

Infant Feeding Practices Among the Mothers of Selected Different Socio-economic Groups in Dhaka City

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to understand the infant (0-12 month) feeding practices among different classes' mothers in Dhaka city. The study was carried out among the 183 mother-infant pair of the upper, middle and lower socio-economic classes in Dhaka city and purposive sampling method was applied. The study was conducted at following areas in Dhaka city which were selected purposively. The mean age of upper class, middle class and lower class were 35 ± 4 , 25 ± 3 and 21 ± 7 in years. Regarding first feeding it was observed that upper (75%), middle (85%) and lower class (48%) first gave colostrum. It also observed that 18% of upper class mother first gave powder milk, while in case of middle class it was 5%. In lower class preference of giving honey and sugar water were 21% and 12% respectively. The starting time of breast feeding indicated that in upper classes (74%) breast feeding initiated within one hour, while in middle (75%) and lower classes (84%) it was given within 12 hours. It was highlighted that 44% upper and 36% lower class mothers started complementary feeding at 3 month of the baby respectively, while in middle class 61% mother started complementary foods at 5 month of their baby. In case of duration of breast feeding practices, middle and lower classes breast-feed continued longer time than upper class. Majorities of the upper class preferred egg, soup, fruit juice while middle class liked meat-fish, egg, khichuri, fruits. On complementary feeding the lower class choiced mainly rice-potato, dal, khichuri or vegetables. The study result should not be generalise and need further large scale research.

Key words: Infant feeding, Socio-economic group

Introduction

Babies need appropriate nutrition, affection and protection. Breast feeding meets these needs and gives them the best start in life. It is natural and a basic part of life process. Breast feeding normally provide all nutrients of a baby for the first six months of life¹. Mothers are the primary caretakers of children only in early infancy². Care practices and resources for care are important not only for the good nutrition status of children but also for their growth and development. They have been recognized as the building blocks of UNICEFs integrated

approach to young children³. A care Initiative Manual developed by UNICEF lists six caring practices with subcategories and three kind of resources needed for good child care⁴. At six month complementary and supplementary food must be given to the baby besides the breast feeding because after six months only breast feeding cannot meet the nutritional demand for their growth. This time if the complementary food is not given then baby suffers from various types of malnutrition³. In most developing countries the mother is usually the main care-

giver for the infant and the very young children, but in common extended family grandmother, siblings, other family member often contribute to child care⁵. This study revealed various aspect of infant caring practices among the selected different urban communities. So this study program will be helpful to design future plan for promotion activities in the urban areas regarding infant caring practices.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among the upper, middle and lower classes mother-children pair of different selected areas in Dhaka city (Gulshan, Badda, Banani, Lalmatia, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Shankar, Magbazar, Tezgaon, Malibag, Baridhara, Mirpur and Ramna) from January 2008 to October 2008. The socio-economic classification in this study was made according to 2006 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita and using the calculation of World Bank (WB)⁶. The groups were: low-income \$75.41 or less (BDT 5360), lower middle-income \$75.5 - \$299.58 (BDT 5361-21270), upper middle-income \$299.68 - \$926.25 (BDT 21271-65761) and high-income \$926.33 or more (BDT 65762). Purposive non probability sampling method was used to collect data. Data were collected using pre tested semi structured questionnaire by face to face interview. After data collection, data were sent to the researcher, which was sorted, scrutinized by the researcher himself by the selection criteria and then data were analyzed by personal computer by SPSS version 12.0 program. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics. Sick women, women with sick babies, mentally retarded and insane women were excluded from the study.

Results

The mean age of upper class, middle class and lower class mothers were 35 ± 4 , 25 ± 3 and 21 ± 7 in years. Nearly all were married and small family size were more (70%) among upper class. No illiterate and primary level of

education was seen among upper and middle class but among lower class it was seen 26% and 30% respectively. Housewife was more (40%) among middle class but service holder was prominent among upper class (Table 1). Regarding first feeding it was observed that upper (75%), middle (85%) and lower class (48%) first gave colostrum. It also observed that 18% of upper class mother first gave powder milk, while in case of middle class it was 5%. In lower class preference of giving honey and sugar water were 21% and 12% respectively (Table 2). The starting time of breast feeding indicated that in upper classes (74%) breast feeding initiated within one hour, while in middle (75%) and lower classes (84%) it was given within 12 hours (Table 3). It was highlighted that 44% and 36% upper and lower class mothers started complementary feeding at 3 month of baby, while in middle class 61% mother started complementary foods at 5 month of their baby (Table 4). In case of duration of breast feeding practices, among middle and lower classes breast-feed continued longer time than upper class (Table 5). Majority of the upper class preferred egg, soup, fruit juice while middle class liked meat-fish, egg, khichuri, fruits. On complementary the lower class choiced mainly rice-potato, dal, khichuri or vegetables (Table 6).

Table-I: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (n=183)

Characteristics	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
Mean age (yrs)	35±4	25±3	21±7
Marital status			
Married	61(100)	60(99.36)	61(100)
Divorced	0(0)	1(1.64)	39(100)
Family size			
<5	43(70.49)	35(57.38)	12(19.67)
5-8	15(24.59)	20(32.79)	26(42.62)
>8	3(4.92)	6(9.84)	23(37.70)
Education			
Illiterate	0(0)	0(0)	16(26.23)
primary	0(0)	0(0)	18(29.51)
SSC	2(3.28)	12(19.67)	12(19.67)
HSC	15(24.59)	17(27.87)	10(14.75)
Graduate or more	44(72.13)	32(52.46)	5(8.2)
Occupation			
Housewife	10(16.39)	25(40.98)	7(11.48)
Business	5(8.20)	6(9.84)	12(19.67)
Gov service	20(32.79)	10(16.39)	8(13.11)
Pvt service	26(42.62)	19(31.15)	13(21.31)
Labor	0(0)	0(0)	17(27.87)
Others	0(0)	1(1.64)	4(6.56)
Total	61(100)	61(100)	61(100)

Results were expressed as frequency (%)

Table-II: Comparison of first feeding to baby of different classes (n=183)

First feeding	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
Colostrum	46(75.41)	52(85.25)	29(47.54)
Honey	4(6.56)	5(8.20)	13(21.31)
Sugar water	0(0)	0(0)	11(18.03)
Water	0(0)	1(1.64)	3(4.92)
Mastered oil	0(0)	0(0)	2(3.28)
Cow's milk	0(0)	0(0)	3(4.9 2)
Powder milk	11(18.03)	3(4.92)	0(0)
Total	61(100)	61(100)	61(100)

Results were expressed as frequency (%)

Table-III: Comparison of starting time of breast feeding (n=183)

Time of breast feeding started	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
<1 hour	43(73.77)	12(19.67)	7(11.48)
<12 hours	14(22.95)	46(75.41)	51(83.61)
<24 hours	2(3.28)	2(3.28)	3(4.92)
<48 hours	0(0)	1(1.64)	0(0)
Total	61(100)	61(100)	61(100)

Results were expressed as frequency (%)

Table-IV: Distribution of respondents by introducing complementary foods to infants (n=183)

Age of introduction of complementary food	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
1 month	3(4.92)	5(8.20)	0(0)
2 month	12(19.67)	7(11.48)	6(9.84)
3 month	27(44.26)	1(1.64)	22(36.07)
4 month	10(16.39)	2(3.28)	20(32.7)
5 month	7(11.48)	37(60.66)	8(13.11)
6 month	2(3.28)	9(14.75)	4(6.56)
>6 month	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.64)
Total	61(100)	61(100)	61(100)

Results were expressed as frequency (%)

Table-V: Duration of breast feeding by different classes (n=183)

Age upto breast feeding continuation	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
<3 month	14(22.95)	5(8.20)	1(1.64)
3-4 month	13(24.59)	12(19.67)	5(8.20)
5-6 month	7(11.48)	16(26.23)	12(19.67)
7-8 month	20(32.7)	14(22.95)	13(21.23)
9-10 month	3(4.92)	11(18.03)	11(18.03)
11-12 month	1(1.64)	2(3.28)	13(21.23)
>12 month	1(1.64)	1(1.64)	6(9.84)
Total	61(100)	61(100)	61(100)

Results were expressed as frequency (%)

Table-VI: Types of complementary food given by different classes (n=183)

Type of foods	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
Meat-fish	29(47.54)	39(63.93)	11(18.03)
Egg	55(90.16)	54(88.52)	17(27.87)
Soup	59(96.72)	18(29.51)	0(0)
Dal	6(9.84)	17(27.87)	27(44.26)
Rice-potato	14(22.95)	22(36.07)	36(59.02)
Khichuri	29(47.54)	38(62.32)	39(63.93)
Vegetables	34(55.74)	22(36.07)	46(75.41)
Fruit/fruit juice	57(93.44)	41(67.21)	14(22.95)
Others	12(19.67)	9(14.75)	13(21.31)

Results were expressed as frequency (%); Multiple responses found

Discussion

Infant feeding is very important in determining the subsequent growth and development of infants and children. Unfortunately there exists improper infant feeding practices in our country. Nutritionally wrong infant feeding practices are disastrous and contributing malnutrition, infection, growth failure, morbidity and mortality. Regarding first feeding it was observed that upper (75%), middle (85%) and lower class (48%) first gave colostrum. It also observed that 18% of upper class mother first gave powder milk, while in case of middle class it was 5%. In lower class preference of giving honey and sugar water were 21% and 12% respectively. Chaklader in his study⁷ observed that 54.4% of the infants were given colostrum as the first food while Aktar et.al.⁸ found that only 12.4% of mothers motivation of breast feeding and value of colostrum in the recent years. Refusal of colostrum was mainly due to misconception and motivation by elderly family members. Another study showed that 41% upper class mothers gave colostrums and 43% exclusive breast feeding⁹. The present study found that starting time of breast feeding in upper classes (74%), breast feeding initiated within one hour, while in middle (75%) and lower classes (84%) it was given within 12 hours. Talukdar et.al¹⁰. found that incidence of exclusive breast feeding in 65.3% at birth and 28% at 4 months. Pandey et.al¹¹. found incidence of breast feeding 84.3% at birth and 99.7% at 3 months.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Complementary feeding practices are essential component of infant feeding practices and are crucial for optimum infant and child nutrition. Although economic condition in Bangladesh have not been improving as fast as other Asian countries, the population is gradually becoming urban and educated. In addition, housewife mothers are turning to carrier women or working women. And these changed orientations of mothers are associated with decreased breast feeding. Important and integral part of infant feeding pattern, complementary food requires additional care.

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Conflict of Interest

We have no conflict of interest.

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