

## ABSTRACT

# Role of Fathers in Rearing Infants

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The present study was conducted to assess the role of fathers in rearing infants (0-1 year) attending under-five clinic of the Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab.

The research project was undertaken by Mrs Florence John Mall in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Nursing of the Punjab University, Chandigarh, in May 1993.

### The Objectives

1. To assess the role of fathers in rearing of infants.

2. To compare the role of husbands of employed wives with those of unemployed wives in rearing their infants.

3. To find out the relationship of father's infant rearing practices score with selected variables like age, religion, type of family, place of living, level of education and income of father.

The Descriptive Non-Experimental Approach was used. The independent variables were age, education of the father, type of family, income, religion and place of living.

The dependent variable was the father's infant rearing practices score, Self-Structured Interview Schedule was used to obtain data personally. It contained thirty-five items which were categorised under six broad headings. Besides this demographic data was also collected.

A Pilot Study was conducted in October, 1993. Reliability of the tool was calculated ( $r = 0.91$ ) by test-retest

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method. Purposive Sampling Technique was used to study father's IRPS in a selected hospital of Ludhiana in January 1994.

Data obtained were analysed using Descriptive and Inferential Statistics and shown with Bar and Pie Diagrams.

### Major Conclusions

The Major conclusions drawn on the basis of the study findings were that fathers do participate in infant rearing. Their participation is the least in nutrition (7.83) and maximum (21.03) in socialising need of the infants. Husbands with employed wives living in urban, nuclear families were more involved in infant rearing than the husbands having unemployed wives and living in rural joint families. Christian fathers give more participation in infant rearing than fathers belonging to other communities like the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Muslims. Data also revealed that as the fathers' age increases their participation in infant rearing also increases regardless of their educational level. Fathers in the middle income group participate more in infant rearing as compared to the fathers in the upper and lower income groups.

### Implications

The findings which have been made are useful and important for Nursing Practice and Nursing Education.

#### (i) Nursing Practice

Nurses are in strategic position to assist the new father in his

acquaintance with and early adjustment to his infant. The Maternal Child Health Nurses educate the fathers as follows :

- Can encourage fathers to attend under-five clinics.

- Regular planned health talks can be organised in the under-five clinics for fathers.

- They can demonstrate how to handle and care for the new born and instruct the fathers about normal infant development.

- Nurses can help fathers to practise caring skills with the new born child, the father's self concept as a parent may be enhanced.

- Counselling and guidance can be provided during role transition.

#### (ii) Nursing Education

(a) The Nursing curriculum must include and emphasise on the father's role in related subjects. The Nurses should assess and try to meet the learning needs of the new father regarding infant care, growth and development and early neonatal behaviour.

(b) Guidance and counselling on transition to parenthood can be included in post-graduation courses.

(c) The primary importance of the father's role in nurturing the new born infant.

### Major Recommendations

Study can be replicated to validate the findings. Comparative time and work studies can be conducted. Knowledge and practice score of fathers can be studied. Studies can be done on larger samples from cross-sectional societies to draw the generalisation. □