

Significance of rice as a weaning food (baby food) in Coastal Orissa

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ABSTRACT

To know the significance of rice as baby food (weaning food) a survey was conducted with 100 mothers in four blocks of Puri and Khurda district. That among solid weaning foods, roasted flake powder (roasted chura powder) with milk and sugar was the most frequently used weaning food in almost 70 %families. It was also observed that Muslim families did not give roasted chura powder to their infants rather they give soft boiled rice with dal or boiled vegetables. Roasted rice powder (rice chattua) with milk or water was also in practice in the studied families. It was found that with modernization and product diversification, there is need to promote value addition to these rice based baby foods through processing into products with a precise utilization combining multiple ingredients in products that promote health and improving quality.

Key words: Baby food, weaning food, nutrients, energy, infants, breast feeding

Exclusive breast feeding for the 1st four months and if possible six months is the WHO's recommendation of feeding full term infants by healthy and well nourished mother. The introduction of foods (other than breast milk) into an infant's diet by slowly reducing the breast milk is known as weaning food (Kazimi 1979). Traditional weaning foods are mainly based on local staples mainly rice, wheat, maize, ragi etc on the basis of the production of that crop. Some infants however are weaned directly into the family diet early in life. The low nutrient density and high bulk of the weaning foods, early introduction of solid foods and unhygienic practices predispose infants to malnutrition, growth retardation and infection. Hence, multi-approach strategies, involving the development of improved recipe, processing and nutrition education for use of rice is recommended (Bressani 1983).

The study was conducted in 4 villages of four blocks namely Pipili and Nimapara of Puri district, Bhubaneswar and Balipatna Khurda district of Orissa. One village was selected from each block and from each village 25 respondent were selected randomly and interviewed. The information were collected from 100 mothers of 100 young children aged 2-30 months. Diet assessment was done using conventional methods. Profile of mother and information regarding weaning foods of infants were gathered through personal

interview. Matrix ranking was done to know the most common and frequently used weaning food among the studied families.

Results indicated that majority of women of sample belonged to 25-35 age group, having primary education and families Hindu population. Each mother had one small child. Out of the infants, 37% were in the age group of 0-6 months and 63% in the age group of 6 months and above. (Table 1).

The results presented in Table 2 indicates that of 100 infants, 18% was exclusively breastfed for less than 4 months only. Four percent infants were

Table 1. Profile of the mothers

	Category (years)	<i>N = 100</i>
		Percentage
Age	20-25	17
	25-30	51
	30-35	23
	35-40	09
Education	Illiterate	14
	Primary	64
	High school	16
	Graduate	06
	Post graduate	-
Religion	Hindu	75
	Muslim	25

Table 2. Distribution of infants as per their onset of weaning

<i>N = 100</i>	
Age of onset of weaning	Percentage
Less than 4 months	18
4-6 months	22
6-8 months	26
8-12 months	30
More than one year	4
Total	100

Table 3. Matrix ranking regarding the preference of solid weaning foods given to the infants

Solid Weaning foods	Matrix ranking
Roasted chura powder + milk + sugar	I
Boiled sago with salt	VIII
Cerelac	III
Rice water + soft rice + boiled potato	II
Soft boiled rice + dal	V
Boiled rice + boiled vegetable	VII
Rice sattua	VII
Biscuit + milk	VI

exclusively breastfed up to one year. Up to 6 months only liquid food like cow's milk, powdered milk, water and honey were given to the infants. It was observed that exclusively breastfed infants were nutritionally normal in comparison to partial breastfed infants up to the age of 6 months.

Matrix ranking was done to know the solid weaning foods given to the infants and it was found that roasted flake (Chura) powder + milk + sugar was the most preferred weaning food followed by rice water + soft boiled rice + dal and so on. It was observed from the table that rice is the main ingredient used as baby food in coastal Orissa. It was also observed that Muslim families did not prefer roasted flakes powder for their

Table 4. Distribution of infants according to the frequency of rice based weaning foods given to them

<i>N = 100</i>	
Frequency of foods	Percentage
One time in a day	3
Two time in a day	33
Three time in a day	55
Four time in a day	9
Total	100

infants rather they prefer to give soft boiled rice with dal or boiled potato.

Frequency of rice-based weaning foods given to the infants indicated majority of the infants (55%) were getting rice based baby food 3 times in a day i.e., in the morning and evening roasted rice flake powder with milk and lunch soft boiled rice with dal or boiled potato or boiled vegetable and only 3% were getting one time in a day.

Rice based weaning foods were most preferred in the locality those were deficient in required quantity of proteins, fat, vitamins and minerals which are very much required for growing infants. Consumption of animal protein, fruits and vegetables was extremely low with negative implications to the micro-nutrient nutrition of children in Orissa. It is recommended that mothers and caretakers of young children be sensitized on the importance of proper nutrition for the growth and development of their children. Mother should also be trained and equipped with child care and feeding skills to enable them combine the variety of locally available food ingredients with rice to make nutritious food for their children.

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