

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

Promoting the exclusive breastfeeding is one crucial policy, which has been implemented globally. Breastfeeding is the most vital way for nursing an infant and the most appropriate duration of breastfeeding is between four up to six months. It is important because breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for infants which is essential for their growth and development. Besides its abundance of important nutrition for infants, breastfeeding has significant benefits in several ways. Examples include physiology and social psychology of the infants. (Boer & Dornton Hill, 1994; Neifert,1983) In light of physiological benefit for infants, the breastfed infant will have a lower incidence of illness than formula-fed infant. It also points out that the formula-fed group has two times higher incidence of many illnesses than the breastfed group in the first year of life. (Cunningham et al, 1991; cited by Feldman, al., 1996) Further, the formula-fed or bottle-fed infants are more likely to get the medical treatment due to the bacteria infection ten folds of the breastfed infants. (Bailey&Deck,1993; cited by Feldman,A.L.,1996)

Not only the benefit to infants, the breastfeeding is also helpful to mother's physiology and social psychology, for instance, promoting uterine involution, accelerating local discharge, decreasing a risk of postpartum hemorrhage and

Osteoporosis, reducing the incidence of breast cancer and ovarian cancer. (Bocar, D.L., 1997) Moreover, the breastfeeding can help prevent the postpartum blues in mothers who breastfeed their infants. In essence, breastfeeding helps develop a special closeness and bond between mothers and infants. It helps mothers feel they have done their utmost completely and increase the self-esteem in their roles, being a mother. (Institute of medicine, 1991)

Currently, there is a significant decrease in breastfeeding both its percentage and its duration. In the late 1960s to beginning of 1970s, rate of breastfeeding in developing countries has been dramatically decreasing, whereas, the formula feeding is significantly increasing. (Cohen et al, 1991) In the United States, it indicated that the rate of infants nursed by breastfeeding for 6-week period was at 32.25 per cent in 1985 but it declined dramatically to 24.32 per cent in 1992. (Janke,1998) Additionally, the finding of the study about breastfeeding in Australia illustrated that the breastfeeding rate in mothers who breastfed before discharging from the hospital was 80 per cent but the breastfeeding rate sharply dropped to 10 per cent when the infant was at 3 months of life. (Nicholson W , Yuen HP,1995)

In addition, according to the survey of Health Department conducted in 1991, it demonstrated the average percentage of exclusive breastfeeding up to 4-month period which collected from the Healthy Children Clinic in Health Promotion Center nationwide was at 4.21 and it considerably decreased to 3.6 per cent in 1995. (MOPH, Assessment of feeding of children, 1995) In 1997, the study of exclusive breastfeeding conducted by Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University incorporated with UNICEF pointed out

that the percentage of exclusive breastfeeding for 4-month period was at 3.6 per cent only. (Health Promotion Office, Health Department, Ministry of Public Health, 1998)

World Health Organization (WHO) recognized the significant decrease in breastfeeding both in developed countries and developing countries. Therefore, the policy/guideline to promote breastfeeding was introduced in 1979. WHO then announced the policy which focusing on protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding worldwide. Moreover, in 1989, WHO also took action to give effect to the principles and aim of all Articles of the International Code on the Marketing of breast milk substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolution in its entirety. The WHO Code stipulates that all countries are forbidden to advertise the formula or low-cost substitutes for human milk on any media, in order, to promote the breastfeeding globally. WHO with UNICEF also defined the guideline in maternity practices in hospitals and midwifery around the world, so called, "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding". (WHO, 1989) This written policy in promoting the exclusive breastfeeding helps communicate with the health personnel in medical and public health sector more effectively to ensure that every health facility providing maternity service fully practices the special role of maternity services. This brought about the radical change in health operating practice in the hospital to encourage and support the breastfeeding comprehensively. (Family Health Section, Health Department, Ministry of Public Health, 1996) Further, the so-called Baby Friendly Initiative Hospital (BFIH) is a global program sponsored by WHO. It was also introduced and implemented in 1991, in order, to develop the ten steps to successful breastfeeding in the hospital. It defined the appropriate duration of the exclusive

breastfeeding with no water, formula, pacifiers or other forms of nutrition to be at least four to six months. (Baby-friendly,1992)

In response to the WHO regulations, the policy in promoting the exclusive breastfeeding was consequently included in the Social and Economic Development Plan Volume 4 (1977-1981) in Thailand. Additionally, in Public Health Development Plan Vol. 5 (1982-1986), the principle of basic public health had been inclusively applied to promote breastfeeding, based on the participation of populations to take care their own health. It also developed the modeling concept and reinforcement concept to change the mother behavior in nursing the infants. In 1991, Health Department implemented the exclusive breastfeeding for 3-month period project to promote the breastfeeding extensively. Although it was supported by Ministry of Public Health, the project did not achieve the Ministry's objective. This breastfeeding practice was not successful and still not implemented nationwide.

From the study of factors associated with breastfeeding, there were several factors and obstacles, which mothers encountered in breastfeeding, for instance, lack of support from other family member in nursing the infants. Returning to work was another important factor, which caused them to unable to continuously breastfeed their infants for a longer period. The different experience in nursing with breastfeeding in new mother and multi-parity mother can be also a factor in breastfeeding duration. (Ladawan Prateepchaikool, 1989) These problems can result in the mothers not being ready and unable to give breastfeeding continuously.

Nayong hospital is located in Nayong district, Trang province. It is a 60-bed community hospital. The hospital had also implemented the project to promote the exclusive breastfeeding in the postpartum mother in accordance with the WHO guideline, which defined by Ministry of Public Health in October 1993 onwards. According to the hospital annual report in 2002, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for at least 4-month period in Nayong district was significantly low (4.2 per cent) (Hospital Annual Report, 2002). This implies that the current promotions in breastfeeding project can not boost the rate of breastfeeding in postpartum mother to achieve the defined target. Hence, it needs the additional crucial strategy and technique in educating and promoting the breastfeeding for the postpartum mothers. From the compilation and review of various learning methods, the participatory learning method is the most appropriate learning process, which needs the participation of mothers and family supporter in promoting the breastfeeding efficiently. As a result, the researcher proposes to use the participatory learning program with the postpartum mothers and their family supporters. This will help them learn and realize the benefit and advantage of breastfeeding and subsequently gain more participation in breastfeeding from the mothers and their family supporters.

Moreover, the finding of the study will be applied to solve the encountered problem and obstacles relating to breastfeeding and promote breastfeeding amongst the postpartum mother on a continuous basis, in accordance with the policy of MOPH. The results of the study can be the guideline in providing support or assistance to the postpartum mother to have the appropriate knowledge in breastfeeding which ultimately gives a sustainable rise in the breastfeeding rate. In short, exclusive

breastfeeding is proven to be the most powerful and feasible infant nursing, which resulting in the good quality of life of mothers and infants ultimately.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 General Objectives

1. To increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for at least 4-month period in the postpartum mothers in Nayong district, Trang province.
2. To initiate the high participation in family to promote the exclusive breastfeeding.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To increase the knowledge, realization of worth and benefit of breastfeeding amongst the mothers, supporters in Nayong district, Trang province.
2. To gain the mutual support in breastfeeding from the family supporters.