Like every society Myadpur has its own way of looking at pregnancy and child-care, not only regarding the biological aspects but also socio-economic and ecological aspects. Various taboos are followed and precautionary measures are taken to enhance fertility, to avoid miscarriage and for the well being of mother and child. The precautions to enhance her fertility begin the moment a girl gets married.

A bride madalagitti or madamagalu takes all precautionary measures to enhance her fertility, through elaborate rituals ruta, offers prayers to various deities with vow known as bedakoladu, goes on pilgrimages and follows dietary regulations patte. The rituals performed to enhance fertility are ‘Santan Laxmi ruta’ and ‘Santoshmata ruta’. Santana Laxmi ruta is a ritual wherein worshipping the Goddess Laxmi is done for begetting children Santana and Santhoshmata Ruta is a ritual wherein worshipping the Goddess Santhoshmata is done since she gives happiness in the life by giving children. Former one is worshipped on every Friday Sukrara and latter one on every Tuesday Manglara and Saturday Shanivara. The Santana Laxmi is worshipped in the evening and prasada is distributed among the family members. There is a book, which contains story and power of the deity and prescribed procedure to worship Santhoshmata. It is prescribed in the book that twelve boys of eight to ten years of age are to be invited. The woman who is
worshipping the deity and invited boys should avoid consuming those foods, which contain sour huli and salt uppu until the worship is over. In the evening the woman worships the Goddess and after the worshipping, serves a feast to the invited boys. Gifts like household utensils or notebook and pen are given to the boys. Such worship is repeated every week for twelve weeks.

A woman is expected to bear a child one year after her marriage. It is believed that a woman can give birth to a child till fifteen to twenty years after her marriage otherwise she is considered as sterile banji. Because her reproductive capacity is believed to give birth to a first child is up to these many years.

Sterility banjetana is considered to be a curse shāpa or ill fate durdaiva (or keṭṭa nasība) in Myadpur. The villagers say by looking at the barren woman banji that, the woman’s fate is not good, that she might have done something wrong in her previous life vhāda janma so in this life janma she has become barren adara nasībana keṭṭa aitti, vhāda janmadāga ·ēn karmā māditta ena, i janmadāga banji āgi kunteti.

The traditional midwife sīlagitti and knowledgeable persons attribute sterility primarily to physiological reasons where as parturient women anubhava i ddavaru or gotta ballaru and others attribute it primarily to cosmological reasons for the etiology of sterility banjetana. The sīlagitti advises the banji to go to a doctor for the medical examination including check-up for possible venereal diseases.
3.1 Reasons for Sterility

People of Myadpur believe that sterility is due to some defect *dōsa* and this *dōsa* is not confined to the physiological body constitution. It could also be a defect in the horoscope *kundli*, violations in the moral and religious codes, sometimes the defect is attributed to their newly constructed or occupied house. The house may be having five corners *aida mūli* or *aimūli* which they believe as not being good for them or if any religious violations in religious codes are made God gets angry and curses a childless life.

People consider *banji* as having a 'cold' *tampina* body constitution. The reasons for sterility are said to be, imbalance in the body constitution where in if a 'cold' body constituent woman goes to places with cold climate her body becomes still colder which might lead to sterility. Dietary habits *ūṭa* may also be a cause that is, if a 'hot' *kāvu* body constituent woman eats foods like pepper *menasu* it prevents conception and papaya *pappāli* increases heat in the body resulting in sterility. Apart from one's physiological body constitution *parkurti*, flaws in one's horoscope *kundli dōsa* like troubles of planets *graha kāta*, which are in one's horoscope such as Jupiter *Guru* and Saturn *Shani* are also a cause. Lastly, it is attributed to fate *nasība* or *karmā*.

3.2 Remedies to bear children

In Myadpur people try to do whatever is possible to bear children, from physiological to cosmological ones, like indigenous remedies, to those, which
are religious like, worshipping deities or feeding the priests or going to pilgrimages.

During menstrual period a woman in the village is considered to be in ‘hot’ kāvina body constitution. People believe that some banji have irregularity in menstrual period because of her ‘cold’ tampina body constitution. So efforts are made to induce regular menstruation in a banji through emmenegoges and among Mādaru by drinking liquor sere to make her of kāvina parkurti. Common emmenegoge is a paste of black sesame seeds kare ellu with jaggery bella that are said to produce kāvu. A banji is encouraged to consume heat producing foods kāvina padārtha such as mustard oil sāsvi enṇi, mangoes māvina haṇṇu, pineapple anānas and jack fruit halasina haṇṇu, vegetables pallevu like pumpkin kumbāla kāyi, unripe banana bālikāyi and green pepper hasimenasu and papaya pappāli to induce heat in her body.

People in the village believe that conception takes place during warm nights rather than during cold nights. Nights of full moon day hunimi are warm and nights of new moon day amāsi are cold. Hence they advice a woman to have sexual intercourse during hunimi or closer to it rather than amāsi.

Villagers offer sacrifice bali in the form of fowl kōli and sheep kuri to Dyāmavva, the village deity on the day of her fair jātri to seek her blessings in curing sterility. In order to correct the dōsa in the house or kundli or with planets, the local astrologer jyōtishi or priest ainaru is consulted and necessary
compensatory and corrective rituals are performed. Other suggested therapeutic courses of action to overcome childlessness include observation of fasting upāsa which include fasting in the name of God cobra Nāgappa and worshipping him, in the belief that it may be due to defect of God cobra Nāga dōsa as they consider this Nāga dōsa as one of the dōsa. Feeding children below ten years of age sāṇṇa mākli ge tinadu, thinking that by seeing their interest in children, God may reward them with children. Feeding and giving gifts to Brāhmaṇru who are regarded as the most pious people to seek their blessings and good wishes to beget children is also done. If any violations are committed in the family rituals, the family deity becomes angry and curses the woman to not bear children. They believe that deity can be pleased and also can bless them with children, only when they go to the deity’s place and worship the deity. Some women also eat holy ash angāra available in temples to get the blessings of God to bear children. If all these efforts fail, it is assumed that perhaps the time is not ‘good’ in their fate, hence one has to simply wait for better time.

3.3 Conception and Pregnancy

According to the people of Myadpur a woman who is biologically healthy and who does not possess any defects and has been leading a moral and ethical life is often blessed with healthy children. A woman with kāvina parkuriti is said to experience frequent abortions khāli āgadu or hoṭṭi hōgadu or will give birth to a number of weak children having low appetite and being vulnerable to ailments.
On the other hand a ‘cold’ body woman is unable to conceive because of her irregularity in monthly menstruation. A woman is advised to have sexual intercourse during such conditions when body constitutions of ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ are in balance. She is asked to refrain from sex on the day when she takes oil bath enñi jaḥaka or telī snāna, which has a ‘cold’ effect on her and likewise on important social and religious occasions because a woman’s body becomes ‘hot’ due to heavy work and tiredness. It is generally believed by the villagers that conception takes place during warm nights rather than during cold nights. Hence a woman is advised to have intercourse during warm nights that is, hunīmi.

There is a firm belief among the villagers that, conception can occur only on certain days and during certain times of the day. Casual intercourse will not result in conception. Elderly experienced persons like village priest aināru and astrologer jyōtishi know about the time as to when one should have sexual intercourse to get a child, on the basis of one’s horoscope. Having sexual intercourse, fourteen days after the monthly menstruation has greater chances of conception. Because aināru or jyōtishi believes before fourteenth day due to the effect shakā of menstruation there is no possibility of conception hōṭtīnilładu. The medical notion of conception is different from indigenous notion of conception. In medical science, conception is the union of male and female elements of procreation from which a new being develops (Greenhill, 1960) where as, in local notion, conception is the doubting stage of pregnancy or until the pregnancy is confirmed after the cessation of monthly menstruation. Conception of a woman is
doubted by the missing of her monthly menstruation *horaga ågadu* accompanied by symptoms such as vomiting *vanti* and giddiness *chakra baradu*. It is only three months after cessation of menstruation that, conception is confirmed and she is referred to as *hoṭṭiledāla*, which can be translated as being pregnant.

The cessation of monthly menstruation *horaga ågadu*, swelling of breasts *mali bāyadu*, vomiting *vanti* and giddiness *chakra baradu* are the common symptoms of pregnancy in the village. The symptoms, which vary from individual to individual, are morning sickness *munjāne susta ågadu*, always feeling like sleeping *yāvāglu maṇakōbeka anasadu* and not tolerating any kind of smell *yā vāsnīnu taḍakoḷāraddu*.

When a woman comes to know that, she is missing her menstrual period from last fifty to sixty days and is feeling uneasy, she doubts about her pregnancy. Usually the matter is told to her close friend in her husband's place who has children or to her mother in case she is in her natal family. The reasons for telling the close friend is, since there is uncertainty regarding pregnancy, she gets advices for both, if it is pregnancy, to prevent miscarriage and if it is irregularity of menstrual period to make it regular. Though the husband has close relationship with his wife, menstruation and reproduction are considered to be the matters related to women, hence a wife should not tell it to her husband otherwise she will be commented upon in the society. If it is told to the elderly female members in the family and they consider it as pregnancy wherein it is irregularity of the period, she is looked down upon in the family because irregularity is associated
with sterility. Therefore, she shares her feelings with her friend and later after confirmation of pregnancy, it is disclosed to the elderly women in the family. It is through them that husband comes to know about the pregnancy of his wife.

The precautionary measures to prevent miscarriage like avoiding heat producing foods, not doing heavy works or not lifting heavy things which are associated with miscarriage are taken. The pregnancy is confirmed forty-five days after the cessation of monthly menstruation as per the biomedical system, whereas, as per the indigenous system it can be confirmed only after three months. The women who are aware of modern medical system and who are educated up to high school and college level get their pregnancy confirmed through medical checkup by doctor, but the rest of the women depend on indigenous system. The former women opine that, confirmation in the early stage by doctor helps in observing precautionary measures with regard to pregnancy to prevent miscarriage or malformation of the child, but the women who depend on indigenous system do not believe this, because for them formation or feeling of the fetus is necessary, which normally takes three months time.

In order to calculate the months of pregnancy, the women in Myadpur count from nearest hunimi or amāsi when last monthly period was missed. Other than this, the track of pregnancy is kept from nearest festivals or agricultural activities such as sowing bittadu or harvesting rāsi mādādu and the important events of the village such as village fair jātri.
Chandrmma, the village sīlagitti examines the abdomen of the pregnant woman and tells whether the woman is pregnant above five months or below five months. For her, if the fetus is above the naval the woman is more than six months in her pregnancy, and if it is below the naval and feels like an unripe fruit kāyi the pregnancy is within six months.

3.4 Abortion

In the village abortion khāli āgadu is equated to manual termination of pregnancy where as miscarriage to natural termination of pregnancy. In Myadpur, abortion of pregnancy is looked down upon as morally sinful act, which would disrupt the harmonious relations with God and the dead ancestors of the family whose desires are not satisfied. But when there is a danger to the health of the mother if she delivers a baby, then abortion is permitted. The conception in cases such as, a widow ganḍa sattāki becoming pregnant after the death of her husband, a girl becoming pregnant before her marriage lagnakina madla basarādra and in case it is due to rape keḍasadu are looked down upon and such matters are kept a secret in the society and people say in such cases they secretly go to nursing homes in Gadag city and to get the abortion done.

3.4.1 Prevention of Miscarriage

The possibilities of miscarriage are more from conception to three months of pregnancy. Because, the formation of body organs of the fetus takes place after three months and is completed after five months. Until three months the shape of the fetus is like that of a ball. Hence this ball like form can easily pass out of the
womb, even due to slight imbalance. In between three months to five months of pregnancy, the possibilities of miscarriage are moderate as the body organs are forming and once the formation of body organs is complete, there is a lesser chance of miscarriage because the full-formed body cannot slip out easily. Since miscarriage is associated with heat kāvu, to prevent abortion, a pregnant woman should be careful and not excite the kāvina humor in her body. She has to refrain from eating kāvina foods like papaya, mango, jackfruit, spices, fat, vegetable oils, chicken, egg, mutton, liquor and products of sesame seeds. Coitus is avoided because there is a possibility of miscarriage or death of the fetus due to the pressure on the fetus. She is also advised not to do heavy work like lifting of heavy objects.

3.5 Gestation Period

Usually pregnancy is suspected and confirmed on the basis of missing of menstrual periods and accompanied symptoms such as vomiting, giddiness, swelling of breasts.

3.5.1 Sex Determination

People of Myadpur desire children of both sexes, son gandu and daughter hennu since each has its own importance. Sons are needed to continue the lineage and it is believed that a person ascends to heaven, only when his son performs his death ceremony tithi. Daughters are needed for love, affection kalu kakkalati and to take care of parents. People believe that amongst all types of alms giving dāna koḍadu giving off a daughter in marriage kanyā dāna is considered to be the most
significant one. But sons are preferred to daughters as they provide economic support in their old age. If a daughter takes birth in a family people say that Laxmi; the Goddess of wealth who brings prosperity has taken birth. There are some proverbs in the village if a woman has either only sons or only daughters. If a woman has only daughters, it is said that, ayya adena, ganḍa haḍadillā, sostēra kanḍillā, utṭa manige koṭṭa kunteti implies, since woman does not have sons, she does not know the relations and troubles with daughters-in-law. As the marriage of a girl with her mother’s brother is common, people say, woman has married off her daughters to her brothers, she does not know the troubles. They further say, there is no trouble in searching for a suitable boy and there is no problem of dowry varadaxini and no fear about the family, where her daughter goes after her marriage in case of marriage with mother’s brother of a girl.

If a woman has only sons people say ayya adena heṇṇa haḍadillā, maṇṇa mukkilla. Which means since she has only sons, she does not know the trouble of daughters. If parents have daughter, care towards her is more compared to son. The responsibility increases when she attains puberty. They have to protect her from bad-character men in their vicinage and search a suitable boy for her marriage and later about her new family members, how they will take care of her. So according to villagers, a man should have both sorrows kashṭa or dukha and happiness sukha or santōsha to understand the meaning of life and hence should have both sons and daughters.
Though it is believed that God determines the sex of the child and a woman gets a child according to her fate, still there is usually some anxiety in the family and relatives regarding the sex of the unborn. Determination of the sex of the fetus is done after five months, since by this time, the formation of body organs is complete.

Chandramma, by examining the size alati and shape akāra of the abdomen hōṭṭi of a pregnant woman basari, can foretell the sex of the fetus. According to her, generally speaking, a male gandu fetus is smaller in shape than female fetus. So if the abdomen of the pregnant woman is smaller in shape it is male child, otherwise it is a female child. If one feels the heart beat edi badata of the fetus kūsu on the right side of the pregnant woman’s abdomen, it is considered as a male and if it is felt on the left side, it is considered as a female, because left side is associated with females and right side with males.

It is believed in the village that, a male child takes birth earlier than the female child that is before the expected period of delivery, that is nine months. If the childbirth occurs beyond the expected period, it is certain to be a female child. If the body complexion of the pregnant woman turns dark, it is going to be a male child and if it turns fair it will be a female child.

Other than detection of sex, some methods are followed to get a child of desired sex. In case of the first pregnancy, a woman prefers a boy to a girl. A pregnant woman desiring a female child will stand out in the open to expose herself to the sunlight during the amāsi in order to make her body kāvu, that
enables the formation of a female fetus since kāvu is associated with female. If a woman desires a male child, she exposes herself to moon light during the hunimi, moonlight is tampu and tampu is associated with male. It is observed that a woman who wants a male child should stand in sunlight only for few minutes; otherwise excess heat from sunrays causes miscarriage khāli āketti. A male fetus is believed to be delicate midakala and a female fetus is strong ghāṭṭī. Therefore a woman desiring a male child eats less and one desiring a female eats more since eating more would lead to a stronger fetus, which would be a female one. A woman who already has a son wishes to beget a daughter puts on girl’s dress to her son, hoping that in the next pregnancy she may get a daughter. Like wise a woman who already has a daughter and wishes to beget a son, ties a waist string uḍādāra to her daughter, as it is believed that it helps her beget a son because tying of waist string is done only for sons. All these practices are observed before the fifth month, since the formation of body parts is complete by fifth month of pregnancy.

3.5.2 Food Habits of Pregnant Woman

The pregnant woman basari has restrictions on diet, heavy works and sexual intercourse, which are all considered as causes of miscarriage until five months. Eating excess of ‘cold’ food tampina padārtha leads to pitta, which affects the health of the fetus kūsu. The child may get cold negaḍi, deposition of phlegm kaphā in respiratory tract, which causes breathing problem.
Fat content foods *jiddina padārtha* cause the swelling of the body of pregnant woman *basari* leading to difficulty in delivery. Generally speaking a pregnant woman is believed to have an average *kāvina* body constitution. Hence, she is advised to avoid heat-producing activities for the fear of miscarriage. She takes only partial course of the Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) tablets supplied by the ANM *narsabāyi* for the anemic condition during pregnancy because they are considered as heat producing. The villagers believe that the modern medicines and injections produce heat in the body. By taking such medicines the heat of the body is increased and all modern medicines cause side effects like increase in body weight or one or the other ailment. The villagers say that, the tablets causes miscarriage due to heat within five months and in the later months they lead to overgrowth of the fetus resulting in complications during childbirth. Usually, the prospective mother does, both the household works and agricultural works after five months as a normal woman, which are considered as good both for her health and that of the fetus, and results in quick, easy and normal delivery. The villagers say that, she rarely has the health problems like back ache *benu nōvu*, stomachache *hotī nōvu* and swelling of legs *kāl bāyadu* unless she has a heavy workload. These problems are taken care by taking rest. If at all the problems continue or she has ill health, they consult a doctor.

3.5.3 Taboos Followed by Pregnant Woman

The prospective mother is prohibited to go to places where death has taken place, and even such news is kept with held from her. She may be shocked and
might result in miscarriage. She is not supposed to cross rivers nadi or hoḷi, streams hallā and passes through forest adaḷi or goes to the outskirts of the village and graveyard suḍaḍaḍaṭṭi. The crossing of rivers and streams is related to the fear of miscarriage. The villagers believe that evils deva reside in forests and graveyards. While passing through, they may attack the pregnant woman, which results in miscarriage. She is supposed to avoid wearing new clothes and flowers, before the kalla kubasa ceremony is performed. The wearing of new clothes and fastening flowers in hair, makes her look beautiful and evil-eye nedaru affects her. This might also lead to miscarriage. It is believed that working or sleeping of pregnant woman during eclipses grāṇa results in either miscarriage or getting a malformed antintha child like, torn ear-lobed kiwi haraka, cleft lipped swāṭi haraka or hunch backed ḍūga bennu. She is advised to be inside the house and not to see the eclipse otherwise the child goes blind kurada.

A pregnant woman is not supposed to sight snake hāvu, as it is believed that the snake goes blind. This in turn causes ill health or defect to the child-to-be born, like, the tongue of the child is always stretched out while doing work and while the child is sleeping. The prospective mother should not climb a ladder, because she may fall down and the fall may result in miscarriage. She is advised not to go out of the house during night for the fear of evil-eye. She is prohibited to go where three roads meet mūra dāri kūḍadu especially on amāsi because of the fear of evil-spirits. An elderly family member waves a lemon, green chilly and salt together to the person who is affected by evil-spirits on amāsi to remove the evil-
spirit. The evil-spirit is thus transferred to the lemon and green chilly and these are kept in the place where three roads meet. If anybody crosses over this, it is believed that the evil-spirit enters into him/her. Suppose a pregnant woman walks across this, either she or her child-to-be born get affected. When an evil-spirit enters into a person, the person starts misbehaving like jumping and hopping which results into tiredness. This tiredness in a pregnant woman leads to miscarriage.

One should not cross the prospective mother’s stretched legs; if done so, it is believed that she gets a child, which has the characters of the person who has so crossed. Pregnant woman should not cross anyone’s stretched legs, because she may fall down which may either cause miscarriage or injury to the fetus.

3.6 Childbirth

People in the village believe that childbirth takes place nine months after the conception. Two or three days prior to delivery, a pregnant woman develops symptoms of labor pains byāni like pain in the legs, loin, hands and abdomen. It indicates that the delivery time has arrived. The mother of pregnant woman or other elderly women in the family start preparations for delivery like collecting cot of coir horasu and informing the local midwife sīlagitti and elderly parturient women in the neighborhood to help the pregnant woman for easy and quick delivery.

The prospective mother is made to lie down on her back on the floor during childbirth to facilitate quick and easy childbirth. If due to severity of the pains a
woman is unable to lie down, she is advised to sit on the floor lifting both her knees up, so that she can have an easy delivery. At the time of childbirth, the sūlagitti will be pressing the abdomen and birth passage. She massages coconut oil kobri ennī or castor oil audḷennī to the birth passage of the pregnant woman to facilitate an easy delivery. Other women assist the sūlagitti in all these processes.

Men and children are not allowed into the room where childbirth is taking place. As the baby comes out, sūlagitti takes it into her hands and cuts the umbilical cord hurī with a new blade leaving four-finger space from the baby’s side after the placenta māsa comes out. She has started tying a medicated thread, which she has got from the health centre after undergoing the ‘training of dāī’. In case of Mādaru, either blade or sickle kuḍagōlu is used to cut the hurī and it is tied with a thread, as they do not call the sūlagitti (trained dāī) who is from an upper caste. They have a sūlagitti of their own caste. After cutting the hurī, sūlagitti blows through her mouth into the ears kiwi, nose mūgu and mouth bāyi of the infant and the infant starts crying, which indicates that the infant is alive. Then every one in the family takes a long breath that the whole process has ended happily without any difficulty or problem.

People believe that, soon after the infant comes out of the uterus, the placenta should come out; otherwise it moves toward the chest region of the mother resulting in her death. As per the biomedical model, the expanded uterus of the pregnant woman starts contracting as soon as the infant and placenta māsa come, out. A minor foreign particle in the uterus makes it to remain expanded,
which results in continuous bleeding and death of the mother. Hence if the placenta does not come out or even a small piece of placenta remains in the uterus it is dangerous to the life of the delivered woman. Therefore, either the midwife or the doctor whoever is conducting the delivery should be well versed in removing the placenta if it does not come out on its own. The people in Myadpur call this situation as the placenta moving towards the chest region of the delivered woman bāṇanti. Hence the midwife will be pressing the abdomen to squeeze out the māsa from the uterus. The villagers quote the case of Noorjahan daughter of the Musalru family in Myadpur, to illustrate the placenta causing death in such cases of negligence. Noorjahan was twenty year old, when she delivered her first baby. In her case, as villagers say, the placenta did not come out after the delivery of the child. Feeling the danger, people took her to the CHC of Unkur. However, the doctors were unable to handle the case and referred it in turn to a bigger hospital at Koppal town, a taluka head quarter. But it was of no avail and the doctors at Koppal also could not do anything. Therefore, until the placenta comes out, the process of childbirth is not considered as complete.

Then sūlagitti keeps the māsa in an earthen pot gaḍigi along with five types of grains kālu and few piase coins and covers it with a lid muccaḷā. Then it is buried in the backyard or in front of the house. The māsa is protected in the belief that, it is equivalent to God, as it has all along protected the child in the womb hōṭṭi. If it is thrown out, animals might eat it, which in turn brings bad omen to
the mother or the newborn, such as ill health or death of the mother or the newborn.

After delivery, the infant kūsu and its mother bānantī are bathed and made to lie in a separate room if possible or in a separated portion of the house on a horasu, a cot knitted by coir haggā. In case of non-availability of horasu people use hard and thick bed to prevent cold. They are secluded for five days. Because the mother and newborn are considered as polluted mailigi or sūtakā, the seclusion is observed. In case any one touches them, they become polluted and have to take bath to get purified. Another reason is the fear of effect of cold tampu and evil-eye nedaru or evil-spirit gāli. After giving birth to a child, there is a loss of energy in the body of a woman, which makes her body ‘cold’ constituent and creates weakness in the body nisakti or asakta. Hence, cold affects her soon. It is believed in the village that, people who come from outskirts of the village aṭavī, fields hola and other villages, bring the effect of evil-spirits, which are said to reside in such places. Therefore, people coming from such places should wash their hands and legs to ward off these effects before going into the room of kūsu and bānantī, otherwise, those evil-spirits attack the bānantī, and the kūsu. It is a belief amongst the villagers that such evil attacks lead to ill-health of mother and infant. And it also leads to abnormal behavior, by the mother, which may even result in the death of both mother and infant. Since the hands of the people coming from outside are unclean their touch may cause infection nanju to bānantī, and kūsu who are vulnerable to such conditions. Since, bānantī has lost her body
energy she gets affected by nanju. Hence outsiders have to wash their hands and legs before they enter the room of bānanti. The horasu is used to keep the bānanti, warm and she is also kept warm by keeping the chafting dish ilki below the horasu. Ilki is either earthen or iron bowl butti in which ash būdi is partially filled. On this, nine to ten pieces of dry cow dung cakes kullu are kept and burnt. By this fire benki, bānanti, warms up her body until she feels warm enough, usually for half an hour. And then she lies down on horasu and ilki is kept below it to provide warmth.

The kūsu is placed in hammock jōligi made out of either old sari siri or old cloth hale aribi. It is believed that cats bekku are attracted towards kūsu up to ten days after its birth and for eating, they carry away the kūsu. That is why elderly women in the family and bānanti will be keeping watch and is concerned about the kūsu.

3.6.1 Bathing of Puerperal Woman and Newborn

After a massage of coconut oil kobari ennī and turmeric powder arishin pudi to the bānanti, and only coconut oil to the kūsu, the kūsu and bānanti are bathed with hot water bisiniru. Coconut oil protects the skin from burning sensation caused by the hot water and keeps the skin smooth and turmeric powder is heat producing, hence it keeps the body warm and it is also considered as an antiseptic nanja mādagalla. The kūsu becomes tired and goes to sleep after bath because of the massage and hot water bath it. This facilitates its mother to take bath, rest and food without any disturbance from the kūsu. The people believe that,
usually kūsu wakes-up when its mother is having food. Hence, before going to have food, mother breast feeds the kūsu, lets it sleep and then takes food. For the first five days that is, until the seclusion gets over, sūlagitti gives bath to the bānantī, and the kūsu and later it is given by either mother of the bānantī, or any other elderly woman in the family.

The person, who is bathing the infant, makes it to lie down facing downwards, on her stretched legs and then cleans the back of the infant. After this she makes it to sit on her legs. She will be holding her palm angai above the eyes of the infant so that water does not go directly into the eyes and mouth of the infant by which it gets frightened mett bīlatta and finds it difficult to breath. Other woman who is assisting will be pouring the water. The powder of Bengal gram hase hiṭṭu is used to clean the body of the infant, since it makes skin of the kūsu smooth. After bath in case of upper caste people, the powder of an aromatic plant baji pudi is applied on the capitus alanetti of the kūsu to make it strong, otherwise, it leads to mental ill-health in case of even slight application of pressure on the capitus. The Mādaru apply vermilion candra on the capitus of the kūsu. Mādaru say that vermilion is easily available, which is always present in the house and it makes the capitus strong. After the application, head of the kūsu is covered with the homemade cotton head caps kulāyi or kuncigi to keep the head warm.

For the first five to ten days after the birth the infant, except for its hands, is rolled in a soft and clean cotton cloth as its body is delicate and to keep it warm. There is a fear that, while putting on the dress its hands or neck may get sprained
calak anteti. After ten days, a particular type of an undergarment made of a smooth and thin cloth jabalā is put on the infant. It can be easily put and infant feels comfortable in this dress. The people who cannot afford to do this use the old clothes or old dresses used for their earlier children or borrow them from the other people. Old dresses are used until the naming ceremony hesariḍadu is performed since the kūsu looks beautiful in new dresses resulting in the effect of evil-eye. The wearing of thick clothes makes the kūsu uneasy and it cries frequently kiri kiri māḍatta.

After dressing up, a dot of collyrium kādigi is applied on the forehead haṇi and on the cheek galla or on chin gadda of the infant to protect it from the effect of evil-eye. It is also applied to the lower eyelids because of the belief that kādigi keeps the eyes clean. A dot of the kādigi diverts the people’s vision from the face of the infant. This protects the infant from the effect of evil-eye. Then the infant is placed in the jōlīgi. It is believed that the using jōlīgi makes the infant’s head round in shape and makes the infant to feel comfortable as if in the mother’s womb. Another reason is to protect it from the animals like snakes hāvu, scorpion cólu, dogs näyi and cats bekku that may harm the infant.

After bathing the kūsu the bāṇanti is bathed. She uses powder of soapnut sīgi kāyi pudi to clean her body as it keeps the skin smooth. As the powder of soapnut causes burning sensation to the eyes it is not used to bathe the kūsu. After the bath she wears an old sari hāle sīri and, except the face, she covers herself fully to keep herself warm and also this protect her from the effect of evil-eye.
After the bath she takes a special food *kobari kāra* prepared from dry coconut 
*vana kobari*, jaggery *bella*, ghee *tuppa* and dry dates *uttatti* as they are considered to be energetic foods for the *bāṇanti* to make good for the energy she has lost during the delivery. The puerperal woman does not apply pressure while defecating since it is believed that her uterus is not held firmly in place after delivery.

3.6.2 Diet of Puerperal Woman

The puerperal woman takes foods, which produce heat in her body, like those made of wheat like *uppiṭṭu*, noodles and *soutibīja* and *capāti*. Since wheat foods are considered as heat producing they are fed to *bāṇanti* to make up for the loss of heat in her body during the delivery. This balances the 'hot' and 'cold' body constitutions of the puerperal woman. In case of *Brāhmaṇru*, the puerperal woman eats finely boiled rice *mettana annā* and ghee *tuppā* with the chutney of garlic *bāḷḷolī*, red chilly powder *khār puḍi* and salt *uppu*, which are heat producers. Rice is considered as neither 'hot' nor 'cold'. All these together create heat in her body. The *Brāhmaṇru* believe that, they have poor digestive capacity compared to people belonging to other castes, who do hard physical work such as agricultural and labor work. Hence, according to them if a *bāṇanti*, of their caste eats foods of wheat products, which are hard to digest, she cannot digest them, as she always lying down on the *horasu*. Usually *bāṇanti* takes three meals *ūṭa* in a day that is in the morning, afternoon and at night. The *kobri kāra*, which is called *anṭina unḍi* by the *Brāhmaṇru*, is taken once in a day after the bath, which they
believe is sufficient to give energy. Eating excess kobri kāra is said to lead to defecation of blood rakta horakađe because of excess heat. People believe that, unless a person works the food he has eaten does not get digested. Since the bāṇanti, will be on rest, food is not digested. That is why she eats eli adiki containing betel leaves ambādi eli areca nut adiki, lime suṇna and catechu kācu that are considered to be good for digestion after meals. The bāṇanti, avoids foods such as green chillies hase kāyi, which causes stomachache hoṭti sūli and vomiting kakkotati to the infant and infection nanju to the bāṇanti, like burning sensation in the uterus and umbilicus. She also avoids cold producing foods like curds masaru and cucumber soutikāyi cause cold effect and cough to the infant. This is followed until she exclusively breast-feeds her infant.

In Myadpur, the phases that a child passes through before reaching puberty are divided into three stages: the infant stage, baby hood and childhood.

3.7 The Infant Stage

Infant kūsu stage is from birth to the age of one year. This is considered as the most sensitive stage, especially the first six months, during which it is unable to express anything. It cries whenever it is hungry or if it has any health problem other wise it sleeps all the time.

The mother or elderly women handle the infant kūsu with great care. Until it gains control of holding its head erect, the kūsu is not allowed to be lifted or carried by the young children. While lifting the kūsu, one hand placed under the head and neck region and the other hand is under the lower half of the kūsu. After
three months of age it gains control over holding its head erect. The villagers say that the growth of an infant is faster while it is sleeping. It is believed that for the first one month, an infant sleeps during night and remaining awake during daytime. Where as, in the second month it sleeps during the daytime and remains awake at night. One has to stay awake the whole night through when the infant is not sleeping because, it will be crying and hence one has to take care of it by holding it in their hands or on their lap todi. Since mother has become weak due to hasimai, sitting for longer period results in loin ache tonka növu, and she is unable to get up. It is either grand mother ajji or ammā of the infant or elderly women in the family who handle it at such times. The facial expressions of the infant like while it is sleeping makkondāga, laughing nakkāga and crying attāga are connected with its previous life. The villagers interpret such expressions on the face of the infant as the memories of the incidences of its previous life.

The kusu sleeps either at the side of its mother on horasu or in the jōligi which is hanging from the ceiling or may be between the two legs of the horasu. It is said that, by sleeping in jōligi head of the kusu becomes round and infant feels comfortable sleeping in jōligi. The infant is placed in the cradle for the first time on the day of naming ceremony hesariḍatu. Hence this ceremony is also called cradle ceremony tottaladāga hākadu.

3.7.1 Bathing

The infant is bathed with hot water bisinīru every day, either in the day or in the night depending on the climate. During rainy season and winter season,
because of the cold climate, the infant is bathed in the afternoon when it is relatively hotter since common cold negaḍi may affect it. During summer season, the infant is bathed either in the early morning or in the night, otherwise hot water bath in the day time may lead to sweating and eruption of small boils bevarsāli on the body and the infant may not sleep comfortably.

Before bath, coconut oil kobari eṛṇi is applied on the whole body and a drop each is poured into the eyes, nose and ears of the infant. The oil protects the delicate skin of the infant from heat of the hot water and it also helps in tightening of the skin including netti. The flour of Bengal gram hase hitṭu is used to clean the body during bath, since it is believed to keep the skin of the infant soft.

After the bath, the infant is dried with smooth cotton cloth, which absorbs moisture from the body quickly. Then the infant is wrapped in an old soft cotton cloth for first five to ten days. It is believed that, cotton cloth kāṭan aribi keeps the body cold during summer and warm during rainy and winter seasons. The infant is clothed in a loose dress jabalā or old shirts until the performance of naming ceremony. The jabalā facilitates the free movement of legs and hands and it is light in weight. The new clothes are used on the day of naming ceremony. The mothers of the present generation, who can afford, apply talcum powder to the infant to keep it fragrant wāsni.

A small bed sheet dhubati is placed under the kūsu to prevent the soiling of the bed below. Whenever the infant excretes, it is cleaned by wiping with clean
soft cloth up to six months. The delicate body of the infant is affected by cold if it is cleaned with water. Hot water is used up to one year for cleaning and later, cold water is used to clean it. Dhubați is changed each time after urination and dried in sun and then used. Each dhubați is washed after using it three to four times.

There is a belief among the people that, urine of the kūsu does not smell until it starts eating solid foods. Therefore, the same dhubați is used three to four times after washing it. Dhubați is also used when any body takes the kūsu in their hands to prevent the soiling of their clothes.

The infant is diapered after one month till six or seven months with small cotton cloth mūra mūli caďdi. The elastic under garments are used after seven months by which the skin of the infant becomes strong and does not get injured.

3.7.2 Feeding of the Infant

The kūsu is fed with honey jēnatoppa or sugar and water sakri nīru for first three days after birth or until the milk is secreted in the breasts of the mother. Usually it takes two to three days after the delivery for the breasts to secret the milk hālu. The jēnatoppa and sakri nīru are considered to decongest the mucus kaphā that is present in the mouth of the infant and facilitates it to suck the milk from the breast of its mother. Until, about five years back people were not feeding the first milk of the breast, which is rich in colostrum to their infants. They believed that, due to stock of the milk from many days in the mother’s breast, it has gotten spoilt and drinking of such milk results in indigestion in the infant. But when they started hearing to the advice of narsabāyi, sīlagitti, doctors in the hospital and
women in the village who have awareness, that this milk gives strength to the body by which infant does not get any health problem, they started feeding such milk, as soon as the secretion begins. Since the awareness of the benefit of colostrum has been created, the villagers have started the practice.

The infant is exclusively breast fed for ten to twelve months. But in cases of ill health of the mother, or insufficient secretion of milk, the milk of cow ákala hālu, the goat's milk ādina hālu or she buffalo milk emmi hālu are given as substitute milk hoyyālu. The ‘ill-health’ āramba of the mother such as fever or any wound gāya on her breast, prevents her from feeding the infant. Otherwise, the infant gets affected by those ailments, which its mother is affected by. Among the substitute milks, ákala hālu is preferred to other two types of milk, in the belief that, it is easily digestible. The substitute milk is diluted by adding water to it and then heated, the cream keni the fat content of milk, which is hard to digest, is removed.

The kūsu is considered as growing-up when it becomes ten months old and only mother's milk is not sufficient. It needs some supplementary food myālina ūṭa. The foods given are gruel of rice akki ganji and gruel of granulous wheaten flour ravā ganji, as the kūsu does not have teeth to chew. Since the infant does not have capacity to digest hard foods, the foods of wheat and jowar are not given. As the supplementary feeding goes on increasing the number of times of breast-feeding goes on decreasing. In the initial stage they give the supplementary food twice a day and the number
increases to six to seven times after a period of six months. The breast-feeding decreases to two to three times a day. When the infant becomes one and half years old, the food is changed. Now the infant has few teeth and its digestive capacity is increased. The rotti and capāti are made into small pieces and curry is mixed to it, made into a paste and is fed to the infant. When the infant becomes two to three years old it takes the normal food like of an adult and by this time the breast-feeding is completely stopped.

The ear is pierced on the day of naming ceremony, which is considered, as an auspicious day. The ear piercing protects the infant from the effect of muttadōsha and the bites of scorpion cōlu and snake hāvu.

The infant starts identifying the people in its surroundings after three months. It responds to the signals of its mother or family members, like laughing as they talk with it. It learns about the world through all its senses, tracks people and objects with eyes, and turns the head towards any sound. It often soothed when held and tries to turn while sleeping.

In the fifth month the infant turns and moves here and there and starts to sit for fraction of seconds. It smiles quite often and identifies the parents and family members and prefers them to outsider to be held. Mother teaches the infant about hot objects by taking the infant near the hearth fire and holds the hand of the infant at a distance from where it can feel heat. Through this, she tells it to remain away from burning objects. It listens intently, like hearing the sounds like that of dog or cat or crow or sparrow.
Infant starts to sit and crawl *ambegālu* at about six months and explores with hands, feet, and starts putting the objects into its mouth and grasp objects. At this stage, it becomes difficult for the elders to handle it, as it starts moving here and there and puts everything into its mouth. A minor negligence may result in danger since it may go anywhere or may fall down.

### 3.7.3 Teething

Teething begins in infants between eight to eleven months. Teething is said to cause ailments in infants like fever *jarā* diarrhea *hoṭṭi jhāḍasadu* and they are said to become irritable *kiri kiri*. People believe that while teeth are spurting out, gums cause irritation or itching sensation *tinḍi bidateti*. To reduce the itching, raw vegetables like brinjal *badni kāyi*, cucumber *souti kāyi* are given to the infants to bite. Because of the irritation, child also feels like biting something. Since these vegetables are hard to bite, infant cannot chew them by its jaws.

To prevent the health problems during teething, *halpaṭṭi* is tied around the neck of the infant. *Halpaṭṭi* is a black square piece of cloth. A thin small piece of copper wire *tamrada tanti* is kept in a cloth and it is folded into a square and a black thread is wound to it, this is tied around the neck of the infant. It is believed that diarrhea or fever is due to increase in the body heat. This copper wire, which is considered as heat extractor, extracts the heat from the body by which infant gets relieved. This *halpaṭṭi* is available in pharmacy. According to villagers, if the diarrhea is not controlled by
halpatti one need not worry, because the problem does not last long. Once the teeth spurt out, these problems disappear by themselves.

If the tooth of the upper jaw spurts out first, it is considered as bad omen to the mother's brother. To overcome the problem, a silver cup bellī batīla is presented to the mother's brother of the infant on an auspicious day. If the mother has no brother, it is given to the priest.

3.8 Babyhood

Babyhood sanīṇa makkalu or dhoḍa kūsu covers a span of one year to three years of age. When the baby is one or one and a half years old, it takes short, unsteady steps, to the great delight of its parents and other adult members of the family while walking. When a baby crosses the threshold of the house for the first time, the threshold hoccala is worshipped either by the mother of the baby or any elderly women in the family, to indicate that the baby has grown up and it can walk easily which is proved by crossing the threshold in the house. In the case of a weak baby it might take a longer time to do this. The villagers believe that girls sit and walk at an earlier age than the boys.

The baby talk is another source of great joy and pride to the parents. At the age of about one year it begins to utter various sounds. In the beginning it utters single letter words like give tā, come bā and bye bye tā tā, about one and a half year age it utters the kinship terms like, father's sister attyā, mother avvā, grandmother ammā and elder sister akkā. The baby is taught to say the word attyā to begin with since it is a very difficult word, once it learns the word other words
become easily and it learns to speak quickly. By the end of two or two and half years age it speaks well.

A baby is taught and the elders in the family, especially mother, enjoy its actions. A baby is taught to offer regards swāmmāḍadu, and calling kariyadu. At the end of about two years it learns to behave like a person that is, it understands the speech or orders of the elders.

Till the baby is about two years old or until she has another child it sleeps with the mother. When the baby is being weaned, it is encouraged to sleep with the other family members, especially females. Generally brothers and sisters sleep together till they are nine or ten years old as they think by this age they are grown up and the girls till they attain puberty. Till the age of one and half years to two years or some times three years, a baby wets and soils its bed. After one-year efforts are made to train the baby to learn toilet habits and not to wet or soil its clothes or bed hāsigi, but too much pressure is not exerted. By the end of three years the child should have developed those habits and not wet or soil its clothes, but if it continues to do so it is corrected by thrashing or scolding or by being made fun of. One can see a baby defecating in the courtyard angala and a child out side the courtyard. At the age of around six or seven years it starts going to countryside for defecation.

A baby is not carried about habitually. After the feeding it is put to sleep or left to play with the other children of the family. People say if a baby gets accustomed to be carried by others kai caīā later it becomes difficult for the
mother to manage both household chores and baby, as it always keeps crying to be carried. In case of the families where mother and other family members go for work the situation is still more difficult, where as in case of extended or joint families there is no problem as grand parents or other family members carry the child. Men do not generally carry children with a few exceptions. The mothers with a poor economic condition leave their babies at home in some reliable hands or with elder siblings of the baby and go to work. But a mother does not go to work till the child is at least four to six months old.

A baby is made to get acquainted with ghosts devva and Gods dēvaru. They are taught to believe all such stories, which fill their mind with fear about these two powers. Parents or elders believe that a child should have fear of either a person or of gods or ghosts to behave properly, otherwise it becomes mischievous hatamāri or tunā. Hence if a baby does not obey, the mother threatens that God will come and take away its eyes or hands. Adamant baby sometimes refuses to eat food or refuses to go to sleep or keeps on troubling the mother. Babies do not dare to go near the places, which are supposed to be haunted. Only in extreme cases of non-obedience are punish ed, such as depriving it of a meal, or tying him to a pillar.

The tonsure jawalā ilsadu of a baby is performed either at the age of eleven months or three years. It is performed either in their house or in the temple of their family deity. Wherever parents wish to perform.
3.9 Childhood

A baby is considered as a child from three years to ten or eleven years of age. In this age a child is like a normal adult, that it eats the regular food and wears half pant *canna* and shirt *angi*, walks freely everywhere and talks properly. But still elderly family members give it bath till it attains the age of six or seven years.

If a child desires to have something, which parents feel it should not have, they plainly tell it so, and whether the child cries or rolls on the ground, it is left alone till it comes around by itself. Similarly child is left alone if it howls and screams when it is punished for some fault of its.

The term *kusu* is a neutral word referred to both male and female, whereas in the childhood stage, a child is referred with he or she depending on the sex, to which a child belongs.

The father or for that matter any male member in the family, has no say in the matter and manner of bringing up a girl. It is considered as the duty of mother or female members of the family, where as a boy's behavior or his education is a concern of all members of the family. A girl is taught to do household chores like, sweeping *kasã hoðiyadu* the house, washing utensils *bhãndî* or *musari tikkadu*, to look after the younger siblings and rarely cleaning the cattle shed. A girl of five years can be seen doing these works. Slowly she is taught to cook rice *annã* and curry *sãru*, bringing water with small pots and washing the clothes *batì vagiyadu*. At the age of ten or twelve years a girl learns to prepare *rotti* and cook everyday
food and to do all work. She goes to fields for agriculture work also such as sowing \textit{bittadu} and weeding \textit{kałe tagiyadu}.

A boy is taught to cater the cattle, clean the cattle shed, and look after the younger siblings. At the age of ten or eleven years a boy learns to do agricultural works like ploughing \textit{haragadu}, riding a bullock-cart \textit{chakkaḍi hoḍiyadu} and harvesting \textit{rāshi māḍadu}.

At the age of three years child is sent to \textit{anganawāḍi} (an informal educational institution) and after six years of age it goes to school. A child is discontinued from the school during sowing and during harvesting, may be as a labor or helping hand to the parents or else it stays back in the house to look after the younger siblings, facilitating the mother to go to work. Education of a boy is preferred than a girl. People think that learning to read and write is enough for girls, where as a boy can learn as much as he wants because he has to find employment to cater his family and parents.

Correct behavior is expected of a child only when it reaches the age of ten or twelve. Till then it is innocent \textit{malju} and can do no wrong or sin. However, in the case of a girl, restrictions are placed at the age of seven or eight, and she cannot play with boys, must be in the company of women and grown-up girls.

Thus various indigenous beliefs, practices, taboos and precautionary measures are followed by the people to bear children, to prevent miscarriages and for the well being of mother and child. Rituals and ceremonies are also part of the
indigenous beliefs and practices of the people of Myadpur, which are performed for the well being of mother and child.