

Mass media and mothers breastfeeding practices

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Every living organism at some specific point of the time want to reproduce themselves, so does the human being. The process of giving care and love to a newborn by various means of activities is known a child-rearing and the activities performed during this are known as child-rearing practices. Feeding is essential for the maintenance of good health and for proper growth and development of babies. Breast milk is ideal for a baby for the first half year of his life. Now a days, with industrialization families are becoming nuclear and there is nobody to guide a mother how to perform her duties for her child. Mass media is an emerging trend which mothers are following in absence or presence of their elders in the home. Mass media is having a large impact on the minds of the audience and is multiplied by them. In the present study, the purpose of this research was to study the impact of mass media on breastfeeding practices. The initial data collection was done with a self-prepared Demographic Questionnaire. CRP Questionnaire is also used and is designed to measure mass media impact on breastfeeding practices. Inferential statistics such as chi-square and correlation are used to see the perceived impact of mass media on breastfeeding practices of mothers. The mass media is having an impact on mother's breastfeeding practices to some extent in urban areas of Aligarh whereas in rural areas no perceived impact is seen as mothers are following practices told by their elders and doctors. Although mothers in both regions i.e. urban and rural areas are practicing best breastfeeding practices.

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Every living organism at some specific point of the time want to reproduce themselves, so does the human being. Humans reproduce themselves most probably after a well-planned life. All the living beings take care of their off-springs, the duration of care depends upon the species but one can say that the human child-rearing process is for the lifetime. The process of giving care and love to a newborn by various means of activities is known a child-rearing and the activities

performed during this are known as child-rearing practices. There are a number of activities performed during the child's rearing and basically depends upon the child's need. The first and foremost essential rearing practices performed by mothers after the birth of a newborn is breastfeeding. Mostly child-rearing activities are performed by mothers as they use to be very close to the child and also emotionally attached to them. The American Heritage Dictionary (2000) refers to parenting

as “the rearing of a child or children, especially the care, love and guidance given by a parent.” Feeding is essential for the maintenance of good health and for proper growth and development of babies. Breast milk is ideal for a baby for the first half year of his life. During the first 2-4 days after delivery of a new-born, the breasts produce a deep lemon-yellow coloured creamy secretion called the colostrum. It is rich in proteins and minerals and contains some special anti-infective immunologic factors. It is specially made to fulfil all little baby’s needs at this stage. There is no doubt that breast milk is the best milk for new-born. It is the ideal, complete food for the baby and made exactly right for him. Breast milk contains antibodies, special white cells and other anti-infective factors which gives baby extra protection against infections. The incidence of diarrhoea is about 15 times more and of respiratory infections 3 times more in the non-breast fed babies as compared to those who are breast fed. Allergy (asthma, eczema and others) is less common among breast fed babies. Breast milk is especially good for premature babies. It is sterile, safe, and readily available and the baby always gets it at the right temperature (Suneja, 2006). Caring of a young child fulfilling his/her physical, emotional needs is somewhat challenging both physically and emotionally for beginners in parenting (Antonucci and Mikus, 1998). Mothers and fathers who are expecting their off-spring feel that they are not properly skilled in areas such as feeding, bathing, changing and soothing a newborn. (Gottlieb and Pancer, 1988). The mothers were also unaware of the knowledge about how to increase lactation, the sufficiency of breast milk in hot weather, the sufficiency of breast milk for 4 months after birth, and the need to pump the breasts after alcohol consumption. (Laanterä *et al.*, 2010). Majority of the mothers are breastfeeders whereas the level of EBF is low and mothers have good knowledge about breastfeeding. Mothers who are breastfeeding their child had a more positive attitude than non- breastfeeding mothers (Vijayalakshmi *et al.*, 2015). Mothers residing in rural areas are having poor knowledge, attitude and practices about the choice of milk for newborn, duration of exclusive and total breastfeeding (Karnawat *et al.*, 2015). Breastfeeding practices are the major cause of morbidity among children as overall infant feeding pattern and care during illness was good among mothers but some practices like giving pre-lacteal food, stopping EBF before six months have still existed (Vijayalakshmi *et al.*, 2014). All mothers knew that they had to breastfeed

their baby but was unaware of adequate knowledge about the proper way of breastfeeding and cultural practices like giving pre-lacteal feeds, late initiation of breastfeeding after birth, delay in the introduction of weaning foods and avoiding exclusive breastfeeding are still prevalent among the mothers. The maternal knowledge, actual and desired practices are having a large gap (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2011). The under nutrition is persisting in the country due to inadequate feeding practices which are prevalent in our country and suggest to change behaviour on a household level by the means of intervention programmes (Ramji, 2009). The maternal education and working status are also contributing to the mothers rearing knowledge and practices (Gitanjali and Alim, 2015). Immunization coverage increased as the birth order increased and stated that mothers’ education has a significant role in determining her child-rearing practices, which in turn would lead to better child survival (Abdulkader *et al.*, 2013). Working mothers also changes the lives of their children by altering the time and money investments that children require from parents. As well as Fathers are also spending more time with their children compared to past times (Bianchi, 2000). Housewives spend more time with their children whereas working women rely on caregivers but they assure that her child gets nutritious food (Das, 2014).

When a female becomes a mother for the first time it’s quite a big task to give proper rearing practices to her child as she is experiencing this for the first time and usually have no or some knowledge about child rearing. In earlier times as soon as the female conceives she was given knowledge by her elders about the rearing practices followed in that culture. Now-a-days, with industrialization families are becoming nuclear and there is nobody to guide a mother how to perform her duties for her child. Would be mother consults her elders on a telephonic conversation, doctor or take help from mass media. Mass media is an emerging trend which mothers are following in absence or presence of their elders in the home. Mass media is having a large impact on the minds of the audience and is multiplied by them, it is also justified by Wilbur Schramm that “Media are magic multipliers.” Media can be said as formal communication channels. As it is defined, “media are social systems that operate according to specific goals, values, organizational styles and technological capabilities.” Schramm had commented forcefully that the “mass media had the potential power to widen horizons, to focus attention, to

raise aspirations, and to create a climate for development.”The central part of the modern society is mass media, they are the maker and life of modern society. To execute best in such a role, media regularly interact with the society. The needs of the people are catered by mass media as it learns from society. As the level of structural instability increases, the audience dependency on media information increases. Media has created a new trend that wants the people to adopt the new culture and this adjustment of people behaviour towards new culture has affected all dimensions of people’s lives and are demanding change from traditional culture to modern culture (Paul *et al.*, 2013). The utilization of health services had a positive impact of mass media and the flow of effect was congruent towards expected alteration in the field of utilization of health services (Grilli *et al.*, 2009). The government of India is promoting safe motherhood and child survival and it relies upon electronic media, the findings indicate that exposure to mass media is having an impact on prenatal care services and this impact of mass media is stronger in northern states when compared to southern states. (Ghosh, 2006) MMC can produce positive changes in health-related behaviours across populations as after the intervention programme mothers knew that pre lacteals were harmful to the child and the benefits of feeding colostrums and correct age of initiating complementary feeds. The nutritional status of children was also maintained as most of the children were underweight (Seksaria and Sheth, 2014). Although access to new media is spreading rapidly, it still has not made as much of an impact on how moms and dads parent their young children and very few parents are using internet and social media to get information about parenting.

Aims and objectives:

- To study the various variables related to mothers education, professional level, breastfeeding practices and source of knowledge.
- To examine the impact of knowledge source on mothers breastfeeding practices.
- To evaluate the relationship between breastfeeding practices with other variables.

Hypotheses:

- H_0 There is no relation between breastfeeding practices and knowledge source.
- H_0 There exists no association between

breastfeeding practices, education, professional level and domicile.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Research methodology is a process to methodically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. (Kothari, 2005) In the present study, the purpose of this research was to study the impact of mass media on breastfeeding practices. A detailed survey of literature has pointed out the studies related to breastfeeding practices. The relationship between breastfeeding practices and mass media received not much attention in research. The present study used cross-sectional research to examine the variables. It is a form of research design which studies people in different areas during the same period of time. For the present study, the researcher has selected Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. It is easily approachable as the investigator belongs to this area. Aligarh is a city in the Northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Good sample size must be representative of the entire population. In the present study, Kinder Garten students in the age group 3-6 years and their Parents from CBSE Schools of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, were taken. West Uttar Pradesh was selected as target population to generalize the results. The multi-stage purposive random sampling technique has been used in the present study.

The initial data collection was done with a self-prepared Demographic Questionnaire. This schedule elicited information about the student age, gender, height, weight, ordinal position, parents marital status, mothers qualification and mothers professional level. CRP Questionnaire is also used and is designed to measure mass media impact on breastfeeding practices and CRP in Urban and Rural areas according to the lifestyle prevailing in both regions. The questionnaire was designed and subsequently tested in a pilot study survey made at the initial phase of the investigation. Thereafter a comprehensive survey was conducted and data was collected from the parents of students studying in KG in CBSE schools of Aligarh.

The questionnaire cum interview schedule was given to the students of Kinder Garden and their parents who came for parents’ teacher meeting. The parents were briefed about the aim of the study and the answering mode. Data collection was carried out during

academic session 2017-2018. For the present study, only those respondents who were willing to participate are included. To avoid psychological harm to the subjects, the privacy of the respondents is kept in mind. Permissions from Principals of the CBSE schools and parents of KG students were taken so that the following study can be done in a systematic process.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To begin with results it is necessary to mention that the study was focused in the Aligarh district. There were a total of 400 respondents from different age groups, family background and socio-economic status. The answers for the current question were taken from the respondents with the help of questionnaire cum interview schedule. Mothers of children from 3-6 years were my target population and these belong to various rural and urban parts of Aligarh.

As mothers education plays a significant role in maintaining a family environment and it is depicted in her child-rearing practices.

Various demographic variables were asked from respondents and the mother's educational status was low as compared to urban mothers as far as higher qualification is considered that only 20 respondent was highly educated in rural areas when on the other hand 107 mothers were highly qualified in urban areas of Aligarh (Table 1). A single mother was found having

below matric level education in urban areas whereas 35 mothers were there not having matriculation certificate in rural areas.

In today's world working mother is becoming a need of a middle-income group family in order to satisfy all the needs of their offspring, and to financially support her better-half. Mother's educational status also encourage them for a job as after being qualified all girls want to contribute to the society in one or the other way. Mother's professional level directly or indirectly affects her child-rearing practices. Most of the times working mothers become dependent on paid caregivers or in-laws for the rearing practices of her child, even though she wants her child to be reared in a proper way but sometimes she lacks because of her dual responsibility. The professionalism is increasing in mothers in recent years and it can be observed from Table 2. The mothers in the rural areas are less job oriented than the mothers in urban areas. Out of a total of 200 mothers in rural areas, only 42 mothers were engaged in different job works, whereas in urban areas 88 mothers were being engaged in one or the other professional level. Although a very limited amount of mothers were on a higher professional level, the mothers of this district are trying to become a helping hand for their family.

The mother's breastfeeding practices are highly influenced by the source of knowledge they get from various ways and hence, H_0 is rejected at 0.05 confidence

Table 1: Mothers educational status

		Domicile		Total
		Rural	Urban	
Mothers education	Below matriculation	35	1	36
	Matriculation	34	6	40
	Senior Secondary	55	29	84
	Graduation	56	57	113
	Post-graduation	18	87	105
	Ph D.	2	20	22
	Total	200	200	400

Table 2: Mothers professional level

		Domicile		Total
		Rural	Urban	
Professional level mothers	Unemployed	158	112	270
	Class IV	14	6	20
	Class III	16	21	37
	Class II	9	49	58
	Class I	3	12	15
	Total	200	200	400

level. Majority of mothers were practicing best breastfeeding in urban and rural areas but the impact of mass media on breastfeeding practices of mothers seems to be low in rural areas (1%) as compared to mothers living in urban areas (57.5%) (Table 3).

To investigate whether breastfeeding practices are influenced by knowledge, a chi-square statistic was conducted. Assumptions were checked and rejected. Table 4 shows the Pearson chi-square results and indicate that the mothers were not having the perceived impact of mass media on their breastfeeding practices ($\chi^2 = 15.73$, $df = 4$, $N=400$, $p=.003$) as they are getting knowledge regarding breastfeeding from their elders and doctors in the same manner.

The co-relation statistical analysis is used to see

the relation of various demographic variables with the mother's breastfeeding practices. The breastfeeding practices of mothers were highly related to various demographic variables such as the community they live and their educational status and professional level and hence, H_0 is rejected at 95 per cent confidence interval (Table 5). The correlation of breastfeeding practices with the area the mothers are living is $r(398) = .18$, $p = .001$, hence, we can say that the breastfeeding practices are different in urban and rural areas of Aligarh and feeding practices are strongly associated with the place where mothers live. The relation of professional level of mothers with their breastfeeding practices is found to be negatively correlated $r(398) = -.02$, $p = .766$, on the other hand the professional level of mothers is highly

Table 3: Knowledge source of mothers residing in urban and rural areas

Domicile	Knowledge source			Total		
	Elders	Dr.	Mass media			
Rural	Breast feeding	Wrong feeding practices	9	3	0	12
		Good feeding practices	8	2	0	10
		Best feeding practices	98	78	2	178
Urban	Breast feeding	Good feeding practices	0	5	0	5
		Best feeding practices	32	48	115	195
Total			147	136	117	400

Table 4 : Impact of knowledge source on mothers breast feeding practice

	Chi-square tests		
	Value	Df	Asymp.sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	15.733 ^a	4	.003
Likelihood ratio	22.323	4	.000
Linear-by-linear association	13.711	1	.000
N of valid cases	400		

Table 5 : Association of various variables with mothers breastfeeding practices

			Feeding	Domicile	Mother's professional level	Mother;s education
Spearman's rho	Feeding	Correlation co-efficient	1.000	.172**	-.015	.151**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.766	.002
		N	400	400	400	400
Domicile	Breast feeding	Correlation co-efficient	.172**	1.000	.284**	.543**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000	.000
		N	400	400	400	400
Mother's professional level	Breast feeding	Correlation co-efficient	-.015	.284**	1.000	.528**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.766	.000	.	.000
		N	400	400	400	400
Mother;s education	Breast feeding	Correlation co-efficient	.151**	.543**	.528**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.
		N	400	400	400	400

** indicate significance of value at P=0.01 level (2-tailed)

related $r(398) = .29, p = .000$, to area they live as mothers living in urban areas are more job oriented than the mothers residing in rural areas. The education of mothers is highly correlated with breastfeeding practices, area and mothers professional level as a mother having good academic qualification are practicing good breastfeeding practices.

Conclusion:

The mass media is having an impact on mother's breastfeeding practices to some extent in urban areas of Aligarh whereas in rural areas no perceived impact is seen, as mothers are following practices told by their elders and doctors. Although mothers in both regions i.e. urban and rural areas are practicing best breastfeeding practices for their child and are also having an adequate amount of educational status and it can be assumed that the perceived impact of mass media will increase in rural areas also.

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