

## Infant Care Practice in Hadiya Culture: Case Study of Harche Auyaya

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**Abstract :** Feeding and weaning practices vary from culture to culture and depend on different child-rearing values. The socio-cultural dimensions that influence the acceptable infant feeding practices are varied and complex. Understanding cultural differences in beliefs and practices relating to infant feeding is important to enhance designing programs for delivering successful psychological, social, physiological and economic well-being of mothers and infants. The main purpose of this study was exploring mothers infant feeding practices in the context of Hadiyya culture. After purposively selecting Harche Huyaya Uyaya Kebele eight infant feeding mothers were selected using snowball sampling technique. The study employed interviews and focus group discussion. The study found out early initiation and prolonged breastfeeding and early complementary feeding in some instances immediately after birth. In addition, infants were not forced to wean unless the mothers encounter pressing issues like pregnancy and health related problems. Furthermore, the main weaning techniques were putting unpleasant materials on the tip of nipples and sending infants to grandparents home. The study also found out gender difference in weaning, i.e., early initiation of weaning for girls. This can be indicative of gender-based bias on weaning practice. Finally, health extension workers, office of women and children affairs and Hadiyya Zone Tourism office should organize awareness raising programs to preserve vital infant feeding practices like prolonged breastfeeding and length of weaning. In addition, the offices should raise awareness among communities on negative side effects of sending infant to grandparents home that may weaken infant-mothers attachment and create favorable ground for the development of phobia.

**Keywords :** feeding, infant, practices, weaning

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