PERSONAL HYGIENE, HABITS AND HEALTH STATUS
CHAPTER - V

PERSONAL HYGIENE, HABITS AND HEALTH STATUS

One of the most effective ways we have to protect others and ourselves from illness is personal habits and hygiene. Personal hygiene is the first step to good grooming and good health. The health of the individual depends on the fulfillment of the basic needs of the body and mind and the normal functioning of the body mechanisms. It is the balance between understanding of life and thought and action into practice. Good health status of the every individual is not inborn. It has to be practiced, nurtured and depends on personal care and hygiene. Personal hygiene deals with matters pertaining to health of individual himself, therefore, for the maintenance of which the responsibility lies with him.

Hygiene and good habits are commonly understood as preventing infection through cleanliness. In broader sense, hygiene is the maintenance of health and healthy living (Wikipedia, 2006).

Hygiene is defined as the science concerned with the prevention of illness and maintenance of health. It is the study of preserving and promoting the health of both the individual and the community hygiene has many aspects:
a) **Personal hygiene** – Proper living habits, cleanliness of body and clothing, healthful diet, a balanced regimen of rest and exercise

b) **Domestic hygiene** – Sanitary preparation of food, cleanliness and ventilation of the home

c) **Public hygiene** – Supervision of water and food supply, containment of communicable diseases, disposal of garbage and sewage, control of air and water pollution

d) **Industrial hygiene** – Measures that minimize occupational disease and accident and

e) **Mental hygiene** – Recognition of mental and emotional factors in healthful living

According to Anthony Burgess “Bath twice a day to really clean, once a day to be passably clean, once a week to avoid being a public menace”.

Gilbert K. Chesterton says “Man does not live by soap alone; and hygiene is not much good unless you can take a healthy view of it”.

A Lebanese Proverb says, “Hygiene is two thirds of health”. 
Henry Miller viewed “Nine-tenths of our sickness can be prevented by right thinking plus right hygiene” (Quoted in www.answers.com).

Thus, good hygiene should be the part of every human being, because it gives an aid to health, comfort and social interactions. It directly helps in disease prevention and / or disease isolation.

Hygienic Practices

Every human being has to practice hygienic activities. Some of them are -

Personal hygiene

- Daily washing of the body and hair.
- More frequent washing of hands and / or face.
- Oral hygiene – daily brushing and flossing teeth.
- Cleaning of the clothes and living area.
- General avoidance of bodily fluids such as feces, urine, vomit.
- Not touching animals before eating.
- Avoidance of direct or indirect contact with unhygienic people.
- Holding a tissue over the mouth or using the upper arm/elbow region when coughing or sneezing, not a bare hand. Alternatively, washing hands afterwards.
- Suppression of habits such as nose picking, touching the face etc.
- Washing hands before eating.
- Not licking fingers before picking up sheets of paper.
- Not biting nails.
Food safety

- Maintain good food and cooking hygiene to prevent food poisoning.
- Cleaning of food preparation areas and equipment for example using designated cutting boards for preparing raw meats and vegetables.
- Through cooking of meats.
- Institutional dish sanitizing.
- Washing of hands after touching uncooked food when preparing meals.
- Not using the same utensils to prepare different foods.
- Non-sharing of cutlery when eating.
- Not licking fingers or hands while or after eating.
- Proper storage of food so as to prevent contamination by vermin.
- Refrigeration of foods (and avoidance of certain foods in environments where refrigeration is or was not feasible).
- Labeling food to indicate when it was produced (or, as food manufacturers prefer, to indicate its best before date).
- Disposal of uneaten food and packaging.

Medicine

- Use of bandaging and dressing of wounds.
- Use of protective clothing such as masks, gowns, caps, eyewear and gloves.
- Sterilization of instruments used in surgical procedures.
- Safe disposal of medical waste.
Personal services

- Sterilization of instruments used by hairdressers.
- Sterilization by autoclave of instruments used in body piercing and tattoo marking.

Grooming

The related term personal grooming / grooming means to enhance one’s physical appearance or appeal for others, by removing obvious imperfections in one’s appearance or improving one’s hygiene. Grooming in humans typically includes bathroom activities such as primping: washing and cleansing the hair, combing it to extract tangles and snarls, and styling. It can also include cosmetic care of the body, such as shaving and other forms of depilation.

Importance of Personal Hygiene in Islam

Muslims enjoy the highest standard of personal hygiene of all the people in the world (maxpages.com). In Islam cleanliness and purification are not only requirements for the performance of worship or when embracing Islam, but are part of a Muslim’s very faith. As it very truly mentioned in Quran “...Truly, Allah loves those who turn into Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and
cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.” The Quran, (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 222).

Cleanliness in Islam is of three kinds:

1. Purification from impurity (i.e. to attain purity or cleanliness, by taking bath (ghusl) or performing ablution (wudu) in states in which a bath or ablution is necessary or desirable according to Islamic Law).

2. To cleans one’s body, dress or place from an impurity of filth.

3. To remove the dirt or grime that collect in various parts of the body, such as cleaning the teeth and nostrils, the trimming of nails and the removing of armpit and pubic hair.

**GHUSL (A COMPLETE BATH)**

This is when all parts of the body are thoroughly washed. Ghusl is required of every Muslim after marital intercourse, after wet dreams, after childbirth, and after post-partum bleeding (40 days flow of blood, and final yellowish discharge has completely stopped), and each month after menstruation and final yellowish discharge has stopped.

**WUDU (A SIMPLE ABLUTION)**

This simple ablution is necessary before prayer in the following cases:

- After urinating or defecating
- If one breaks wind
- If one falls asleep lying down
- If one loses consciousness
- If one directly touches the genitals
- If one becomes excited, leading to a subsequent discharge.
The above cases also nullify one’s ablution, requiring a fresh one.

According to the Quran (Al-Maidah 5:6)

“O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. If you are in a state of Janaba (i.e. had sexual discharge), purify yourself (bathe your whole body)…”

Narrated Abu Huraira:

“Allah’s Apostle said, “The prayer of a person who does, Hadath (passes, urine, stool or wind) is not accepted till he performs (repeats) the ablution.” A person from Hadaramout asked Abu Huraira, “What is ‘Hadath’?” Abu Huraira replied, “‘Hadath’ means the passing of wind from the anus.”

TAYAMMUM (PURIFICATION WITHOUT WATER)

To put or strike lightly the hands over clean earth and then pass the palm of each on the back of the other, blow off the dust then pass them on the face. This is performed instead of ablution (Wudu) and Ghusl.

According to Quran (Al-Maidah 5:6) –

“... But if you are ill or on a journey or any of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (i.e. sexual intercourse) and you find no water, then perform Tayammun with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour on you that you may be thankful.”
Islamic toilet etiquette

The Islamic faith has particular rules regarding personal hygiene when going to the toilet. This code is known as *Qadaahul Haajah* and is extremely prescriptive. The rules were established during times before the invention of toilet paper or toilet seats. In many parts of the Moslem World, squat toilets are the norm and toilet paper remains rare and its use a matter of dispute. (Wikipedia.org)

Rules

The following rules should be observed by strict Muslims:

- One should say before entering the toilet: In the name of Allah, O Allah! I seek refuge with You from all offensive and wicked things (Al-Bukhaaree)
- One should enter the toilet with the left foot and leave with the right foot.
- It is not permissible to enter the toilet while carrying or wearing anything bearing the name of Allah in it, or jewelry such as bracelets or necklaces engraved with the name of Allah.
- One should remain silent while on the toilet. Talking, answering greetings or greeting others is forbidden.
- One should not face nor turn your back on Mecca while relieving yourself. One should sit at 90 degrees.
- One should be out of sight of people when going to the toilet.
- It is forbidden to relieve oneself while standing up, lying down or if one is completely nude.
- One should avoid going to the toilets anywhere where people may take rest or gather for any purpose.
- Do not raise clothes until one gets close to the ground and do not uncover the body any more than is needed.
- One should sit on the feet (e.g. squat) keeping thighs wide apart with the stress on the left foot.
- Do not look to the private parts of the body nor the waste matter passed from the body.
- Do not sit more than needed.
- Do not spit, blow nose, look hither and thither, touch the body unnecessarily nor look towards the sky but relieve oneself with the eyes downcast in modesty.
- After relieving oneself it is essential to perform Istinjaa (washing with water) of the anus and/or genitals with the left hand and water.
- Other than toilet paper, water and the left hand Istinjaa can be performed with earth, grit, stones and worn-out cloths provided they are all clean. It is forbidden to perform Istinjaa with bone, any edible item, dry dung, baked brick, potsherd, coal, fodder, writing paper and anything, which has even a small value.
- After this process the hands should also be washed.
- When leaving the toilet one should say the following prayer: Praise be to Allah who relieved me of the filth and gave me relief.

However, it is known that these rules are not compulsory to all Muslims, just the ones that are in Mecca itself near the Ka'aba. As a further note, many people believe that many points mentioned today are outdated since in modern times toilets have become clean tiles areas compared to thousands of years ago when they were confined areas in the desert.
In the background of the importance of personal hygiene in Islam and habits and its impact of overall health of human beings, an attempt has been made in this Chapter to examine the personal hygiene, habits of the respondents. In this Chapter, an attempt has been made to examine the health status and food habits of the respondents too.

I. PERSONAL HYGIENE

As we stated earlier personal hygiene is a combination of several practices and habits. Habit of eating, type of food, cleanliness with regard to their body and mouth, determine the personal hygiene of the people. Let us examine the respondents' hygiene level.

Cleanliness of mouth and teeth

Overall health of the people depends on the cleanliness of mouth and teeth. However, people give least importance to the cleanliness of mouth. Dental health is often depends on the cleanliness of mouth. Therefore, we asked the respondents to state the way they clean their teeth. The data about the same is provided in Table 5.1.

It is clear from the Table 5.1 that 86.3% of the respondents are used toothpaste to clean their teeth. Nevertheless, about one-fifth of them stated that they use charcoal as well as salt.
Table 5.1
Respondents’ habit of cleaning their teeth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Item used to clean teeth</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tooth paste</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(72.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tooth paste + Salt</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(13.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Charcoal + Salt</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Others *</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Leaves, Neem-stick, etc

Few respondents revealed they use mango leaves or neem sticks while cleaning their teeth.

Regularly taking Bath

Regular bath is essential requirement of every individual. It is needed for strong skin and internal organs. Therefore, bath is a sanitary need. As we mentioned earlier, Islam lays special emphasis on bathing. Therefore, we enquired with the respondents to state their regularity in bathing. It is seen from Table 5.2 that almost two-thirds (60.5%) of them take bath regularly, whereas about forty percent of them do not.
Table 5.2

Whether Respondents take bath regularly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Taking bath</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>227 (60.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Irregularly</td>
<td>148 (39.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is shocking to note that almost forty percent do not take bath regularly. Therefore, we asked the reason to state why they are not doing so. The reasons for their irregularity in taking bath are given in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Reasons for not taking bath regularly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Irregular supply of water</td>
<td>12 (13.79)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 (8.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Scarcity of water</td>
<td>52 (59.77)</td>
<td>41 (67.21)</td>
<td>93 (62.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>09 (10.34)</td>
<td>11 (18.03)</td>
<td>20 (13.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Lack of adequate bathing facility</td>
<td>14 (16.09)</td>
<td>09 (14.75)</td>
<td>23 (15.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>87 (100.0)</td>
<td>61 (100.0)</td>
<td>148 * (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Those respondents who do not take bath regularly
More than two-thirds (62.83%) of the respondents who do not take bath regularly remarked that because of scarcity of water, they skip from taking bath regularly. Most of the respondents during the field study complained about irregular and shortage of drinking water. 15.54% of them stated that they do not have adequate and comfortable place for bathing. They have to wait until late evening due to the lack of separate bathroom. As a result, most of the time they miss taking bath regularly.

Cleanliness of clothes

Along with brushing teeth and bathing, it is important to wear clean dresses. Therefore, a question was also asked with the respondents whether they wash their clothes everyday.

Table 5.4

Regular washing of clothes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Washing clothes</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>227 (60.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Irregularly</td>
<td>148 (39.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses provided in Table 5.4 show that about 40% of them do not wash their clothes daily. These 40% of them said that due to the
scarcity of water as well as due to its irregular supply, we are unable to wash our clothes daily.

**Habits of the Respondents (Socially Acceptable)**

Daily or routine habits have a significant bearing on health of an individual. Good habits maintain and sustain good health. Proper living habits provide human being sound health and body. However, due to external factors like outside home environment, peer group, working or living conditions make human beings fall pray to some good or bad habits. Therefore, an attempt has been made to examine such habits if any among the respondents.

**Offering Namaz/Prayer**

Namaz is one of the basic pillars of Islam. Every Muslim compulsorily has to offer Namaz five times a day. Prayers in Islam are called Namaz. There are the five names of prayer – *Fajhar* (the early Morning Prayer), *Zohar* (the noon prayer), *Asar* (the mid-afternoon prayer), *Magrib* (the sunset prayer) and *Isha* (the evening prayer). The best way to cultivate in man a sound personality and actualize his aspirations in a mature course of development is the Islamic Prayer. To neglect prayer is to oppress the good qualities in human nature.
To offer prayers one has to be clean in his mind and body. Offering Namaz regularly is like a food we consume. We require food daily; likewise not every Muslim should miss from Namaz. Regular Namaz makes every Muslim systematic, punctual in his life. Therefore, we enquired with the respondents to state about their offering Namaz. Information about the same is given in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5
Offering prayers by the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Offer Namaz</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>219 (87.60)</td>
<td>114 (91.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
<td>31 (12.40)</td>
<td>11 (8.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
<td>125 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is heartening to note from the Table 5.5 that, majority (88.8%) of the respondents reported that they offer Namaz. But, it is very important to see whether they perform Namaz regularly or not. The data provided in Table 5.6 make it clear that, almost three-fourth of the respondents never
do it regularly or five times a day. Nearly about one-fourth (22%) of the men respondents revealed that they offer Namaz only on Fridays.

Nearly two-thirds (56.8%) of women respondents also revealed that they are not doing Namaz on regular basis. Only about one-fifth (20.4%) of the men and 34.4% of women respondents expressed that, “we are not missing any time from offering Namaz.” It is the prime duty of every Muslim on this earth. From this, we can reiterate that the process of Islamization has not take place among most of the Muslims of sample area. They acquired Muslim names but never adhere to Islamic principles.

Table 5.6

Regularity in Namaz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Offer Namaz</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>51 (20.40)</td>
<td>43 (34.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Not regularly</td>
<td>113 (45.20)</td>
<td>71 (56.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Only on Friday</td>
<td>55 (22.00)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>31 (12.40)</td>
<td>11 (8.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
<td>125 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HABITS OF THE RESPONDENTS (Socially not acceptable)

Habit of Smoking

Smoking is a habit that is always injurious to health. It causes respiratory diseases, impairs oral hygiene and disturbs digestion. Smoking is not only injurious to the smoker; passive smoker also equally gets affected by its smoke. A smoker not only kills himself but also his family. Smoking is a major factor in the development of many cases of cancer, heart trouble, chronic lung and respiratory disease and other ailments.

Smoking and Islam

As we mentioned earlier Islam gives special emphasis of cleanliness. It is very well known that a smokers’ mouth is unclean and foul smelling like a cigarette ashtray. In the Quran it is well said –

"And forbid them what is bad." (Surah Al-Araf, 7:157)

"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling are an abominatin of Satan’s handiwork. Eschew such abominations that ye may prosper." (Sura Al Ma’idah, 5:93)

The word intoxicant has three meanings:

1) To induce, especially the effect of ingested alcohol
2) To stimulate or excite
3) To poison
The latter two meanings are very valid and applicable to nicotine.

Smoking is nothing but a form of slow suicide.

The Qur'an says:

“And slay not the life which God hath forbidden...” (Surah, Al-Isra, 17:33)

“And make not your own hands contribute to your destruction.” (Surah, Al-Baqara, 2:195)

“Nor kill or destroy yourselves for verily God hath been to you most Merciful.” (Surah, Al-Nisa, 4:29)

Prophet Mohammed has said:

“Not be hurt or injure others.” It is scientifically proven that the exhaled smoke of the smoker is hazardous to non-smokers around him. Thus, smoking is unlawful in Islam.

In this context, when we asked about their smoking habits, 33.6% of respondents reiterated that they smoke. We found most of the men who are living slum and other backward areas smoke mostly beedi. None of the women respondents of the study is having the habit of smoking (Table 5.7).
Table 5.7

Habit of smoking among the men respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Habit of smoking</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84 (33.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>166 (66.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Habit of Tobacco Chewing

Tobacco chewing, chewing beetles, beetle nuts, gutka packets are common now a days. Irrespective of age and sex, it is found among all sections of the population. Chewing tobacco leads to spitting, which is dangerous as it is responsible for spreading communicable diseases. Therefore, we asked the respondents about their chewing of tobacco. Responses given in Table 5.8 that, 16.8% of the respondents chew tobacco whereas some other chew beetles, beetle nuts, gutka packets.
Table 5.8

Habit of tobacco chewing among the men respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Whether chew Tobacco</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42 (16.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>94 (37.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Beetle nuts</td>
<td>31 (12.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gutka packets</td>
<td>83 (33.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income and Tobacco use

In India and other developing countries, it is well known that the least privileged groups are more prone to suffer from acute and chronic infections diseases and poverty is a major determinant of mortality (Dreze, J & Sen, A., 1996). Most of the diseases we found among the lower socio-economic groups. All these diseases are related to unhealthy life styles. Smoking and tobacco use among the people cause these diseases.

In this background, we attempted to examine the relationship between income and tobacco use among the respondents. The data shown in Table 5.9 make it clear that there is a close relationship between income and tobacco use. Almost three-fourth (72.43%) of the respondents who
take either gutka, tobacco are belonged to the income category of below Rs.10,000/-. Even though it is not totally missing in higher income groups, the incidence of taking tobacco is very negligible.

Table 5.9

Income and habit of chewing tobacco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Income (Rs.)</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Below 5,000</td>
<td>54 (34.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>5,001 - 10,000</td>
<td>59 (37.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10,001 - 15,000</td>
<td>20 (12.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>15,001 - 25,000</td>
<td>13 (8.33 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>25,001 - 50,000</td>
<td>07 (4.48 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>50,000 and above</td>
<td>03 (1.92 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smoking, tobacco use and educational status

One of the major determinants of population health is its health related behaviour. Increasing life expectancy is directly related to a shift in healthy life styles. Infact the data show that the number of adult smokers has come down in recent times. Awareness about healthy life styles, good habits, diseases, decreases health hazards.
Income and habit of chewing tobacco

Source: Table 5.9
In most of the countries smoking and tobacco is prevalent among the least privileged groups. These groups are unhealthiest and face the largest health inequalities. In developing countries where illiteracy is rampant, educational status could be an important determinant for many of these risk factors. Low level of illiteracy increases tobacco use and smoking, and therefore, cause more health hazards to the illiterate population most than the literate.

Diagrammatic representation of the relationship of illiteracy and tobacco use on the basis of available data of the present study

Fig. 1: Relationship of poverty with health. One of the pathways is via illiteracy greater smoking and tobacco use and ill health among the respondents

In the present study, poor people have significant material deprivation, illiteracy. For them dirty water, poor nutrition and unhygienic
living conditions are part of their life. Poverty breeds most of the socio-economic problems.

Consumption of Alcohol

Consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited to Muslims. In fact, intoxication is forbidden in the Quran through several verses. At first, it was forbidden for Muslims to attend prayers while intoxicated. The holy Quran says ‘O you who believe, do not approach prayer while you are drunken, until you understand what you say...” (Al-Nisa, 4:43) Then a later verse was revealed which said that alcohol contains some good and some evil, but the evil is greater than the good (2: 2190). Al-Baqarah and finally it is said ‘O you who believe, Intoxicants, gambling, idolatrous altars, dice to seek luck, all these are only an abomination, evil and are satanic works. So shun all these, in order that you may be successful... Shaitan wants only to breed enmity and hatred between you by means of intoxicants and gambling (Al-Maidah, 5: 90-91). Thus, Islam clearly prohibits the use of intoxicating substance whether it is wine, beer, gin, whiskey or whatever. But what about the Muslims? Therefore, we asked with respondents to state about the use of alcohol among them. When we asked this question only to men respondents, all the men respondents reiterated that they are not consuming alcohol. However, during the field
study, we came across many instances of drunkenness among Muslims. In slum areas, it is almost common practice. Muslims belonging to poor socio-economic background are the one who fall pray to the habit of consuming alcohol. Most of the auto drivers, labourers consume alcohol.

Food habits of the respondents

To maintain a pure heart and a sound mind, to nourish an aspiring soul and a clean healthy body, special emphasis should be given to the diet of human beings. Food and drinking stuff has direct effect on the general condition of the person who fills his stomach regularly. Food is an essential prerequisite of life and as such, the primary goal of eating and drinking is to enable the body to function normally. With food, or lack of it, the destinies of individuals are greatly influenced. We should “eat to live” and not “live to eat”. Therefore, one should always consume balanced diet. Nutritious food if consumed regularly, it guarantees good health status to human beings.

Islam and Food habits

Islam laid a distinctive importance to the dietary habits to its followers. It is mandatory for every Muslim to adhere to Islamic rules on diet. The general principle of Islam in this respect is this: “All the things
which are pure in themselves and good for man are lawful for diet as long as they are taken in moderate quantities, and all the things which are impure and bad or harmful are unlawful under all ordinary circumstances (Abdulati). The holy Quran says 'O mankind, eat of which is lawful and good things on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Surah Baqarah 2:168) and Surah, Al-Maidah 5:4).

The drinks, which Islam considers harmful and destructive to the human spirit and morality as well as to the physique and morale of man, are included in the Quranic verse, which forbids all intoxicants and all forms of gambling or games of chance.

A Balanced Diet – Prescribed in the Quran

The Quran has not restricted itself in merely mentioning the permissible and impermissible food but goes to the extent of giving useful tips regarding a balanced diet, a diet that contains most if not all the useful ingredients required for the growth, strengthening and repairing of the human body. These ingredients include animal protein, fat, calcium, iron, salts, etc. The most balanced diets consist of meat, fish, fresh milk, cheese and fruit. Both direct and indirect references have been made regarding the
aforementioned. The reference regarding the importance of meat protein in
the human diet is given in the following verse:

And the cattle, He has created them for you, in them there is
warmth (clothing) and numerous benefits, and of them you
eat." (16:5)

In this verse special reference has been given to the importance of
eating despite having said, "... numerous benefits...". Reference regarding
other types of meat has also been given such as the meat of fowls in the
following verse:

"And the flesh of fowls that they desire." (56:21)

Fish has always been considered as a food of very high protein and is
very important for human consumption. Allah says:

"And from them both (fresh and salt water) you eat fresh
tender meat (fish)." (35:12)

The usefulness of fresh milk is stressed in these words:

And verily in the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you
to drink of that which is in their bullies, from between
excretion and blood, pure milk, palatable to the drinkers." (16:66)

The benefits of fruits as good nourishment can be understood from this
verse:
And from the fruits of date palms and grapes, you desire strong drink and goodly provision." (16:67)

Similarly, there are verses which covert the whole range of fruits, salads, and vegetables, which also play an important role in a nutritious, balanced diet:

"It is He who sends down rain from the sky, and with it We bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and out of it We bring forth thick clustered grain. And out of the date palm and its spate come clusters of dates hanging low and near, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste). Look at their fruits when then begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof." (6:99)

Islam, being a complete religion, also teaches and advises the believer as to what the best method of eating is. The believers are advised to be moderate in every aspect of life. Direct reference has been made in the Noble Quran regarding moderation in eating and drinking.

And eat and drink, but waste not in extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not those who waste in extravagance." (7:31)

In the background of importance of food habits to human being, an attempt has been made to examine the food habits among the respondents. Therefore, a question was asked with the respondents about vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. All the respondents of the study said that they are non-vegetarians and also take vegetables. Further, a question was also
asked with the respondents about the types of non-vegetarian. All the respondents take most of the types of non-vegetarian items like Mutton, Chicken, fish, and beef. It is significant to note that about two-fifth of the respondents are taking beef.

Those who consume Mutton / Chicken, a question was asked about the frequency of taking these on an average in week. The data provided in Table 5.10 make it clear that about half of them consume non-vegetarian food once a week. It is also significant to note that 5.6% of the respondents said that they consume non-vegetarian daily and 31.7% of them consume once in two days. Thus, the level of non-vegetarian consumption is more among Muslims.

Table 5.10

Frequency of consuming mutton / chicken / beef in a week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>21 (5.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Once in 2 days</td>
<td>119 (31.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Once in 3 days</td>
<td>38 (10.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>195 (52.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Place of buying non-vegetarian

It is not only important what type of non-vegetarian people eat, it is important to know from which place they buy Mutton/Chicken/Fish/beef. The non-vegetarian is usually sold in non-vegetarian / fish market, usually the non-vegetarian they sell, available in good quality. However, it was found that most of the Muslims buy especially beef/Chicken nearby shops. Most of these mutton / chicken shops are in unhygienic conditions. These shops produce awful smells and are in unhygienic places. Local people hardly realize / feel the dirty smells they produce. 30.4% of the respondents of the present study told us that they buy chicken/mutton/beef from the shops located in their vicinity (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nearby shops</td>
<td>114 (30.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>261 (69.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of these shops are very poorly maintained and some of them are in almost on either side of the road. Wastes, blood generated from
these shops is going in front most of the houses through open drainage. These open drainages have become the breeding centre for flies and mosquitoes as well as stray dogs and pigs. In toto, the whole surrounding area produce ugly smell and unfit to live. Yet most of the poor ones live there.

II. HEALTH STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Health is an important aspect social section and healthy living is an important indication of development. Healthy life means free from illness and ailments. Everybody in the earth struggle to remain healthy, because it is one of the important assets of human beings. Health is real wealth; health is the man's most precious possession because health influences all activities and shapes the destiny of people. Without it, there can be no solid foundation for man's happiness. Therefore, health is a part of an individual and society.

It is important to note that, 'health' means not merely the absence of disease but it is psychological, social adjustment of an individual to the environment where he resides. An unhealthy person not only a burden to the family, but also to the community and society. Because, being healthy and being able to live long also brings some indirect benefits to individuals
or to the society as a whole. It enables release of resources that, otherwise, would be spent on treatment of ill health and ailments, at least, at household level and, perhaps at the level of public provisioning for some health care services. In the process, it influences distribution of resources and equity in well-being among people.” (NHDR, 2001).

Even though health is an essential ingredient for development, in India, the progress of health is far from satisfactory. No doubt, there is no considerable improvement in the life expectancy, because in morbidity and mortality levels, the overall health scenario is not encouraging. Crores of rupees are being spent on the health sector in India. But with all the resources, trained man power and even a reasonable health infrastructure at its command, a large part of the country continues to suffer from disease burden, morbidity as well as high mortality reflective of early stages of epidemiological transition.

Respondents' Health Status

In the background of the importance of health to human beings and health status of Muslims in India, an attempt has been made to examine the level of health, health related behaviour among the respondents.
Good health is a foundation of every society, and that foundation has to be strong and supportive. Therefore, a question was asked with the respondents reveal about their present level of health status.

It is evident from the Table 5.14 that about 40% of the respondents reiterated that they are not keeping good health status. However, about two-thirds (60.26%) of them stated that they are enjoying satisfactorily good health status. Further, if we see the data, about one-fourth of the women respondents said that their health status is poor. They are suffering from various health disorders.

Table 5.14

Present status of Health among the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Health Status</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>93 (37.20)</td>
<td>29 (23.20)</td>
<td>122 (32.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>61 (24.40)</td>
<td>43 (34.40)</td>
<td>104 (27.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>53 (21.20)</td>
<td>21 (16.80)</td>
<td>74 (19.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>43 (17.20)</td>
<td>32 (25.60)</td>
<td>75 (20.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>250 (100.0)</td>
<td>125 (100.0)</td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visit to Hospitals (Treatment seeking behaviour)

A person after falling sick usually goes to a doctor for treatment. He has several options for his cure. He can choose either a private doctor or public. He may go for Allopathic, Ayurvedic or Homeopathic treatment. Therefore, we enquired with the respondents about their nature of hospital for their treatment.

Table 5.15

Treatment seeking behaviour of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI. No.</th>
<th>Whether visit Hospital</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>353 (94.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>22 (5.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94.1% of the respondents told us that they visit hospitals for treatment. Surprisingly, about 6% of them have not visited any hospitals for treating their ailments (Table 5.15).

Nature of Hospitals

To those who are visiting hospitals a question was asked about the type of hospitals they go when they fall sick. Data about the same are
given in Table 5.16. Accordingly, almost equal numbers of respondents visit private hospitals (35.2%) and public hospitals (37.1%). 21.86% of them stated that they go to both type of hospitals.

Table 5.16
Nature of Hospitals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Nature of Hospital</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>132 (35.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public Hospital</td>
<td>139 (37.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Private &amp; Public Hospital</td>
<td>82 (21.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>22 (5.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>375 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, it is evident that most of the Muslims, poor in particular, give least importance to personal hygiene. Infact, Islam lays special emphasis on habits and hygiene to its followers. Unfortunately, most of the Muslims are not adhering to Islamic principles. Though the respondents denied about the consumption of alcohol, during the field study the researcher came across the cases of intoxication among Muslims.