

# Feeding practices and nutritional status of children of sub-centre Kotamoni, Assam

K. GEETA, N. SEEMA AND D. KAPUR

An observational cross sectional study was carried out on 200 mother-child (6 months to 2 years) pair among the rural women of Kotamani, Assam. The study aimed to find out breast feeding and complimentary feeding practices and to determine the effect of nutrition education on mother's knowledge regarding the infant and child feeding practices. Questionnaire cum interview schedule was used to collect data for sociodemographic characteristics and feeding practices. Weight and length/height were measured with standard technique. A pre prepared educational material was used to impart nutrition education. Knowledge assessment questionnaire were developed to determine the effect. Nutritional status of the children was assessed with different indicators using WHO standard (2006). Results revealed that only 30 per cent of the subjects started breast feeding within 1 to 4 hours. Exclusive breast feeding for 6 months were followed only by 24 per cent of the subjects. Use of pre lacteal feed was common (95%). Only 26 per cent of the subjects continued breast feeding after one year. Mothers/care takers scored very low for infant and children feeding practices ( $4.96 \pm 14.86$ ). Results revealed that 59 per cent of the children were under weight (weight for age), 59 per cent wasted (weight for length) and most of the children (95%) were stunted. Nutrition education significantly improved mother's knowledge ( $4.96 \pm 14.86$  to  $17.50 \pm 27.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Nutritional status also improved significantly, weight for age (41% to 74%) and height for age (5% to 35%). Severely malnourished (weight for age) decreased from 18 per cent to 4 per cent and severely stunting from 76 to 27 per cent. The results provided strong evidence for the positive effects of nutrition education.

**Key Words :** Infant, Feeding practices, Nutritional status, Nutrition education

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