

RESEARCH NOTE

Knowledge Level of Rural Women about Child Care Practices

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INTRODUCTION

The development of children is the key to the development of national human resources. Since children are very vulnerable to physical and emotional stress, it becomes an important responsibility to protect them by various ways. In India, various child development and welfare programmes are implemented for improvement of child health and nutrition. Although, about 50 per cent of the children are living in conditions of deprivation. More than half of them are below six years which is the most critical period for growth and development. About two-fifths of all deaths in the country occur in children in the age of upto 6 years. About half to two-thirds of children from economically disadvantaged section of society are malnourished. The above picture is more poor in rural India. The fruits of our welfare programmes could not reach at the grass root level in our country due to various reasons. Lack of knowledge among rural women about child care practices may be one of the most important factors. Keeping this in view, the present study was conducted with following objectives :

(1) To study the personal and socio-economic characteristics of rural women

- (2) To know the knowledge level of rural women about child care practices
- (3) To ascertain the relationship between personal and socio- economic characteristics of rural women with their knowledge level about child care practices.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in randomly selected two talukas viz. Palanpur and Vadgam from Banaskantha district. One village was randomly selected from each taluka. An equal number of respondents were randomly selected from both the villages making a sample size of 100 respondents. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule.

The interview schedule consisted of three major child care practices viz. child food, child clothing and child health care was developed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal and socio-economic characteristics :

It is obvious from Table 1 that majority (61 per cent) respondents were of middle age, 72 per cent were found to be illiterate. Medium family education was observed among 58 per cent families and 60

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Table 1. Personal and Socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

(n=100)

Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Number/Per cent of respondents
1.	Age	Young (Upto 25 years)	29
		Middle (26 to 45 years)	61
		Old (Above 45 years)	10
2.	Education	Illiterate	72
		Upto primary	22
		Above primary	06
3.	Family Education	Illiterate family	04
		Low (upto 3 score)	26
		Medium (4 to 9 score)	58
		High (above 9 score)	12
4.	Occupation	Labourer	11
		Farming	60
		Caste occupation	11
		Business	98
		Service	09
5.	Marriage Age	Upto 15 year	50
		16 to 18 years	31
		Above 18 years	19
6.	Number of child	No child	08
		Upto two child	32
		Above two child	60
7.	Family size	Small (Upto 4 members)	40
		Medium (5 to 7 members)	54
		Big (Above 7 members)	06
8.	Land holding	Landless	35
		Small (Upto 1 hac.)	24
		Medium (1.01 to 5.00) hac.)	30
		Large (Above 5 hac.)	11
9.	Milch animal	No milch animal	42
		Upto one milch animal	19
		Two to four milch animal	35
		Above four milch animal	04
10.	Annual Income	Low (Upto Rs. 10,000)	60
		Medium (Rs. 10,001 to 50,000)	29
		High (Above Rs. 50,000)	11

Table 2. Knowledge level of respondents about child care practices.

			(n=100)
Sr. No.	Child care practice	Category	Number/Per cent of respondents
1.	Child food (Total score-20)	Low (Upto 10 score)	16
		Medium (11 to 15 score)	78
		High (Above 15 score)	06
2.	Child clothing (Total score-5)	Low (Upto 2.5 score)	15
		Medium (2.6 to 4.5 score)	57
		High (Above 4.5 score)	28
3.	Child health care (Total score-25)	Low (Upto 10 score)	10
		Medium (11 to 17 score)	72
		High (Above 17 score)	18
4.	Overall child care practices (Total score-50)	Low (Upto 25 score)	11
		Medium (26 to 35 score)	81
		High (Above 35 score)	08

per cent respondents were found engaged in farming with small (24 per cent) to medium (30 per cent) land holding. Having small piece of land, their annual earnings was found upto Rs. 10,000 (60 per cent).

It is unfortunate to note that early marriage of girls is still continued, as 81 per cent women were found to marry (adolescence period) at the age of less than 18 years. Still the importance of family planning measure has not been realised by the rural women because 60 per cent women were found to be the mothers of more than two children.

Knowledge about Child care practices :

It can be observed from Table 2 that, majority of the respondents were having medium level of knowledge about child food (78 per cent), child clothing (57 per cent) and child health care (72 per cent)

practices. Overall knowledge level of majority respondents (81 per cent) about child care practices was also found to be medium.

Relationship between personal and socio-economic characteristics of rural women and their knowledge about child care practices :

Table 3 indicate that education and occupation of women were found significantly correlated with their knowledge about child clothing, child health care and overall knowledge about child care practices. Age of the women was also found to establish significant relationship with all sort of knowledge (excluding child food practices) but trend was negative. Whiel number of children and family size were significantly correlated only with the knowledge about child clothing. Number of milch animals was also significantly corre-

Table 3. Relationship between personal and socio-economic characteristics of rural women and their knowledge about child care practices.

(n=100)

Sr. No.	Personal/socio-economic characteristics	Correlation Coefficient			
		Child food	Child-clothing	Child health care	Overall child care
1.	Age	-0.0569	-0.2474*	-0.2902**	-0.3072**
2.	Education	0.1403	0.2407*	0.3033**	0.3565**
3.	Family education	0.0206	0.0543	0.1410	0.0824
4.	Occupation	0.1746	0.2465*	0.2737**	0.3500*
5.	Marriage age	0.1514	0.0316	0.1055	0.0038
6.	Number of child	-0.1169	-0.2120*	-0.0777	-0.11639
7.	Family size	-0.1754	-0.2215*	-0.0375	-0.1654
8.	Land holding	0.0957	0.1407	0.1027	0.1592
9.	Milch animal	-0.0861	-0.0162	-0.3552**	-0.3046**
10.	Animal income	0.1345	0.0522	0.0794	0.0134

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

lated with knowledge about child health care and overall knowledge about child care practices, whereas landholding, milk yield, annual income, marriage age and family education could not establish significant relationship with any sort of knowledge. So far as relation between personal and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their knowledge about child food practices was concerned, no characteristic was found significantly associated with knowledge about child food practices. Thus, it can be concluded that age, education and occupation were the important variables affecting the knowledge

of rural women about child care practices.

IMPLICATIONS

The present study clearly indicated that majority women were found possessing medium level of knowledge about child care practices. In the country like ours, child rearing is the responsibility of mother. No children welfare programme will get success, if a mother will not knowing about the importance of nutrition, clothing and health in the physical and mental development of children. Attempts therefore needs to be made to educate and train the rural women about child care practices.