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Vivek Singh
Department of Textile and
Apparel Designing, I. C.
College of Home Science,
CCSHAU, Hisar, Haryana,
India

Nisha Arya
Department of Textile and
Apparel Designing, I. C.
College of Home Science,
CCSHAU, Hisar, Haryana,
India

Clothing practices of rural lactating mothers

Vivek Singh and Nisha Arya

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. Twenty five rural 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 rural 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.

Keywords: Clothing practices, rural lactating mothers, psychological changes, motherhood

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 (Lawrence *et al.* 2005)^[1]. 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

Correspondence
Vivek Singh
Department of Textile and
Apparel Designing, I. C.
College of Home Science,
CCSHAU, Hisar, Haryana,
India

clothes become awkward and embarrassing. Thus, there is a great need to design clothing for lactating women. (Khatri, 2016) [2].

Hence, a study on existing clothing pattern of dress of lactating mothers and problems encountered by them during this period was conducted.

Technical plan of work

To find out the availability of various casual wear, formal wear and night wear for rural lactating women, many leading shops/showrooms/malls of readymade garments of Hisar city were visited. Twenty five rural lactating women were randomly selected from maternity and children hospitals 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 rural lactating women.

Table 1: Personal profile of rural lactating women (n=25)

Variables	Categories	Rural (25)
Age	15-25	19 (76)
	26-35	6 (24)
	36-45	-
	45-55	-
Education	Matric	4 (16)
	10+2	7 (28)
	Graduate	11 (44)
Family type	Post-graduate	3 (12)
	Nuclear	6 (24)
Occupation	Joint	19 (76)
	Service	7 (28)
	Business	3 (12)
	Housewife	15 (60)

Data in Table 1 indicated that majority of urban lactating women (68%) belonged to age group 26-35 years while a large majority of rural women (76%) were from 15-25 years of age group.

A large majority of rural women (76%) were from joint family type and were housewife (60%).

Thus, rural women (76%) were from 15-25 years of age group, graduate (44%) belonged to joint family type (76%) and were housewife (60%).

Table 2: Problems encountered with existing clothing practices during lactation period n=25

Sr. No.	Problems	Respondents
1.	Improper ease allowance makes feeding difficult	14 (56 %)
2.	Front openings upto burst level are not practical	10 (40%)
3.	Hooks get entangled with child’s clothes	6 (24%)
4.	Lifting of <i>kameez</i> is uncomfortable	13 (52 %)

*Multiple Responses

The data presented in Table-2 revealed that 56 % rural women were not satisfied with the ease allowance provided in *kameez* during lactation period. Half of the rural women also considered lifting of *kameez* uncomfortable during feeding. Forty percent of rural women were not satisfied with the length of openings used in dresses of lactating

women and twenty four percent respondents faced problems with fasteners that hooks get entangled with child’s clothes. Thus, more than half of the rural women were facing problem with the amount of ease allowance provided in the *kameez*, type of fasteners, lifting of *kameez* for feeding and length of openings in the *kameez* used during lactation period.

Table 3: Existing clothing practices of rural lactating women (n=25)

Dresses	Respondents		
	Formal wear	Casual wear	Night wear
	Rural n=25 F (%)	Rural n=25 F (%)	Rural n=25 F (%)
Long straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i>	25 (100)	25 (100)	25 (100)
Short straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i>	19 (76)	19 (76)	19 (76)
Long straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i>	12 (48)	3 (12)	3 (12)
Short straight <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i>	-	-	-
Flared <i>kameez</i> with <i>salwar</i>	2 (8)	2 (8)	2 (8)
Flared <i>kameez</i> with <i>pyjama</i>	12 (48)	4 (16)	-
<i>Kurti</i> with legging	-	-	-
Saree	20 (80)	4 (16)	-
Top/T-shirt with skirt	-	-	-
T-shirt with <i>pyjama</i>	-	3 (12)	3 (12)
Nighty	-	3 (12)	3 (12)
Any other	-	-	2 (8)

Multiple responses

Data regarding existing clothing practices of rural lactating women has been presented in Table-3. It is clear from the data that all the rural lactating women used to wear long straight *kameez* with *salwar* and saree also for formal wear followed by short straight *kameez* with *salwar*, which was

worn by 76% rural women. Near about half of the respondents (48%) also wore flared *kameez* with *pyjama* and long straight *kameez* with *pyjama* followed by (12%) flared *kameez* with *salwar* (8%).

Rural women didn't use short straight *kameez* with *pyjama* and *Kurti* with legging for formal wear.

All the rural lactating women used to wear long straight *kameez* with *salwar* for casual wear. Flared *kameez* with *pyjama* and saree were worn by 16% of rural women. Long straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, T-shirt with *pyjama* and nighty were worn by 12% of rural respondents for casual wear. None of the rural lactating women wore short straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, *Kurti* with legging and T-shirt with skirt for casual wear.

Data pertaining to existing practices of lactating women for night wear indicated that all the rural respondents used to wear long straight *kameez* with *salwar* followed by short *kameez* with *salwar* by 76% respectively. Nighty as night wear was worn by only 12% of rural 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. Long straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, T-shirt with *pyjama* and nighty were worn by 12% rural respondents and 8% rural respondents also wore flared *kameez* with *salwar* and gent's *kurta* as night dress. Rural lactating women didn't wear short straight *kameez* with *pyjama*, flared *kameez* with *pyjama*, *Kurti* with legging, saree and top/T-shirt with skirt.

Conclusion

Rural women 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 rural women faced problem with their existing clothing practices during lactation period and wanted to change it by adding additional features in their dresses to make these comfortable.

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