the categories are:

3.4.1 Traditional Rituals on the People of Aceh

Results of analysis of the data shows that there are two traditional rituals influence in exclusive breastfeeding among *peucicap* and *bie ie sira*. Participants stated that *peucicap* is a ritual performed in infants which aims to introduce food to the baby *degan* provide a wide variety of food at the time of carrying out the ritual.

Provide an opportunity to taste food for newborns. The *peucicap* uses egg yolks, fruits and honey). (P3)

While *bie sira ie* this is a tradition of giving sugar-salt water to babies who paid his first visit to the home of relatives. If there is a baby who first visited the house after the birth of the party host should provide sugar-salt water as symbols of welcome and glory given to the baby when the baby is first visited.

Acehnese people's habits when baby first home visit relatives, given water containing salt and sugar or honey. (P1)

These ritual gives significance of public importance in Aceh

Bie ie sira is a symbol of Acehnese people to glorify babies. *Peucicap* with sweet-salty, meaning that everything in life has something that is pleasant or unpleasant and both must be lived). (PP3)

3.4.2 Do not Perform Traditional Rituals Despite Knowing

Results of analysis of the data, although the traditional rituals of the sacred meaning for the people of Aceh, but the participants knew that provide food / drink other than breast milk to the baby can frustrate exclusive breastfeeding. So most participants did not perform the rituals.

Provide knowledge to family members not to provide food or drinks to babies when visiting relatives' homes. (P6)

3.4.3 Respecting the Traditional Rituals

Participants maintain, preserve and respect the customs and rituals can not avoid a series of traditional rituals that must be followed in social life. As expressions of the following participants:

Sometimes it is difficult to give understanding, maybe someone is offended or angry. (P3)

Participants chose to perform traditional rituals in other ways but still does not derail exclusive breastfeeding.

Giving water containing sugar and salt does not interfere with exclusive breastfeeding, because it applied only the baby's lips. (P1)

Peucicap and *bie ie sira* is a custom. Thus generally do not have any impact for both mother and baby, not not be a sin if abandoned.

No effect whatever it's just a custom not a religious law. it's just the belief of old people). (PP3)

4 DISCUSSION

Being a mother is a dream for every woman. The role of a mother described as a duty to care for the child and provide the best for children. From the results of the study illustrate the success of becoming a mother when someone managed to give exclusive breastfeeding to their children. The success of exclusive breastfeeding became the pride and is a gift to be grateful mother.

Burn, et al (2009) which states that expectations about breastfeeding woman is described as a natural process that is best for babies and equated with being a good mother. Stop breastfeeding is often associated with guilt and failure as a mother.

Another study conducted by Britton and Britton (2008) states that women who breastfeed exclusively has a high self-concept, the form of satisfaction and happiness in interrelation (Wattimena, et al, 2012). Breastfeeding described as a fun thing that can not be disclosed (Hall & Hauck, 2007), so it is a gift to be grateful.

The theme “hold the test, the milk for the sake of the baby” general explained that breast milk is best for babies and all women should do. Give the best thing for a baby is a strong motivation for most women to choose exclusive breastfeeding. But for many people to give the best for the baby requires new skills in the face of unforeseen challenges.

The results showed although breastfeeding is described as natural, easy and practical for every mother, but in fact the mother requires great effort to remain mempertahankan exclusive breastfeeding. It is also supported by research Burn, et al (2009) which states that breastfeeding is not as easy as one might imagine, in fact, the mother is required to have perseverance, to be able to survive in a difficult situation, and requires great sacrifice.

Put aside personal interests in order to move towards the goal achieved. Prioritize the needs of the children themselves need to fulfill her responsibilities as a mother. Mother willing to lose his time and pleasure for the sake of children.

The theme “knowledge is the key to successful explained about the breast feeding knowledge from the participants. According Fikawati & Shafiq (2009) which states that can be ascertained if the mother does not know about exclusive breastfeeding, mothers may not know the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. Maternal knowledge is the basis for the mother to believe that exclusive breastfeeding is the best option that is a mother for the confidence anaknya.dengan mother needs to survive to continue to provide the best for her baby.

The mother also understands that, as Muslims believe breast-feeding mother is instructed in religion. So the suggestion breastfeeding is defined as an obligation that must be fulfilled like doing other acts of worship.

In the Qur'an Allah surah Al Baqarah verse 233, Allah says which means "*The mother let suckle their children for two full years, that those who want to enhance the breastfeeding* (Al-Baqarah: 233). Lessons clause contained in the book of the Holy Quran, at least emphasizes that breastfeeding is very important. Although there are still differences of opinion about whether or not mandatory breastfeeding, but should for a Muslim to respect the verses of Allah. That verse firmly advocated to enhance breastfeeding period is for 2 years.

According to Shaikh and Ahmed (2006) stated that the Muslims formed by two main sources that drive on the belief that Al-Qur'an and hadith as a guide for the behavior of a Muslim. Likewise with breastfeeding behavior. Mother believed that God give as a breast milk production as a gift for the

baby and the mother has an obligation to God to memmenuhi right baby. So most Muslim women believe that they will be rewarded if it does not fulfill this obligation.

Cultural values of the people of Aceh believe breastfeeding is associated with the nature of the task and the role of a mother. In this case it appears that the values of the culture of breastfeeding is still attached firmly and believed by most people in Aceh positively.

Acehnese people undergo various traditional rituals performed in welcoming the birth of the baby. But there are two rituals are very striking that influence breastfeeding practices of exclusion, namely ritual *peucicap* and *bie ie sira*. *Peucicap* is a ritual that is performed when the baby is 7 days old or some are doing so at the age of infants 40 days all the rituals of getting off the ground. *Peucicap* ritual performed to introduce a wide variety of food to the baby.

Bie ie sira is the provision of water mixed with sugar and salt to the baby's first visit to the house of relatives after the baby off the ground. *Bie ie sira* done as a symbol of welcome and praise the baby first came to the house of relatives.

A culture that believed in an area will affect the behavior of the local community, as well as with the behavior of breastfeeding. It is also stated by the Yzer (2012) based integrative models of behavioral prediction, namely that culture is the background variables that indirectly affect the intention to perform the behavior.

However, the results also showed some mothers still perform traditional rituals such as *peucicap* and *bie ie sira* to respect the rituals that have been undertaken families and the surrounding communities for generations. To keep the exclusivity of breastfeeding mothers do both of these traditional rituals symbolically, it is only by smearing the lips of baby food / liquor. This will make the baby still exclusively breastfed for food and drinks was not until tertelah by infants.

This is done by the mother so as not to be a new conflict between beliefs about exclusive breastfeeding mother with family and community understanding of the rituals associated with *peucicap* and *bie ie sira* understood as a ritual and sacred. Mother knows that knowledge of the family, the local community or indigenous elders not fully understand about exclusive breastfeeding, so that the mother can make a leeway in rituals *peucicap* and *bie ie sira*.

5 CONCLUSIONS

From the results, the four themes that describe the meaning of breastfeeding on the people of Aceh, which became the mother, breastfeeding test stand for the sake of the baby, the key to successful knowledge and cultural practices would not hurt.

Being a mother is a pleasant thing to be thankful for as well as pride. In breastfeeding mothers face many obstacles so that the mother should have a spirit and a high fighting spirit and a complete knowledge to survive for the sake of fulfillment of exclusive breastfeeding in infants. Besides the cultural practices are often an obstacle to maintaining the exclusiveness of breast milk, but the mother is able to face and to modify cultural practices that do not succeed exclusive breastfeeding.

Based on the description above conclusion is expected to families, communities, health workers and the government can provide practical support to mothers in exclusive breastfeeding. Provide positive support and identify things that are needed by the mother in maintaining the success of exclusive breastfeeding.

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