

Breast Feeding Practices Among The Sugali Community : A Study In A Tribal Population of Ananthapuramu District, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The practice of breast feeding is almost universal. In the present study an attempt was made to understand various aspects of feeding practices among the Sugali tribe of Ananthapuramu district, Andhra Pradesh state.

Objective

To assess the various aspects of feeding practices among Sugali tribe community.

Materials and Methods

A descriptive study was conducted among 125 mothers of pre school children were interviewed using a pre-designed structured questionnaire. A purpose sampling technique was used for selection fo sample.

Results

Nearly 76 percent mothers said they breast fed their child immediately after birth. While 20 percent of mothers repeated they initiate breast feeding up as the 2nd day and 4 percent on 3rd day of the birth of the child.

Conclusion

The study identified programmes and interventions to improve breast feeding. Misconceptions on breast feeding need to be changed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to census 2011, the tribal population of India is 10.43 crores, constituting 8.6 % of the total population. Their socio cultural, economic and educational background differ from the urban and rural communities and between the states. Factors such as ignorance, illiteracy, lack of accessibility and inadequate utilization of health services contribute to poor health status of tribes. A major burnt of these factors observed among the mothers and children in terms of morbidity and mortality.

Mother's milk is the nature's gift to the baby. Breast milk is the ideal food for all infants and provides adequate nutritional requirements upto the age of five months. Breast feeding lay the foundation for their healthy psycho-social development, besides providing perfect nutrition. The health and nutritional status of millions of infants influence their subsequent growth and development throughout childhood is determined by the patterns of feeding during the infancy.

Each tribe has its own exclusive practices in child rearing. These practices are deeply rooted in the day to day life of tribes and more difficult to change. The beliefs and practices related to breast feeding during the newborn period (birth to 28 days of life) have a critical impact on the survival of infants, exclusive breast feeding for the first six months after birth si a global public health recommendation not only to achieve optimal growth and development of infants but also save them from diarrhoea, pneumonia and allergies. Globally, 35 % of infants are exclusively breastfed during the first six months of life. Improper infants feeding practices not only results in under nutrition but also leads to impaired cognitive development, poor school performance and reduced productivity influence.

II. METHODOLOGY

The sample for study comprises of 125 mothers in the age group of 17 – 35 years, belonging to areas of Ananthapur district namely Kadiri, Madakasira, Kalyandurg, Gooty Mandals of Andhra Pradesh. Mothers of children (0 – 60 months) interviewed using a pre-designed structured questionnaire. Interview schedule comprised of socio-economic background of the family of the child i.e., care during pregnancy and delivery, care of nursing mother, feeding and wearing practices, personal cleanliness, health care facility, play, sleep and rest, toilet training and socialization etc.

For the present study, information regarding initiation of breast feeding, duration of breast feeding, pre-located feed and age of supplementation were recorded. The questions asked during field work were : (a) when does baby lactated for the first time ; (b) How long breast feeding was done ; (c) Does any prelacted food given and (d) when was the supplementary/ weaning food introduced to infants etc.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Details of initiation of breast feeding are shown in Tale – 1. Nearly 76 percent mothers said they breast fed their child immediately after birth. It was seen that majority of mothers fed colostrums, while 20 percent of the mothers reported that they initiate breastfeeding on the 2nd day and 4 percent on 3rd day of the birth of the child. The reason for not feeding colostrum in rest of the mothers (24 percent) was traditional belief as they considered it thick, cheesy, indigestible, unhygienic and not good for the baby.

Table – 1 : Initiation of breast feeding

| S. No | Initiation of breast feeding | No of respondents | Percentage |
|-------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | Immediately after birth | 95 | 76.0 |
| 2. | Second day of birth | 25 | 20.0 |
| 3. | Third day of birth | 05 | 4.0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

Dash and Chowdary (2005) reported about breast feeding practices among sentals and non-sentals of Odisha. The results showed that almost 37.78 percent of santal babies and 48 percent of non sental babies were first put to breast feeding with in 6 hours after birth. Majority of the senatal mothers (53.13 %) did not give colostrums where as 66 percent of non sental mothers fed with colostrums.

This shows that doctors re creating awareness among mothers regarding infant feeding practices. Still there is a need of intensive breast feeding education to mothers for removing various myths regarding breast feeding.

Table – 2 shows the duration of breast feeding. About 76 percent of the mothers breast fed their children upto one year and above, while 20.08 % of mothers fed their children upto 9 months and 3.02 percent of them breast fed upto 2 years. It appears that tribal children in the studied population on enjoy the precious gift of nature for a long period.

Table – 2 : Duration of breast feeding

| S. No | Duration of breast feeding | No of respondents | Percentage |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | 9 months | 26 | 21.0 |
| 2. | 1 year and above | 95 | 76.0 |
| 3. | 2 years | 04 | 3.0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

The practice of giving the infants some special type of feeds before initiating breastmilk is vide spread in tribal areas. Practically colostrums alone is sufficient to maintain the nutritional demand of the newborns during prelacted stage of the mothers without any type of prelacted feeds (Talukdar et al., 1992). On the other hand introduction of prelacted feed often resulted in “insufficient milk syndrome” and leads the newborn to the risk infection especially diarrhoeal diseases (Akhter, 1992). It was the reflection of their ignorance about the nutritional value of colostrums at the one hand and ill effect of pre-lacted foods on the other.

Table 3 shows the introduction of pre-lacted feed. Supar water (29 %) was on the top of the list of the pre-lacted foods followed by milk mixed with jaggery (9 %), Honey (6 %), Hot water mixed with supar and jaggery (3 %), milk mixed with supar (3 %). While 60 % of the mothers did not use prelacted foods. Many women reported that, these prelacted feeds were given as cleaning agents. These prelacted feeds interfere with the suckling stimulation and prolactin production, but also often these feeds are the source of infection to the newborns.

Table – 3 : Introduction of Pre-lacted feed

| S. No | Initiation of breast feeding | No of respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | NO | 75 | 60.0 |
| 2. | Supar water | 29 | 23.2 |
| 3. | Milk mixed with jaggery | 09 | 7.2 |
| 4. | Hot water mixed with supar or jaggery | 03 | 2.4 |
| 5. | Honey | 06 | 4.8 |
| 6. | Milk mixed with supar | 03 | 2.4 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

The right time of introducing semi-solid or solid food to the baby's diet, supplementing right type of food in right amount and the frequency of feeding, that is, number of times children are fed in a day are most crucial factors to be considered for appropriate infants and child feeding practices.

Table – 4 shows the feeding practices associated with supplementary feeding of the child. The growing child requires supplementary feeding besides breast feeding. The initiation of supplementary feeding at a appropriate timing is important, which is generally recommended as 4 – 6 months age of the child. In the present study, nearly 48 percent are initiating supplementary feeding during 6th to 9th month, followed by those giving in 4th to 6th month (26.4 %), 12th month (1.2 %). In 9th to 12th month and after 12th month the percentage (7.2 %) of feeding supplementary food is found to be same.

Table – 4 : Age of Starting Supplementary food

| S. No | Initiation of breast feeding | No of respondents | Percentage |
|-------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | 4 – months | 33 | 26.4 |
| 2. | 6 – 9 month | 60 | 48.0 |
| 3. | 9 – 12 month | 09 | 7.2 |
| 4. | 12 th month | 14 | 11.2 |
| 5. | After 12 th month | 09 | 7.2 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

IV. CONCLUSION

It was found that although people have become aware of the importance of breast feeding but still there is great need for intensive nutrition education programmes and interventions to improve breast feeding duration and increasing familiarity of family relations an exclusive breast feeding by increased access to information on breast feeding and reproductive health of women in general.

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