

Needs of mothers of new born babies in the area of child care and development

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The present study has been undertaken with the primary objective *i.e.* to assess the needs of mother of new born babies in the area of child care and development. Hundred numbers of mother having babies from the age group of birth to six month were selected from government hospital, nursing home and from urban and rural areas of Jorhat district of Assam. An interview schedule was prepared as tool for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that higher percentage of mothers have the feelings that they have knowledge about child care and development, but when these mothers were asked various questions on different aspects of child care the entire mother could not give correct response. When the needs of mothers were assessed it was found that 91 per cent of the mothers want to enhance their knowledge on child care. It is evident from the results that although many schemes of health department are implemented for the welfare of the new borns and for acquiring knowledge of mother but there are still some mothers who are still ignorant and not aware on different aspects of child care and development.

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A mother irrespective of caste, creeds and socio economic status may be over whelmed by a feeling of joy, pride, wonder, exhilaration mixed with exhaustion at the birth of baby. At the same time a new mothers may be surprised at his or her appearance, the oddly shaped head, wrinkle face and tiny hands and feet and may be anxious to know whether the baby is alright and whether the sound and movements the baby makes are normal. The mother is responsible for promoting the child good health, recognizing when the child is ill and acting accordingly. When mother happens to be the exclusive provider of care, it is all but

impossible for her to provide high quality child care if she herself is illiterate and uninformed. Soniapuri. Bhatia (2008) conducted a study on comparison or prevalent newborn rearing practices, in urban and slum population in Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh. The cross sectional research designed was used. He conducted study on 226 women of both urban and slum areas. The findings are, women gave birth at home (38.4%) only. (45.1%) deliveries were conducted by skilled birth attendant as compared to (7.1%) by traditional birth attendants. (61.9%) of new born infant had been bathed within the 0-12 hours. Number of infants who were given

colostrums were (80.9%) and (26.9%) were put on breast feed with 1-2 hours of birth.

Proper care and development of infant is possible only when mothers are educated and well informed of all the minutes' details of child development like different reflexes and milestones of development. For many parents the first time they see or hold a new born baby is when their own first baby is born. Many first time parents really do not know what to expect in terms of what their baby will like, what he or she will do or how to handle them. It can be very daunting. After the birth of the baby it is not possible for a mother to consult the doctor every day for clarification of their doubt if any regarding growth and development, feeding pattern and so on. Therefore in this regard a need has been felt to do an intensive study with the following objective to assess the needs of mother of new born babies in the area of child care and development.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was confined to the Jorhat district of Assam. For the present study, hundred numbers of mothers having babies from the age group of birth to six months were selected from Government hospitals, nursing home and from rural and urban areas of Jorhat. For the selection of sample from the hospital, one Government hospital and two nursing homes were selected purposively and from these hospitals forty numbers of mothers those who have newly born infants were selected. Twenty numbers of mothers were selected from Government hospital and ten numbers of mothers were selected each from the two nursing homes. For the selection of samples from the urban areas, mothers having infant of age group birth to six months were selected from the past records kept in the hospitals and nursing homes. After looking into the past records kept in the hospital the mother those who were at a nearby distance and within ten kilometers from the town and connected with public transport were selected purposively for the study, thirty numbers of mother were selected from the urban area. For selection of sample from rural area the villages were selected purposively from Jorhat Development block. List of mothers having infant from birth to six months were collected from anganwadi centres and primary health centres of these villages. From the list ten numbers of mothers from each of the villages were selected randomly. In this ways thirty

numbers of mothers were selected from rural area. Finally hundred numbers of mothers were selected from different areas. An interview schedule was prepared for the mothers of new born babies. Before preparing the interview schedule a small number of mothers were personally contacted to assess their needs regarding child care and rearing practices. The interview schedule consist of many questions where mothers had to say either the statement is right or wrong or they had to choose from the alternative given against the statement. The schedule consist some basic questions to assess the needs and knowledge of mother and to identify the specific area of child development where their knowledge is lagging behind.

Ethical issues :

Prior permission was taken from the doctors of the hospitals and nursing homes. The nurses were requested to show the rooms where the inpatients were available. Mothers were interviewed personally to assess their needs regarding child care and development and the rearing practice through the interview schedule which was prepared for the study.

For the analysis of surveyed data interview schedule were thoroughly coded and appropriate tables were designed. Preliminary analytical device expressed in frequency and percentages were used.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Responses have been collected from the mothers in different aspects and they were analyzed in terms of the objective of the study. The interview schedules consist of different types of questions related to mother's knowledge, their sources of knowledge. When the responses have been analyzed it has been seen that 72 per cent mothers felt that they have knowledge about child care after birth and they expressed that they acquired that information from books (49%), from other people (43%), television (21%), newspaper (16%) and radio (10%). 79 per cent mothers said that they discussed with their friends and relatives about child care during pregnancy, but 58 per cent mothers felt that the information and knowledge they have is not sufficient to bring up a baby. Although most of the mothers felt that they know how to take care of their babies, when they were asked various questions on different aspects of child care and development, all the mother could not

come out with correct answer. Jain and Jain (2008) conducted a study to assess home based newborn care practices in urban and rural areas of Chandigarh and comparison of both practices. Author emphasized that knowledge scores of rural areas is lesser than urban areas. Also there is more prevalence of various harmful practice of newborn like application of kajal, delay of breastfeeding etc. The study suggested that information and education regarding new born care practice is very essential.

Table 1 reveals that higher percentages of mother do not have knowledge about development of perceptual abilities 70 per cent, establish attachment with care givers 65 per cent and emotional development 80 per cent. It may be because these areas of development are very specific and it needs minute observation of the caretaker. Hence most of the mothers either they overlook these area of development or they do not consider these as important as others areas like physical and language development. These are within the reach of a very small numbers of mothers who are educated and keep themselves abreast of the recent development in child care and development. Vijayalakshmi (2007) conducted a study on effectiveness of a planned teaching programme for infant mother on knowledge and attitude of infant rearing practices. She emphasized that mother has inadequate knowledge regarding infant rearing

practices, immunization and feeding.

Table 2 reveals regarding feeding of colostrums to the new born, it was found that many mothers specially the rural mothers who had home delivery, thought that colostrums is an impure form of milk because of its yellowish colours and its thickness and so they do not feed it to the infants instead of these they use to give the infant honey, water and Jiggery water to supplement the milk and to provide energy to the new born baby. Punia *et al.* (1993) had conducted a study on “Infant feeding and weaning practices in selected cultural zones of Haryana.” The study was conducted in two districts Hisar and Rohtak. The pregnant women having at least one child in the range of 0 to 2 years were taken for the study. The result shows that pre lacteal feeds were given to new born babies for 2 to 3 days after birth thinking that baby is not able to suck the milk from breast. 64.66 per cent respondent preferred Jiggery water as pre lacteal food rather than honeys 14 per cent. Visalomon (2008) conducted a study on “Comparison of infant learning practices in selected urban and rural communities in Mudurai. She concluded that higher rate of growth and development of infant in urban area than rural infants. She also concluded that there is need to give awareness for rural infant mothers regarding nutritional programme, importance of a significant higher nutritional status among urban infant comparing to rural infants. It was

Table 1 : Mothers showing correct and incorrect responses on developmental milestones

Sr. No.	Developmental milestone	Correct responses (%)	Incorrect responses (%)
1.	Correct age when children learn to rolls over and sit with slight support.	73	27
2.	Age when children learn to hold and reach for objects	73	27
3.	Age when children express clears babbling and imitates simple sounds.	75	25
4.	Age for eruption of teeth.	76	29
5.	Age when children develop certain perceptual abilities	30	70
6.	Age when children learn to establish attachment with care givers	35	65
7.	Age when children expresses positive and negative emotion.	20	80

Table 2 : Mothers showing correct and in correct responses on infant's feeding.

Sr. No.	Infant feeding	Correct responses (%)	Incorrect responses (%)
1.	Breast feeding is important after birth of the baby	90	10
2.	Feeding Colostrums to new born	60	40
3.	Start on different breast each time.	93	7
4.	Benefits of breast feeding.	78	22
5.	Burping after every feeding	69	31
6.	Sterilization of utensil sets after every feeding	55	45
7.	Age of weaning	85	14
8.	Feeding water and honey after birth	62	38

also observed that most of the urban mothers who had hospital delivery know about burping as well as sterilization of utensils after every feeding. It may be because at the time of pregnancy the mothers who go for regular check up and also after the birth of the child when they go to the clinic, the doctors and the nurses generally give instruction on these basic things and provide certain literature to the mothers regarding these aspects. The mothers giving in correct responses were mostly the rural mothers 30 per cent, because they do not have much knowledge and exposure regarding these areas and moreover they do not think such things to be important. These mothers generally think that washing the utensils with soap and clean water is sufficient. Only the urban and the educated mothers know the infant are very prone to diseases and infections and everything that is used for children should be given special attention, for example after every feeding the utensil and the feeding bottles of the infant should be sterilized to make it free from germs.

Under health and hygiene it was observed from Table 3 that highest percentage, 52 per cent of mothers do not know that vigorous oil massage is bad for infant and 33 per cent do not know that putting of oil in baby's nose and ear is harmful. These differences in knowledge were seen generally among the home delivered as well as between the urban and rural mothers. The rural mothers those who had home delivery thought that vigorous oil message and putting of oil in baby's nose

and ear is a good practice because this has been done traditionally. In the same ways some urban mothers those who have gained the knowledge from the elderly people to follow this practice. They generally think that vigorous oil message will improve child health and it will make the child more robust and strong. In case of some urban mothers they generally use to employ a dhai for a month or two to give a good body massage for the baby. Some mothers also think that putting of oils in baby's nose and ear will help him in breathing and respiration and will help the child to have a comfortable and sound sleep. Gupta and Kumar (2005) conducted a study on effectiveness of structured teaching programme regarding growth and development of infant among infant mother in selected community in South Orissa. The author identified the lack of knowledge in mother regarding ante natal and prenatal care and child rearing practices. Dr. Gupta felt that early instruction through stimulation and enrichment programmes for disable infant and young children of parents to minimize further damage.

Regarding clothing's it was observed that 13 per cent mothers used synthetic and nylon garments for the infants and after analyzing it was seen that most of these mothers were from rural areas and belongs to low socio-economic group. Some of the mothers were from urban area also, the reason may be that most of the mothers do not know that cotton clothes will provide comfort to the infant and it will also help in free movement of the body.

Table 3 : Mothers showing correct and incorrect responses on health and hygiene

Sr. No.	Health and hygiene	Correct responses (%)	Incorrect responses (%)
1.	The safest place of delivery	81	19
2.	Worries and anxiety during Pregnancy	98	2
3.	Care of wound after birth	94	6
4.	Putting of oil in baby's nose and ear.	67	33
5.	Vigorous oil massage	48	52
6.	Use of bandage after falling of navel cord	73	27
7.	Keeping dry the navel area	90	10
8.	Sterilization of clothes in case of home delivery	93	7
9.	Use of soft and colour fast materials	98	2
10.	Drying of babies clothes	95	5
11.	Use of plastic panties and napkins	93	7
12.	Change of soiled diaper	91	9
13.	Use of synthetic and nylon clothes.	87	13
14.	Importance of immunization	97	3
15.	Knowledge of immunization schedule	70	30
16.	Immunization during illness	65	35

Many mother those who belong to lower income group cannot effort to buy soft cotton materials which are higher in price so they generally use to buy cheap synthetic and nylon materials for their babies.

When question was asked on immunization it was seen that higher percentage 97 per cent of mother had knowledge about importance of immunization and among them 30 per cent of mothers do not have the knowledge of immunization schedule, these percentage of mothers are mostly the rural and home delivered mothers. These mothers generally do not know and some use to forget the dates when it has to be started and when the next dose to be given. When only the Anganwadi workers come and remind them they use to go to the clinic and give the vaccines. But in case of mothers those who had hospital delivery generally know about the time schedule because at the time of release from the hospital and nursing homes the doctors give them an immunization card where all the dates, regarding when it has to be started and when the next dose to be given is written serially.

It was also found after analysis that 35 per cent mothers use to stop the immunization when the child is ill. Generally this practice is common in case of first born child for both the rural and urban mothers. It may be because the mothers of the first born generally use to get tensed and worried and think that if the child is given immunization on the day on which he is ill then the child will suffer more and without consulting the doctor the mothers use to discontinues the immunization, but the rest 65 per cent use to go to the doctor for consultation and depending on the advice of the doctor they use to do accordingly.

During the interview it was observed that 92 per cent mothers use toys and other play materials for their babies. Among them only 70 per cent know the importance of stimulation but only 53 per cent mothers stimulate their babies through different activities. In case of providing stimulation of new born baby, it was observed that mother provide toys and play materials to their children without even knowing its stimulatory effect. They provide these either as a source of pleasure or to engage them during their busy hours. It may be because some mothers think that development and growth is a natural process and it goes on accordingly. These mothers do not think that stimulatory activities or play materials should be used for babies to enhance

or accelerate their development.

Moreover such topics are not focused through media. Mother who solely depends on media does not get the chance to know about it. Only the mothers who keenly observe the development of their babies and go through relevant article published in books, journals and magazines acquire knowledge in these areas. These mothers constitute a small percentage who knows about importance and use of stimulation. Nandwana (2003) conducted a study to "Assess the knowledge of infant rearing regarding socio-economic and personality development in rural area, Rajasthan. The sample consisted of mother having infants between 0-18 months. A self constructed interview schedule was used to generate information on socio-emotional and personality related to rearing practice for providing adequate stimulation for promoting socio-emotional and personality development.

Conclusion:

It is evident from the above result that most of the mothers had the basic knowledge on child care and development. They have acquired the knowledge because of their eagerness to know about child rearing practice from different sources like their parents, elderly members, book, radio etc. But there are still some mothers who are not aware of the different aspect of child care and development. Therefore effort has to be taken to develop some technique and create awareness so that the mother can learn about different aspect and techniques of child development and care easily.

Limitation:

- The study was conducted only in one district of Assam.
- More numbers of mothers could be included in the study
- A media mix package consisting of different Medias namely folders, audio tape and photographs which have information on child care and development could be prepared and handed over to the mothers.

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