

## EXISTING CLOTHING PRACTICES OF URBAN LACTATING WOMEN



### Textile

**KEYWORDS:** Lactation, Nursing clothes, Urban, Designed dresses

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### ABSTRACT

Lactation is a period when women experiences physical as well as psychological changes. This period leads a woman to another level of maturity, i.e. her motherhood. She has her own demands and needs during this period, so her demand during lactation for dressing will be different from normal condition. Like absorbent type texture, looseness and the most important is specially designed dress so that she has no need to lift up the shirt while feeding her child and has extra home for free movement. Woman can improve herself by wearing proper dress, which can be created by using varied design techniques in an appropriate way. Color and design being the fundamental elements in dress if properly used enhance the personality of an individual. It is possible by developing an understanding of design that one can select clothing that will fulfill the wearer's desire. Most of the lactating mothers just wear ordinary suits in which it looks very awkward while feeding the child and she feels herself out of place, even in markets, dresses specially meant for lactating mothers are not available. So it is very important to design construct some specially designed dresses for lactating mothers keeping in mind the comfort ability, becomingness and functionality regarding lactation. A study on existing clothing pattern of dress for lactating mothers and problems encountered was conducted with the same motive. To find out the availability of various casual wear, formal wear and night wear for lactating women, many leading shops/showrooms/malls of readymade garments of Hisar city were visited. Twenty Five urban lactating women were randomly selected from maternity and children hospitals to know their clothing practices during lactation period and problems encountered with existing clothing practices during lactation period. It was found during survey that most of the urban women were not satisfied with their existing clothing practices during lactation period and wanted to change it by adding additional features in their dresses to make these comfortable and trendy.

### INTRODUCTION

Clothing is one of the basic needs of our life. Every individual needs some kind of thing or other to protect, to cover and to beautify his/her body, which is of great importance to him/her. Clothing is one of the most important factors in the development of an individual personality. It influences a person socially, psychologically and emotionally. Personality to a certain extent is affected by appropriate selection and fit of clothing. A certain amount of confidence and security is obtained by the individual from an appropriate dress. Clothes do not necessarily 'make a person' but they do go a long way towards building up a feeling of satisfaction and well being.

A dress should be suitable for the person for whom it has been designed. Some of the important considerations which should be taken are climate of the region, season of the year for which the garment is made, the time or type of occasion when it is most likely to be worn, the type of role and age of person. As the need regarding clothes varies, the choice of color, material and print also differs from person to person. These variations are due to difference in age, personality, sex and role the individual has to play.

Every change in a life- situation- birth, entering school, college, getting a job, marriage, parenthood and even death requires a change in wardrobe. Even in the course of daily life, situation after situation requires a change in dress to facilitate and symbolize the situational change.

Lactation is a period when women experiences physical as well as psychological changes. This period leads a woman to another level of maturity, i.e. her motherhood. She has her own demands and needs during this period, so her demand during lactation for dressing will be different from normal condition. Like absorbent type texture, looseness (comfort) and the most important is specially designed dress so that she has no need to lift up the shirt while feeding her child and has extra home for free movement. 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 lactating women. (Khatri, 2016)

One can improve herself by wearing proper dress, which can be

created by using varied design techniques in an appropriate way. Color and design being the fundamental elements in dress if properly used enhance the personality of an individual. One thing that is essential for all nursing moms is a good wardrobe of breastfeeding clothes (Lawrence, 2005). It is possible by developing an understanding of design that one can select clothing that will fulfill the wearer's desire. Nursing clothes make feeding to infant easier and more enjoyable (Anonymous, 2015).

Most of the lactating mothers just wear ordinary suits in which it looks very awkward while feeding the child and she feels herself out of place, even in markets, dresses specially meant for lactating mothers are not available. So it is very important to design and construct some specially designed dresses for lactating mothers keeping in mind the comfort ability, becomingness and functionality regarding lactation. A study on existing clothing pattern of dress for urban lactating mothers and problems encountered was conducted with the same motive.

### TECHNICAL PLAN OF WORK

To find out the availability of various casual wear, formal wear and night wear for lactating women, many leading shops/showrooms/malls of readymade garments of Hisar city were visited. Twenty five urban lactating women were randomly selected from maternity and children hospitals, nearby localities of Hisar city to know their clothing practices during lactation period.

The data regarding existing clothing pattern of dress for lactating mothers and problems encountered with existing clothing practices during lactation period was collected with the help of self-structured interview schedule.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section includes the information regarding personal profile of respondents, problems encountered with existing clothing practices during lactation period and existing clothing practices of urban lactating women.

**Table 1: Personal profile of Urban Lactating Women (N=25)**

| Variables | Categories | Urban Lactating Women |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Age       | 15-25      | 4 (16)                |

|             |               |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|
|             | 26-35         | 17 (68) |
|             | 36-45         | 4 (16)  |
|             | 45-55         | -       |
| Education   | Matric        | -       |
|             | 10+2          | -       |
|             | Graduate      | 4 (16)  |
|             | Post-graduate | 21 (84) |
| Family type | Nuclear       | 21 (84) |
|             | Joint         | 4 (16)  |
| Occupation  | Service       | 13 (52) |
|             | Business      | 5 (20)  |
|             | Housewife     | 7 (28)  |

Data in Table 1 indicated that majority of urban lactating women (68%) belonged to age group 26-35 years followed by 15-25 and 36-45 of age group (16% each).

A large majority of urban women (84%) were post-graduate followed by 16% with graduation. Urban women belonged to nuclear family type (84%) and around half of the urban women were working, doing service (52%).

Thus, urban women belonged to age group 26-35 years, were post-graduate and belonged to nuclear family (84%) and working (52%).

**Table 2: Problems encountered with existing clothing practices during lactation period**

| N=25    |                                                   |             |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Sr. No. | Problems                                          | Respondents |
| 1.      | Improper ease allowance makes feeding difficult   | 16 (100%)   |
| 2.      | Front openings upto burst level are not practical | 12 (75.0%)  |
| 3.      | Hooks get entangled with child's clothes          | 11 (68.75%) |
| 4.      | Lifting of <i>kameez</i> is uncomfortable         | 13 (81.25%) |

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that all the urban women were not satisfied with the ease allowance provided in *kameez* during lactation period followed by problems with fasteners that hooks get entangled with child's clothes (79.6%) faced by urban women. Majority of urban women also considered lifting of *kameez* uncomfortable during feeding. Near about three-fourth of urban (73.4%) women were not satisfied with the length of openings used in dresses of lactating women.

Thus, all the urban women were facing problem with the amount of ease allowance provided in the *kameez*, type of fasteners (79.6%) lifting of *kameez* for feeding (76.5%) and length of openings in the *kameez* (73.4%) used during lactation period.

**Table 3: Existing clothing practices of urban lactating women (N=25)**

| Dresses                                         | Respondents          |                      |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                                                 | Formal wear<br>F (%) | Casual wear<br>F (%) | Night wear<br>F (%) |
| Long straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i>  | 22 (88)              | 15 (60)              | 2 (8)               |
| Short straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i> | 24 (96)              | 17 (68)              | 3 (12)              |
| Long straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i>  | 22 (88)              | 3 (12)               | -                   |
| Short straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i> | 19 (76)              | 2 (8)                | -                   |
| Flared <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i>         | 2 (8)                | -                    | -                   |
| Flared <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i>         | 21 (84)              | -                    | -                   |
| <i>Kurti</i> with legging                       | 19 (76)              | 19 (76)              | 7 (28)              |
| Saree                                           | 23 (92)              | -                    | -                   |
| Top/T-shirt with skirt                          | -                    | 6 (24)               | 6 (24)              |
| T-shirt with <i>pyjama</i>                      | -                    | 24 (96)              | 24 (96)             |
| Nighty                                          | -                    | 6 (16)               | 23 (92)             |
| Any other                                       | -                    | -                    | -                   |

#### Multiple responses

Data regarding existing clothing practices of urban and rural

lactating women has been presented in Table 3. It is clear from the data that overwhelming majority (96%) of urban lactating women wore short straight *kameez* with *salwar* for formal wear followed by saree worn by 92% respondents. Long straight *kameez* with *salwar* and *pyjama* separately were worn by 88% of respondents followed by flared *kameez* with *pyjama* (84%) worn by urban women for formal wear. A few i.e. 8% urban women also used to wear flared *kameez* with *salwar*. None of the urban lactating women was using top/T-shirt with skirt and T-shirt with *pyjama* for formal wear.

Thus, majority of urban women wore short straight *kameez* with *salwar* followed by saree, long straight *kameez* with *salwar* and *pyjama* for formal wear.

A large majority of urban women (96%) wore T-shirt with *pyjama* for casual wear. Majority of urban women (76%) also used to wear *Kurti* with legging followed by short straight *kameez* with *salwar* and long straight *kameez* with *salwar*, worn by 68% and 60% of respondents, respectively. Twenty four per cent urban women were also using top/T-shirt with skirt for casual wear followed by nighty, worn by 16% respondents. A few i.e. 12% and 8% urban lactating women were also using long *kameez* with *pyjama* and short *kameez* with *pyjama*, respectively. None of the urban respondents used to wear flared *kameez* with *salwar* and *pyjama* separately and saree for casual wear. Data pertaining to existing practices of lactating women for night wear indicated that majority of urban respondents (96%) wore T-shirt with *pyjama* and night wear followed by nighty worn by 92% urban respondents. *Kurti* with legging and top/T-shirt with skirt were worn by 28% and 24% respondents, respectively. Short *kameez* with *salwar* and long *kameez* with *salwar* were worn by 12% and 8% respondents as night wear. None of the urban respondents wore long straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, short straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, flared *kameez* with *salwar* and *pyjama* separately and saree.

#### CONCLUSION

It was found that not a single leading shop/showroom/mall of Hisar city was having specific garment for lactating women. Urban were not satisfied with their existing dresses because of amount of ease allowance provided in the *kameez* and length of opening in the *kameez*. It was found that most of the lactating women were not satisfied with their existing clothing practices during lactation period and wanted to change it by adding additional features in their dresses to make these comfortable and trendy. Improper ease allowance makes feeding difficult, front openings upto burst level are not practical, hooks get entangled with child's clothes and lifting of *kameez* is uncomfortable were the most common problems encountered by the lactating women.

#### REFERENCES

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