

# KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE ON CHILD REARING PRACTICES AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN WEST GODAVARI DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

**Dr. M. Padmaja**

*Lecturer in Home Science, St. Theresa's College for Women, Eluru- 534003*

## **Abstract:**

India is a nation with more than 375 million children and about 36 percent of the population is living below the poverty line, with women and children accounting for 73 percent. Child rearing refers to bringing-up of children by parents or parent substitutes. It is probably the most challenging responsibility for a mother during her child's infancy. Successful child rearing is essential for the child's overall development and realization of self-esteem. Socio-economic conditions as well as cultural beliefs play a large part in the child rearing practices in India. A cross-sectional study was conducted with a view of assessing the nutritional status and the level of knowledge about child rearing practices followed in rural areas of West Godavari District. It was found that women and children were suffering from one or more forms of malnutrition including low birth weight, wasting, stunting, underweight, Vitamin-A deficiencies, iodine deficiency disorders and anaemia. It was observed that only 13.5% of the mothers initiated early breast feeding and exclusive breastfeeding under six months was given by 37.5%. Initiation of breastfeeding is generally quite late and colostrums are discarded. Only 35% of the children have received complete immunization as per the National Immunization Schedule. The reasons expressed by the mothers for non-immunization of the children were going to a native village (46.8%), problems in the family (19.6%), immunization centre was located too far from their home (14.7%) and the child was not well when the vaccination was due (5%). About 18.9 per cent of mothers could not give any reason for not immunizing the child.

Mother is an important primary care provider and, therefore, she should be able to take care of her baby and to develop a positive attitude towards infant rearing practices. The child rearing practice is an important task for the parents to help the infants to become emotionally and socially healthy. The major responsibility of parents is to provide good care for their children so that they can develop into responsible adults. The study states that inadequate infant rearing practices are prevailing in our society so an important role can be played by health care delivery system to help the mothers to up bring their children as a normal person by adopting good child rearing practices.

**Key words:** *Child rearing practices, deficiency, breast feeding, immunization*

India is composed of a diverse population with assorted religious, political and cultural views on child-rearing practices. With so many differences among Indians, it is impossible to ascribe a unified set of customs and beliefs about child-rearing to the entire country. Influential factors on child-rearing practices such as socioeconomic status, education and individual experience vary from family to family. When a child is born, her first connection to the world is established through her mother, or in a broader sense, her parents. An infant sees the world through her parent's eyes; she tries to imbibe everything she recognises in her parents. Thus, a parent-child relationship lays the foundation of the 'building of her life'. More than from anyone else children learn values from their parents, and they learn best by copying their parents' actions. Successful child rearing requires the active and continuing physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual presence of parents in the lives of their children. Those parents who spend the most time in childrearing, other things equal, will have the best child outcomes.

Child rearing practices vary from culture to culture. Although culture is the key ingredient, the economic situation and standard of living also have an impact on parenting. India is a land of diverse traditions, all rooted in the same value system. Proper nutrition of children leading to adequate growth, childcare and good health is the essential foundation of human important to explore the role of infant feeding practices in development. Despite global efforts for improving the etiology of malnutrition in India, as growth maternal and child health and specific efforts like retardation is very high among under five children . The present study was conducted in tribal areas of West Godavari district to study levels of knowledge and attitude on child rearing practices and prevalence of malnutrition among children under five years of age.

The prevalence of undernourished children was low in families where mother had higher levels of education. It was observed that 38 % of the children were undernourished who were not breast fed properly. Infant feeding practices were analyzed for the risk on under nutrition. Initiation of breastfeeding after six hours of birth, deprivation from colostrum and improper complementary feeding were found significant risk factors of underweight. at various levels of significance shown in the table. Proportions of underweight and stunting reached peak levels during 13-24 months of age and then it decreased gradually with increasing age.

Initiation of breastfeeding within six hours was observed among 13.5% and proper complementary feeding was found in only 29% of them. Exclusive breastfeeding practice was not so common in the study area. Only 21 % mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour, 48% mothers practiced complementary feeding during 6-9 months and exclusive breastfeeding (0-6 months) was given by 37.5% of the mothers. It was also observed that 44% of the mothers discarded colostrum as they felt that it was stored milk and should not be given to child. Delayed initiation of breastfeeding, deprivation from colostrum, and improper complementary feeding came out to be significant risk factors of underweight. Infant-feeding practices could not influence nutritional status as assessed by weight-for-height index but can have some long-term beneficial effects in improving the nutritional status of children. In case of low incidence of wasting in a community, underweight and stunting both reflect the long-term health and nutritional experience of the population. ICDS benefits received by the children helped to improve significantly their nutritional status.

Only 35% of the children have received complete immunization as per the National Immunization Schedule. The reasons expressed by the mothers for non-immunization of the children were going to a native village (46.8%), problems in the family (19.6%), immunization centre was located too far from their home (14.7%) and the child was not well when the vaccination was due (5%). About 18.9 per cent of mothers could not give any reason for not immunizing the child.

There is a significant relationship between improvement in nutritional status of under five children and adoption of proper infant-feeding practices by their mothers. Delayed initiation of breast feeding, deprivation from colostrum and improper complementary feeding come out to be significant risk factors for undernutrition among under five children. Adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers and also elderly women should be educated for promotion and protection of optimal infant-feeding practices for improving nutritional status of children.

Mother is an important primary care provider and, therefore, she should be able to take care of her baby and to develop a positive attitude towards infant rearing practices. The child rearing practice is an important task for the parents to help the infants to become emotionally and socially healthy. The major responsibility of parents is to provide good care for their children so that they can develop into responsible adults. The study states that inadequate infant rearing practices are prevailing in our society so an important role can be played by health care delivery system to help the mothers to up bring their children as a normal person by adopting good child rearing practices.

## References

1. Jane B. Brooks (28 September 2012). *The Process of Parenting: Ninth Edition*. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 978-0-07-746918-4. For the legal definition of parenting and parenthood see: Haim Abraham, *A Family Is What You Make It? Legal Recognition and Regulation of Multiple Parents* (2017)
2. Baumrind, D. (1967). Child care practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behavior. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 75, 43–88.
3. Rubin, M.; Kelly, B M. (2015). "A cross-sectional investigation of parenting style and friendship as mediators of the relation between social class and mental health in a university community". *International Journal for Equity in Health*. **14** (87): 1–11. doi:10.1186/s12939-015-0227-2. PMC 4595251. PMID 26438013.
4. Bronfenbrenner, Urie (1985-11-30). "Ecology of the Family as a Context for Human Development: Research Perspectives". *Developmental Psychology*. **22** (6): 723–42.
5. Sanders, Matthew R. (2008). "Triple P-Positive Parenting Program as a public health approach to strengthening parenting" (PDF). *Journal of Family Psychology*. **22** (4): 506–17.
6. Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press
7. Bolin, Inge (2006). *Growing Up in a Culture of Respect: Child Rearing in Highland Peru*. University of Texas Press. pp. 63–67. ISBN 978-0-292-71298-0.

