

The Porja: A Study on Pediatric Practices

S. Narahari*, M. Narasinga Rao, S. Bhaskara Babu and A. Aparna

*Department of Anthropology, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam 530 003,
Andhra Pradesh, India*

*Fax: 0891-2844232, *E-mail: narahari_samudrala@yahoo.co.in

KEYWORDS Pediatric Health. Breast-feeding. Primitive Tribe. Andhra Pradesh

ABSTRACT Pediatric Health in terms of Feeding Practices were recorded on 260 ever married women, who have at least a child in their reproductive span, belonging to the Porja, a Primitive Tribal Group of Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh. The sample hails from 18 villages of Munchangiputtu and Pedabayalu Mandals. The results show that almost all the mothers started breast feeding to their new born immediately. About 71 percent of the respondents squeezed out the 'colostrum' (milk) ere to start the feeding the baby, thereby depriving of their babies from 'colostrum', a thick yellow liquid rich in factors that provide natural immunity. This may be due to illiteracy and lack of awareness about the nutritive and immunity value of the colostrum.. The duration of lactation was noticed mostly for 2 years (42 percent) followed by 3 years (38 percent) and 4 years (17 percent). Very few mothers (3 percent) lactate their babies below the age of 1 year due to conditions of ill health. The practice of supplementary feeding starts from 6 months onwards which is greater during 8-12 months (60 percent). The predominant type of supplementary feeding is 'Ambali' a liquid form of rice or chodi (87 percent) and a few of them are fed with rice in mashed solid form. The results are discussed in the light of available information on other local tribes besides focusing the relevance of illiteracy, status of awareness etc., on Pediatric health care practices.