

Foreward



R. D. Pandit

Most people around the world give breast feeding scarcely a thought. The modern civilisation, urbanisation, fast pace of life of working women have been responsible for breast feeding either being given up or practically gone into complete background. This tendency also crept up in the developing countries and was being replaced by top feeds or milk substitutes. This brought forth the severe problem of gastroenteritis in newborns and infants giving rise to higher neonatal and infant mortality. This gave rise to realisation of the importance of breast feeding which was being forgotten. How many of the doctors or nurses examine the breasts in antenatal and postnatal department even today, and give proper advice regarding breast feeding ?

Thanks to the herculean efforts of WHO, UNICEF and many womens organisation, some Non-Governmental Organisations, and now even professional bodies of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists like FOGSI, Paediatricians, Nursing Personnel highlighted the importance of breast feeding entirely for a period

of 6 to 9 months, and brought forth the realisation as to how it is of great significance for human welfare.

All women have the ability to produce milk. They only differ in their capacity to lactate. Each mother produces milk for her child, according to the baby's needs and demands. The composition of breast milk is also constantly changing nutritionally and immunologically adapting to the need of the growing child.

Breast feeding is convenient, economical, and medically beneficial. The baby gets protection against various childhood diseases through breast milk. It also contributes to the bond between the mother and child. From the immunological viewpoint breast feeding provides a natural source of protection against gastrointestinal, viral, respiratory, and allergic conditions.

Breast feeding is associated with a period of infertility and with increased birth intervals which is variable in different populations.

Most women want to do the best for their Children. What they lack is information on the benefits of breast feeding, encouragement before and after delivery, practical advice and the opportunity to integrate breast feeding into their modern lives.

Dr. D. K. Tank, during his Presidentship of FOGSI, during year 1997 thought it fit to take out a special issue on Breast Feeding essentially to highlight the importance of Breast Feeding.

I thank past President of FOGSI Dr. D. K. Tank and Eminent Paediatrician Dr. R. K. Anand for their valuable suggestions, and all the authors in this issue in responding to my request and giving very useful information in their respective articles.

I hope this issue will immensely benefit FOGSI members. I hereby appeal to all Medical, Nursing, Paramedical and Social Service Personnel to encourage breast feeding to their utmost, a mission which is of vital importance for the mother, the newborn and the infant.

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Editor