CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
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Growth and development of human babies can very well be distinguished from that of the young of animals in that they require special care, attention, love, food and energy. The process of weaning which is the period when the diet gradually changes from complete breast feeding to when the child is able to eat normal family food, has assumed a greater significance in view of the fact that it fulfills most of the requirements otherwise are necessary. The process of weaning thus governs the initiation of growth and development in its most idealistic pattern. Although the aspect of weaning appears to be of close concern with health workers and those concern with mother and child care. However, it has taken an entry in the area of home-science and attracted the attention of home-makers, home-scientists and researchers in view of its importance.

As a matter of fact, quite a large number of studies on the topic of weaning have been carried out and wide range of publications have been brought out in the field of medical sciences; however, there appears to be a scarcity of well planned studies with integrated approach covering various aspects in the field of home-science in particular. After careful consideration and in the light of above, study was planned with following specific objectives.
1. To study personal, social, economic and situational characteristics of the respondents under the study.

2. To quantify level of knowledge and adoption of recommended weaning practices by the mother respondents.

3. To assess the Nutritional status and Health status of the infants under study.

4. To highlight some of the selected relevant aspects of weaning process.

5. To enlist the constraints encountered by the mother respondents in the adoption of recommended weaning practices.

6. To invite suggestions from the respondents for effective adoption of weaning practices by the respondents.

7. To establish relationship between selected characteristics of respondents and knowledge and adoption of recommended weaning practices by the respondents.

8. To establish relationship if any between Nutritional status, Health status and selected variables of infants and mother respondents.

9. To test the difference between the knowledge and adoption score of rural and urban mothers.
Results emerged out of the present investigation were based on data collected from 600 mother respondents intentionally divided into two groups on the basis of their native background as rural and urban 300 each, respectively selected from 20 villages from two blocks of Akola district in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The selection of district, blocks and even for that matter villages were based on purposive sampling considering suitability and convenience for collection of quality and reliable data through the establishment of rapport. For the selection of mother respondents, however, author resorted to the method of random sampling naturally for providing scope for representative sample. Data were personally collected through interview with the help of appropriately developed and pretested schedule by visiting the villages and wards in Akola district and city respectively.

Aspects of weaning for the purpose of scope and jurisdiction encompasses many more issues, however, principal focus of an enquiry in the present investigation was centered around following few aspects only because of limitations of gender and resources placed at the disposal of author besides availability of time.
1. Knowledge about recommended weaning practices on the part of rural and urban mothers.

2. Adoption of recommended weaning practices by the mothers from both the categories.

3. Important and relevant aspects of weaning process.

4. Constraints encountered by the mothers in the adoption of recommended weaning practices.

5. Relationship between knowledge and adoption and selected characteristics of mother respondents from both the categories.

6. Nutritional status and Health status of infants under re-study in the context of knowledge and adoption of weaning practices.

7. Variability in terms of difference between rural and urban mothers as regards the knowledge possessed and adoption of recommended weaning practices realized.

The study was conducted within the framework of scientific methodological steps and findings emerged, have been briefly summarized below drawing appropriate conclusions on the strength of the same.

1. In an attempt to understand personal, social, economical and situational characteristics of the respondents under the study it was revealed -
i. The majority of the mother respondents from rural area were in the age category of up to 25 years, whereas the urban mother respondents were in the age range of 26 to 30 years.

ii. While majority of the rural mothers received formal education up to primary standard and with formal education, urban mother respondents, received education up to college and beyond.

iii. Majority of the mother respondents from both the categories reported to have preferred to designate themselves as housewives. Some of the other professions reported for livelihood however, were labourship prominently for rural mothers and service, business prominently for urban mothers.

iv. According to rural mother respondents majority of them were in the income group of Rs 10,000 to 20,000, urban mother respondents however, according to them majority had an income of more than Rs 40,000/-.

v. Rural mother respondents in general had joint type of family with more than six members in their families. Urban mother respondents on the other hand were
enjoying the status of individual family with 4 to 6 members in their families.

vi. Mother respondents from both the categories when assessed for their value orientation with the help of scale developed for the purpose, it was observed that majority of them were placed in the medium category.

vii. Picture, however, for socio-economic status of respondents from both the categories was slightly different as was anticipated. Majority of the rural mother respondents are in the medium category of socio-economic status whereas mother respondents with urban native were in the high category of socio-economic status.

viii. Poor and good housing conditions were reported by the majority of the rural and urban mother respondents respectively.

ix. Unlike urban mother respondents, rural mother respondents had to report inadequacy of medical facilities to make use of in their area.

x. Radio, neighbour, relatives and friends were some of the important sources of information, the rural mother
respondents made use for seeking information about recommended weaning practices. Situation in urban area, however, was encouraging as compared to that of rural area and some of the prominent sources of information, the urban mother respondents resorted to were T.V., radio, different types of literature besides medical functionaries.

2. In an effort to understand some of the important constraints encountered by mother respondents from rural area, it was observed that their poor economic condition, lack of scientific knowledge about weaning, non-availability of time for preparation of food in view of labourship, and engagement in activities of agriculture, etc., influence of traditions and customs and non-acceptability of food by infants were some of the constraints to report. Mother respondents from urban area, however, had no much more constraints to report excepting that they also lack scientific knowledge about the weaning process and they also lack time for preparation of food as preparation of special home-made weaning foods take lot of time for preparation.
3. Considering the utility and importance of weaning process, enhancing its effectiveness assumes priority for consideration and, therefore, respondents from both the categories were specifically requested to offer suggestions. Some of the noteworthy suggestions offered were, implementation of educational programmes through extension functionaries and need for passing on relevant instructions through doctors particularly in rural areas. It was interesting to note that topic of weaning was proposed for its incorporation in the curriculum of school and university education, in view of its importance utility and necessity.

Introduction of educational programmes based on the aspects of weaning through social organisations was also suggested.

Advertisements through different media have assumed significant importance for passing on message to the public and therefore, it was suggested by the respondents to encourage passing on information about weaning through advertisements on T.V., radio or in the form of literature.
4. Of the late, importance of weaning process has been realised particularly in the growth and development of child for ultimate personality development. In the present study, therefore, some important and relevant aspects were touched for probing into for useful information and it was thought it would not be out of place to make a mention of the same here.

i. As regards the ceremonies performed present study clearly brought out that feeding of child at the hands of maternal uncle, feeding infant in silver plate, sweet dish feeding in the presence of friends and relatives were some of the ways and means to celebrate ceremonies to start the process of weaning. Observance of these formalities with the anticipation that this would enable provision of good fortune for initiation of growth and development of child.

ii. As regards first feed as weaning food other than milk in rural and urban area mostly preferred, present study clearly brought out that dal water, egg, cerelac, farex, biscuits, chapatti, rice water and khichdi were some of the reported items of first feed other than milk in order of priority with slight variation in
urban area. Cost of preparation, acceptability, palatability and nutritive value, however, had some of the points of consideration for preparation.

iii. Supplementary milk, fruit juice, dal water, vegetable soup, rice water and ghutti were different types of weaning foods under the category of liquid foods reported by rural and urban mothers. Home-made mixes, rice kheer, dalia, egg, and rice flakes were some of the semi-solids of weaning foods reported to have used by the urban mothers. Rice-dal, bread khichadi, biscuits, chappati, different types of sweets and ponga were some of the types of weaning foods from the category of solid reported by the mother respondents from both the categories.

Regarding types of weaning foods naturally had an influence of factors such as cost of preparation, ease and convenience in preparation, palatability on the part of infants, ease and availability and nutritive value as well, was noteworthy trend in rural area was observed and sudden change from mothers milk to solid was noticed in rural area and change from liquid to solid in urban area was comparatively gradual liquid to semi-solid, semi-solid to solid.
iv. As far as weaning techniques adopted by the mother respondents in general, study disclose that keeping infant off the breast by discouragement, gradual separation and separation of infant and mother were some of the weaning techniques reported to have adopted by the mother respondents in the present study.

v. Insufficient breast milk, employment of mother, possession of appropriate knowledge disease problems with mothers were some of the reasons from mother side. Reasons for weaning from infants side however, were infant’s age, doctor’s advice, proper growth of infant and infant’s demand.

vi. Process of weaning has its own effects to leave behind. Present study, however, brought some of the important effects of the process of weaning in light and they were according to respondents, activeness on the part of infant, development of palatability for acceptance for different types of weaning foods and increase in the body weight. Although these were some of the desirable effects of weaning, author also could came across with undesirable effect of weaning also and that was providing considerable scope for consuming different types of contaminated food items.
5. Mother respondents from both the categories were examined tested for their knowledge about the weaning process. Knowledge score was worked out with the help of scale developed for the purpose and respondents were classified into three categories on the basis of knowledge score which was converted into an index and frequency distribution revealed that majority of the mother respondents from rural area were in the poor knowledge category followed by those who were in the partial knowledge category. Very few of them however, were in the complete knowledge category of knowledge category. The number of respondents from urban area in the category of complete knowledge partial knowledge and poor knowledge worked out to be 172, 82 and 46 respectively. It can, therefore, be concluded that mother respondents from urban area did possess comparatively better knowledge about the process of weaning as compared to that of mother respondents from rural area.

6. Mother respondents from rural area did differ on their adoption index score from that of mother respondents from urban area. Majority (119) of the mother respondents from the rural area were in the partial adoption category followed by those who were in the
category of poor adoption. Only 17.00 percent of the respondents from rural area had place to occupy in the category of complete adoption. Corresponding figure for the mother respondents from urban area however, worked out to be 26.115 and 157 respectively, majority of them enjoying the privilege of being designated themselves as complete adopters of recommended weaning practices.

7. Similarly an attempt was also made to visualise the relationship between knowledge about weaning practices and selected variables. It was noticed that there exist relationship between education, income and socio-economic status and adoption of weaning practices by the rural mothers and their knowledge index score, and only education of urban mothers and their knowledge about weaning practices.

8. In an effort to establish relationship between adoption of weaning practices score and selected variables and knowledge about weaning practices of mother respondents from both the categories. Relationship, however, between education, income, socio-economic status and knowledge of weaning practices of rural mothers was noticed with their adoption of weaning practices.
9. As far as the frequency distribution of infants according to their nutritional status was concerned it was revealed that majority of the infants both from rural and urban area were in normal category of nutritional status with score range of 21 to 30. The number of respondents from rural and urban area belonging to the category of below normal and satisfactory, however, worked out to be 131, 26, 43 and 60 respectively.

10. Majority of the infant respondents from rural area were in the medium health status category. The corresponding number for infant respondents from urban area for medium category worked out to be 93. Majority of the infant respondents from urban area, however, were in high health status score category.

11. In an exercise to ascertain existence of relationship between nutritional status score and selected variables, it was noticed that the nutritional status score was positively and significantly related with knowledge about weaning practices, adoption of weaning practices and income of mothers, both from rural and urban area.
12. It was hypothetically assumed that mother respondents from rural area might differ in their knowledge about recommended weaning practices and so also their adoption of recommended weaning practices. In the course of the study of difference between two types of respondents, it was observed that on the basis of computed ‘t’ value respondents differed both on their knowledge score and adoption score. This could be taken to mean that mother respondents from urban area are superior in respect of their knowledge about the recommended weaning practices and adoption of recommended weaning practices as well.

On the strength of findings emerged it could therefore, be concluded that urban mother respondents possess more knowledge about recommended weaning practices, adopt recommended weaning practices to greater extent as compared to that of mother respondents from rural area. Similarly infant respondents from urban area are superior in respect of their nutritional and health status.

Education, income and socio-economic status are the principal determinants and therefore, are closely related with knowledge and adoption about weaning practices.