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A study of feeding practices of infants in Parbhani district

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ABSTRACT

The study of infant feeding practices was conducted to find out the current feeding practices of infants in rural areas of Parbhani. The effect of socio-economic status of the family and educational status of mothers on feeding practices was observed. The survey of 130 women having the infants of 3-18 months were randomly selected and personally interviewed. It was evident from the results that 46.9 per cent rural mothers were giving the pre-lacteal foods to infants. Foods other than milk, like biscuits, rice with milk, rice with dal, forex, cerelax, chapatti, bread were given to 51.53% infants after six months of age. It was observed that 70.42% of low income group mothers breastfed their infants upto age of 18 months and 82.53% illiterate mothers breastfed their infants up to age of 18 months that means there was direct effect on socio-economic status of the family and educational status of mothers on infant feeding practices.

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Key words : Infant feeding practices, Educational level, Socio-economic status

INTRODUCTION

The word infancy comes from latin language means infans. Infancy period extends from birth to 24 months. Breast feeding is best for infants. Breast milk is the natural food for the infant. The infant should be put to breast within half an hour after normal delivery and within four hours after caesarian sections. Pre-lacteal foods like honey, distilled water or glucose should not be given. These foods will satisfy the thirst and will reduce vigour to suck and may lead to diarrhoea and helmitic infestation. Breast feeding can be initiated even when the mother is sedated or on IV fluids. Sucking reflex is most active at birth. Colostrum is the first immunization to the infant. It contains an interferon like substance which possesses strong antiviral activity (Shrilakshmi, 2002).

Infants thrive on breast milk alone up to six months of life and their growth rate during this period is satisfactory. Breast milk alone is not able to provide sufficient amounts of all the nutrients needed to maintain the growth after first six months.

Weaning means, infants switching over from breast milk to semi liquid/ semisolid foods. The time at which weaning should begin is determined by the lactation

performance of mother and the rate of growth and maturation of the infants. As the child grows older a progressively greater proportion of the energy and nutrient needs to be met by weaning foods rather than breast milk.

The present study was conducted with the objectives as to find out the current feeding practices of infants in Parbhani district and to find out the effect of socio-economic status and educational level of mothers on the infant feeding practices.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

130 women having the infants of age 3-18 months were randomly selected from the village Brahmangaon of Parbhani District. They were personally interviewed about the general information of the family, socio-economic status, educational level of mothers and infant feeding practices. The collected data were analysed and results are presented in different tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Practice of giving pre-lacteal foods is presented in Table 1. Still the centuries old custom of giving pre-lacteal