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## Traditional belief and practices for care of infants among mothers

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### Abstract

Mothers not equipped with sufficient knowledge about child care and using traditional care practices methods may cause harm to this children's health and even cause handicaps in their children.

A descriptive study was conducted in Bhagwanpur Varanasi by visiting mothers at their homes. The study sample included 60 mothers of all age groups.

The mothers had traditional care practices related to feeding, bathing, massaging, cord care and were highly prevalent among the illiterate ones the prevalence of traditional care practices was inversely related to the level of education of mothers.

Some of these traditional health behavior can cause health risks. Therefore nurses should be aware of traditional behaviours which may pose health risks.

**Keywords:** Culture, traditional care practices, traditional belief

### Introduction

In India the infant mortality rate is high, and any attempt to reduce it cannot ignore the importance neonatal practices.

In our community women receive information from family members, elders and traditional birth attendants. Hence, the women especially mothers should be targeted with educational messages regarding care of the infants. Traditional beliefs and practices play a fundamental role in the health seeking and care giving behaviours of mothers. Promoting evidence based practices for newborn caregivers and modifying practices that are harmful will improve newborn health and reduce morbidity and mortality.

The practices, patterns and beliefs affect the style and quality of care giving.

While childbearing practices may be different across cultures, scientific knowledge suggest that there are basic needs that all children have and a predictable pattern of development during the early years that is universal. All the infants need adequate and appropriate care from birth onwards. The lack of which during the early years has negative effects either immediate or in later years of the baby's life.

### Objectives of the study

- To find out the prevalence of some of the common traditional practices for infant care among the mothers of Bhagwanpur.
- To find out the influence of level of education of the mothers on their traditional practices for infant care.

### Methodology

**Research Approach:** Quantitative research approach

**Research Design:** Descriptive research design

**Research Setting:** The research was conducted in Bhagwanpur, Varanasi.

**Accessible Population:** all the mothers available in their homes at the time of our visit in Bhagwanpur. (2<sup>nd</sup> March to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020)

**Method of Sampling:** Purposive sampling technique was used to draw sample for the present study.

**Sample size**

The sample size was a 60 mothers residing in Bhagwanpur.

**Selection criteria**

**Inclusion criteria:** Mothers residing in Bhagwanpur at the time of visit.

**Exclusion criteria:** Mothers who

1. Are not available in their homes at the time of our visit.
2. Refused to be the part of our research due to various reason.
3. Did not feel easy to interact freely with the research group.

**Method of data collection**

In the Process of data collection, prior permission was obtained from the head of the department of the community medicine.

Investigator introduced herself to the participants and the

objectives of the study were explained and written informed consent was taken from all the mothers. Their Sociodemographic performa was filled by the investigator. They were interviewed by questionnaire regarding initiation of breastfeeding, beliefs of evil eye, baby bath after delivery, baby massage, cord care.

**Results****Sociodemographic variables**

Table 1 shows the absolute figures of the frequency and the percentage of those frequencies with respect to the total number of subjects. This table shows majority (85%) of the women belonged to age group 40 years and above. It also indicated that majority of the women were educated up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard (33.3%).

Most of the family of the respondent had low socio-economic status 46.7% had family income less than 10000/-month.

**Table 1:** Socio demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age (in years) #</b>		
• 25-30	5	8.3
• 35-40	4	6.7
• 40 and above	51	85.0
<b>Education</b>		
• Illiterate	19	31.7
• Up to 10	20	33.3
• Up to 12	15	25
• Graduate/ postgraduate	6	10
<b>Family income</b>		
• Less than 10000	28	46.7
• 10000-20000	13	21.7
• 20000-30000	10	16.7
• 30000 and above	09	15.0
<b>Types of family</b>		
• Joint family	30	50
• Nuclear family	30	50
<b>Sources of information</b>		
• Elderly		91.7
• Television		58.3
• Radio		43.3
• Health professionals		10.0
<b>Mode of deliveries</b>		
• Normal deliveries	49	81.7
• Caesarean section	11	18.3

**Beliefs and practices related to breastfeeding**

Table 2: Shows among fifty one subject 23 (38.3%) normally delivered mother, 18.3 % initiated breastfeeding within 1 hour.

**Table 2:** Breastfeeding frequency

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Initiation of breastfeeding in normally delivered mothers		
• Within 1hour	23	38.3
• After 1 days	11	18.3
• After 2 days	03	05
• After 3 days	14	23.3
Initiation of breast feeding in mother delivered by caesarean section		
• Within 4 hours	05	8.3
• After 1 day	01	1.7
• After 3 days	02	3.3
• After 7 days	01	1.7
Percentage of mothers who gave colostrum to their infants	n=60	

• Yes	40	66.7
• No	20	33.3
Reasons for not giving colostrum	n=20	
• It is imure or stale	1	1.7
• It is not good for infants health	4	6.7
• As it is traditionally followed	11	18.3
• All of them is correct	4	6.7
First feed given to the child immediately after birth		
• Honey	22	36.7
• Cows milk	28	46.7
• Water	3	5
• Breast milk	7	11.7
Reasons told by mothers for giving initial feed honey, cow/buffalo milk, water		
• Honey- traditional beliefs	24	40
• Cow/buffalo milk- easy to digest	8	13.3
• Water- mother milk does not substitute water	6	10
• Cow/buffalo milk- mothers milk	22	36.7
Frequency of feeds offered by the respondent mother during the first week of infant's life		
• On demand or as the child cries	31	51.7
• Every 1-2 hr	29	48.3
Mother think breast milk is insufficient for growth and development of the infant		
• Yes	22	36.7
• No	38	63.3
Additional feed given to the infants for the growth and development		
• Cow/buffalo's milk	17	28.3
• Dal water	1	1.7
• Both	20	33.3

**Table 3:** Beliefs and practices related to Evil Eye

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Belief in evil eye		
• Yes	56	93.3
• No	4	6.7
Practices followed by the mothers to protect their infant from evil eye		
• Tie nazariya	2	3.6
• Apply kajal	9	16.1
• Both	45	80.4
Number of mothers Believed that evel eye protected their infants from eveil eye		
• Yes	56	93.3
• No	4	6.7

**Table 4:** Beliefs and practices related to BABY BATH

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Number of mothers who gave bath to their infants immediately after birth		
• Yes	29	48.3
• No	31	51.7
Duration after which the infant was given the first bath		
• After 1-2 hrs of life	2	3.3
• After 24 hrs of life	18	30
• After 2-3 days of life	5	8.3
• After chhatti (6 <sup>th</sup> days )	6	10

**Table 5:** Beliefs and practices related to BABY MASS AGE

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of giving massage to the infants		
• 2-3 times a day	9	15
• 3-4 times a day	50	83.3
• At an interval of 2 days	1	1.7
Reasons for massaging the baby	% Yes	% No
• It gives strength to the baby	96.7	3.3
• Moisten the dry skin	75	25
• Brings sound sleep to the infants	85	15
• Gives round shape to the infants	65	35
Oil used for massaging the baby	% Yes	% No

• Coconut oil	96.7	3.3
• Mustard oil	75	25
• Fish oil	85	15
• Commercial oil like dabur lal, johnson's etc.	65	35

**Table 6:** Beliefs and practices related to CORD CARE

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Answer of the mother whether the cords falls off by itself		
• Yes	32	53.3
• No	28	46.7
Techniques used by the mothers to make the cord fall off	Out of 28 mothers	
• Applying drying agent	10	16.7
• Apply warm dry ash	14	23.3
• Pull out manually	4	6.7
Number and percentage of infants who had inne and outiee		
• Yes	6	10
• No	54	90
Practices followed to treat inne or outiee	Out of 6 mothers	
• Tap it with the coin	1	1.7
• Pressing by unckle's thumb	1	1.7
• Seek medical treatment	3	5

**Table 7:** Description of the association between the various traditional infant care practices and the level of knowledge of the respondent mother:

		Level of education		Chi square value	df	p-value
		Illiterate	Literate			
1. Traditional practices related to breast feeding		N=19	N=41			
Respondent mother who had given colostrums to their infants	Yes	07 (36.8%)	33 (80.5%)	11.130	1	0.001 (S)
	No	12 (63.2%)	08 (19.5%)			
Waking the infants when he sleeps fore more than 4 hours	Yes	5 (26.3%)	14 (73.3%)	1.283	1	0.257 (NS)
	No	17 (41.5%)	24 (58.5%)			
Duration of breastfeeding within one week of in fants life	When the child cried	12 (63.2%)	32 (78%)	1.472	1	0.225 (NS)
	At an interval of 1-2 hour	07 (36.8%)	09 (22%)			
2. Respondent mothers who bathed their infants immediately after their birth	Yes	08 (42.1%)	21 (51.2%)	0.423	1	0.511 (NS)
	No	11 (57.9%)	20 (48.8%)			
3. Respondent mothers who believed that cord falls off itself	Yes	06 (31.6%)	26 (63.4%)	5.287	1	0.028 (S)
	No	13 (68.4%)	15 (36.6%)			

## 5. Discussion

In the study conducted on traditional belief and child care practices among mothers in Bhagwanpur, we came across various child care practices, among those some had beneficial effects while others were either harmful or did not have any effect on the child's health. There were certain practices which did not prove to be beneficial due to wrong technique or method of following eg. Massaging a baby with oil is beneficial but vigorous massaging can cause physical injury to the baby. The very common traditional beliefs and child care practices among mothers of the Bhagwanpur were those related to breastfeeding, evileye, baby bathing, baby massage and cord care.

## 6. Conclusion

Under the influence of traditions and beliefs most of the mothers included in this study were found to perform traditional infant care practices that might be harmful for their infant's health.

The results of this study can help all health professionals to recognize the role of traditions in child health. Some of these practices have harmful effects on babies health.

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