

## FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD CHOICES DURING LACTATION IN KUMAON REGION OF UTTARAKHAND

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### ABSTRACT

*Breast milk is the best for an infant is a universally accepted fact. Breastfeeding feeding babies among the population is affected by many cultural religious, social and family influences. False beliefs about food restrict mothers to consume /restrict certain foods on the other hand, lactating mothers require extra calories, protein, vitamin, and minerals which increase the quality of milk and maintain the store of mother's. The study included 197 lactating mothers from Kumaon, who had a baby 0-6 months of age. It was found that 91.37 per cent mothers were excluding more than two food items from the diet out of which 25.89 per cent respondents were vegetarian, 56.85 per cent respondents were non-vegetarian and 17.26 per cent respondents were eggitarian. Out of total mothers from non vegetarian group 81.25 per cent were excluding non-veg food like meat, chicken, fish etc and 87 per cent excluded eggs and those who were eggitarian 91.18 per cent were excluding eggs, suggesting during lactation period the changed food habits of mother affect mothers health as usually quality of milk is least affected but affects mothers status. Other food items being avoided were : whole pulses (71.66 per cent), fruits (95.55 per cent), curd/buttermilk (95.55 per cent), rice (96.11 per cent), millets (92.22 per cent), nuts (71.11 per cent), green leafy vegetables (87.22 per cent), peas (90 per cent), brinjal (88.33 per cent), potato (74.44 per cent), Colocasia (89.44 per cent), cauliflower and cabbage (93.33 per cent), cucumber and raw tomato (89.44 per cent) and cold food (95 per cent),this clearly showed that health of mother, in turn, her baby is at risk due to these cultural beliefs.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Mother Health, Infant Feeding, Breast Milk, Cultural Beliefs*