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A STUDY OF BREAST FEEDING TREND AMONG KORAGA COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT: Here we present a study of breast feeding patterns amongst the Koraga community living in and around Udupi District. The Koraga are a tribal community found mainly in the Dakshina Kannada, Udupi districts of Karnataka and the Kasaragod district of Kerala, south India. These areas in Karnataka are altogether often referred to as Tulu Nadu. They are also found in small numbers in adjoining districts of Uttara Kannada, Shimoga and Kodagu. The Koraga are classified by the Government of India as a Scheduled Tribe.

KEYWORDS: Breast feeding, Infant feeding, Breast Milk.

INTRODUCTION: Unlike women in cities and towns who for name sake breast feed and supplement their baby with formula of foods, the village folk breast feed their children up to 2 to 3 years of age. The Koraga community which we are studying here falls into a backward group in a backward region. We presume that the Koraga women breast feed their child for a long time, from the time of birth of baby. It is an undisputed truth that breast milk is best milk.

Even though the Koraga groups are isolated from main stream it cannot be said that they are outside the preview of the modern society. To date there is no literature which has studied the breast feeding practices of the Koraga community. This has stimulated us to look into the trends and traditions of breastfeeding practices in the Koraga community.

METHODS: About 100 mothers from the Koraga community were randomly selected and were interviewed by us, with reference to a questionnaire which was prepared exclusively for this study. The socio demographic details and the breast feeding history were elicited. Mothers were specifically questioned whether any food, formula milk or water was given to the baby, other than breast milk.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND LITERATURE REVIEW: The World Health Organization insists on exclusive breast feeding in the early days of life of a new born. The WHO defines exclusive breast feeding as, "feeding an infant only with Breast milk, excluding solid or any other fluid, (including infant formulas) except medicines, vitamins, and minerals".^(1,2)

The WHO and the UNICEF recommend that mothers put new born to the breast within one hour of birth, breast feed infants exclusively for the first six months and continued to breast feed for two Years and beyond, together with nutritionally adequate, safe, age –appropriate, responsive feeding of solid, semi-solid and soft foods starting in the sixth month.^(3,4,5) Breast feeding should be initiated within an hour of birth.

Colostrum is the best food for the baby as it contains a high concentration of protein and other nutrients. It is also rich in anti-infective factors which protect the baby against respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases.⁽⁶⁾

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Age group of the mothers[yrs]	No. of respondent	Percentage
18-22	38	31.66
22-26	41	34.16
26-30	18	15
30-35	17	14.16
35-39	6	5

1. Age of the mother

Brest feeding	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	106	88.33
No	14	11.66

2. Do you breast feed your child? Yes or No

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Age group of the Childs	No. of respondents	Percentage
0 - 3 months	18	15
3 - 6 months	43	35.83
7 - 9 months	21	17.5
10 - 12 months.	38	31.66

3. Age of the child?

Frequency of feeding	No. of respondents	Percentage
Hourly once	64	53.33
2 hourly once	31	25.83
3 hourly once	13	10.83
4 hourly once	12	10

4. Frequency of feeding

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Additional food given	No. of respondents	Percentage
Before 6 months	22	18.33
After 6 month	98	81.66

5. When do you give additional food to your child?

Reason for starting additional food	No. of respondents	Percentage
Not enough breast milk	11	9.16
Advice by health worker/Doctor	2	1.66
Work pressure	9	7.5

6. Reason for starting additional food before 6 months?

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Intend to feed	No. of respondents	Percentage
Up to six months	22	18.33
Up to one year	91	75.83
More than year	7	5.83

7. How long you intend to feed?

Thought about breast feeding	No. of respondents	Percentage
Breast feeding enough	49	40.83
Not sure	42	35
Need supplements	29	24.16

8. What are your thoughts about breast feeding?

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Do have liquor	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	29	75.83
No	91	24.16

9. Do you use liquor?

Smoking	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	1	0.83
No	121	99.16

10. Do you smoke?

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Smoking	No. of respondents	Percentage
Veg	8	6.66
No veg	112	93.33

11. Family food habit?

Working women	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	39	32.5
No	81	67.5

12. Are you working women?

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