

Breast Feeding Practices Among Santals and Non- Santals of Orissa

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ABSTRACT The practice of breast feeding is almost universal. In the present investigation an attempt has been made to study the breast feeding practices among Santals and non-Santals of Mayurbhanj district of Orissa. 90 Santal mothers and 100 non-Santal (general castes) mothers were interviewed personally on breast feeding practices. Almost 37.78% of Santal babies and 48% of non-Santal babies were first put to breast within 6 hours after birth. And they were first put to breast (67.78% of Santal and 55% of non-Santal babies) as the first feeding. They were also seen putting plain water, sweetened water and other liquids using spoon, katori and spoon etc. as the methods of feeding. Feeding was mostly by demand whenever the baby cried. Majority of Santal mothers (53.13%) did not give colostrum whereas 66% of non-Santal mothers fed with colostrum. The number of feeding required per day is more at the initial stage of the child, decreased throughout the first year. Non-Santal mothers exhibit better feeding practices than the Santal. This may be due to social customs and beliefs. There should be proper encouragement to the Santals to breast feed the baby. Mothers should not consider an alternative and authority should see that breast feeding practice is not eroded any way by socio-cultural development.