

Research Paper :

Development of suitable functional clothing for lactating woman and assessment of its preferences

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Received : January, 2010; Revised : April, 2010 Accepted : June, 2010

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ABSTRACT

Maternity clothing has a niche market in today's fashion era because of increase number of women worker with the attitude of being well dressed during pregnancy also as at any other time in their life. Maternity clothes have very significant role during lactation period also because breast feeding in regular clothes become awkward and embarrassing. Thus, there is a great need to design clothing for pregnant and lactating women. All lactating women gave their preference towards vertical and horizontal opening with zipper at bust level, hidden flaps up to bust level detachable with Velcro and snap fasteners. Developed functional maternity *kameezes* were found highly suitable among lactating women in terms of suitability of structural features, functional aspects, selection of materials and colour combinations used.

Khatri, Khushboo and Srivastava, Meenu (2010). Development of suitable functional clothing for pregnant woman and assessment of its preferences, *Asian J. Home Sci.*, 5 (2) : 221-225.

Key words : Functional maternity clothing, Breast feeding

Clothing is a primary need of mankind through out the word. Clothes help to make impression on others. Uncomfortable clothes can take away the joy of living. This is equally true for special groups, whose needs are greater because they need more comfort and convenience as compared to normal people to become independent.

Recently, national attention has been focused on the rights of women to nurse their babies in public places. In less industrialized countries, where breastfeeding is a community norm, nursing babies accompany their mothers everywhere and breastfeed at will. In many other countries, breastfeeding is considered so natural that people scarcely take notice of it.

The topic has come into the spotlight on a number of recent occasions when mothers who were breastfeeding their hungry infants were asked to leave public places because exposing their breasts to nurse might be offensive to other patrons. In each case that has been challenged in a court of law, the right to breastfeed in public has been upheld. So, maternity clothes are also very significant during lactation phase because breastfeeding in regular clothes become awkward and embarrassing. Breastfeeding in public can make many women feel self conscious and uncomfortable. Breastfeeding clothes should have a hidden opening, strategically built-in to the clothing.

The present study was undertaken to study the availability of appropriate functional clothing for lactating women in the market, to assess the satisfaction of lactating women with available maternity clothes, to design and develop functional clothing for lactating women and to find out the preferences of lactating women towards developed clothing.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out at Udaipur city of Rajasthan. Ten marketing personnel were selected to know the availability of maternity clothing in local market. To know the satisfaction with available maternity clothing and needs and requirements towards developing functional maternity clothing, 30 female lactating respondents were selected from the Sanjeevani Child and Maternity Hospital, Udaipur. Pretested structured interview schedule was used for getting the complete and desired information. The functional garments were given to the respective respondents for wear trial of a period of three consecutive days to assess the acceptability and preferences. The frequency, percentage, Mean percentage score (MPS) and Acceptability Index was calculated to analyses the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following section contains the outcome of the