

Feeding Practices of Preschool Children in Western Orissa III. Weaning and Supplementary Feeding

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ABSTRACT A detailed study on the feeding practices of infant and preschoolers revealed that the period of exclusive breast-feeding was followed by introduction of liquid supplement except in seventeen percent of industrial, twenty-seven percent of urban and eighty percent of rural children where supplementation was done by semisolids directly. A fair number of industrial (67%) and urban (60.5%) mothers introduced artificial milk within first three months. The number of artificial milk-feed was maximum upto 3 within 24 hours during breast-feeding among forty-seven percent of urban and industrial children. The most common practice was to dilute the milk with equal volume of water. About seventy-seven percent of industrial mothers and sixty percent of urban mothers introduced semisolids within 6 months of age whereas it was 46.5 percent in rural mothers. The common semisolids in industrial and urban areas were commercial sealed food whereas in rural area cereal preparation, semolina, porridge and sago were the preferred semisolids. Majority of the families performed a religious function at the time of introduction of semi-solid/solid food. Chi-square test indicates a significant association of maternal education, income level and caste with the age of introduction of semisolids in industrial and urban communities whereas in rural community the associations were significant with caste only. Similar significant association of duration of exclusive and total breast-feeding with the age of introduction of semisolids was obtained in industrial and urban communities whereas the association was not significant in rural communities. Age of introduction of solid food was most common between 6-12 months. However, only fourteen percent industrial and five percent urban mothers delayed solid food beyond 12 months of age of the child.