CHAPTER IV

Childcare

Care of the child begins practically from birth when the newborn is washed, a task which is often performed by someone other than the mother. The newborn individual long remains helpless to maintain his own survival. The newborn requires special, easily digestible food (a requirement admirably supplied by the breast milk), must be kept clean, and needs protection. These survival needs are met by child-rearing practices in all cultures (Honigmann 1951).

The day-to-day childcare practices reveal, how they are subtly and obviously related to the health and well-being of the child. In the preceding chapter, it was seen as to how the well-being of the child is borne in the mind even before conception through the performance of rituals and observance of taboos. In this chapter, the everyday childcare practices like bathing, massaging, feeding, and life-crisis rituals are analyzed. Understanding the complete 'caregiving package' is key to uncovering proximate factors in infant’s and child’s well-being. This caregiving package is guided by the beliefs and notions of caregivers.

Worthman (1995) points out that the beliefs and behavior of the caregivers’ are rarely arbitrary. They are grounded in observations, interpretations and emphasis of experienced reality. Furthermore, the actions of parents and socializers are seldom capricious, but respond to or shaped by actions, attainments and perceptions of the child. Treatment of children is grounded in ethnobiological beliefs that are grounded in the empirical reality. And the treatment of children, has direct effects on the health and development of children, and also responds to the status and behavior of the child.

4.1. The day of birth

Among Kunabi, once the umbilical cord is cut, the attention of the women present is shifted to the care of the newborn infant.

After birth, infant bālshe is taken by one of the women, who is assisting in delivery. Immediately after cutting umbilical cord nai, coconut oil ganetail is poured on the umbilical cord of bālshe in order to prevent nanj. If the infant is a
female, blood *raggat* from placenta *keru* is applied all over the body, face, lips, under arms, and pubic area. Application of blood is believed to prevent hair growth on parts where it is applied. It is applied so because, body hair is regarded as being masculine and it is not feminine for a woman to have body hair. In case of a male, it is applied only on lips. Application of the *raggat* from *keru* is believed to give red color to the lips, which is considered to be a mark of beauty.

*Bālshe* is then, put in a sheath of betelnut tree *poi* and washed with warm water and cleaned. Then, it is wrapped in a cotton sari *kapad* covering the whole body, leaving only face open so that, it feels warm. Covering the whole body snugly is believed to make the *bālshe* feel warm and as if, it is still in the mother’s womb. The external environment is still novel to the *bālshe* and similar conditions (as existing in the mother’s womb) has to be maintained till it becomes accustomed to the outside environment.

It is then, given to the mother. Mother puts her finger in *bālshe*’s mouth so that, it begins suckling movements. Once it starts suckling, *bālshe* is given the breast. Colostrum *haldodh* is fed to infant, since it is considered to give strength *takat* to infant. Colostrum is also believed to cause loose motion, which is regarded as good for *bālshe* since, it removes whatever waste, it might have swallowed and present in stomach of *bālshe*.

Honigmann (1959) points out that during the first few days, in some tribes, the child is not breast-fed. In this period after birth, the breasts secrete not milk but a noticeably different substance, colostrum. Colostrum may act as a cathartic and so produce bowel movements similar to diarrhea. Perhaps, this fact is related to the avoidance of colostrum in the infant’s diet. However, among Kunabi (apart from the fact that it is strengthening) that it causes diarrhea like condition, which cleans the *poittan* is what makes them to feed colostrum to the infant.

4. 2. *Pani navache* (Bath)

From the day after birth, *bālshe* is applied oil all over the body before giving bath. For the first week or so, warm water is used for bath and gradually hot water, is used. Hot water is gradually used, so that the *bālshe* becomes accustomed to the increased heat of the water. Water is poured all over the body holding
bālshe in the palm hath. Then, bālshe is placed on a kapad on a stone slab and rubbed and cleaned. Water is poured over the head tekkal so that it becomes strong. Hot water is believed to make the body hard and strong ghat dayinte. It is felt that a Kunabi must have a hard and strong head and body in order to do heavy work and carry loads on the head.

After bath, air is blown in both ears to clear them if water has remained. If any water remains in the ear, it is believed to cause earache to the infant bālshe. It is believed that soap has to be used after umbilical cord nai drops, after drying up and usually it is said to occur by one week after birth. It is believed that even if a small amount of soap remains on nai when it is still wet, it can lead to nanj. In the first week or so the prevention of nanj takes priority over cleaning the infant with soap. Soap used by adults is used for bathing and cleaning the infant.

After bath, a handful of water is taken and thrown pani gudoncherta around infant to prevent the infant from startling usal padta. Therefore, throwing water around the infant is believed to be a preventive measure against startling. Children are believed to startle very easily. Childhood and startling go together and as the child grows into an adult, it is no longer easily startled. It is regarded that māru affects when a child is startled. The infant is startled, if a cat suddenly jumps past it, or if there is a loud sound or if somebody shouts loudly.

The infant is dried and wrapped in a kapad leaving only face uncovered and given to the mother to be fed. For the first one year, infant is given bath in the morning when the sun is not too hot. Since it is still not too hot, even if the water is hot, the infant will not cry. Before the sun becomes too hot, there is chill in the air. Therefore, it is believed that the infant does not feel uncomfortable if hot water is poured. Hot water is believed to make the skin hard and strong. If the skin is hard and strong the child will not get hurt or wounded easily. If bath is given when the 'sun has risen high' it will be very hot and when water, which is also hot is poured on the child, it creates garmi in the body and the infant feels uncomfortable and cries persistently refusing to be bathed.

From second year onwards, the time of bath changes and child is given bath in the evening after mother comes back from work or it takes bath with any
other adult in the family like father or grandmother, or grandfather. Because by the
time the child is two years old, it will have started crawling and walking, and
playing out of the house in the mud, through out the day. As a result, even if it is
bathed in the morning it will become dirty by evening. Thus, the change in the
behavior of the child results in the change in the behavior pattern of the caregivers.
This indicates a stage of development, which is recognized by the people.

Upto six or seven years, any elder family member or an elder sibling gives
bath to the child. After seven years or so, children will have learnt to take bath by
themselves. School-going children take bath in the morning after their breakfast.
Younger ones and those who do not go to school bathe in the evening when adults
are taking their bath. It is said that through out the day children play in the mud,
water, they sweat and will have become dirty so if a bath is given before their
dinner, they sleep well. After bathing the child feels fresh and relaxed since it is
tired from all the play and activity through out the day. Bathing is believed to relax
the body and get rid of all the pains.

In the morning, teeth are brushed with ash from firewood and children as
well as adults go to streams to defecate.

4.3. Passoka (massage)

Just before bath, coconut oil ganetail is applied all over the body of infant.
Coconut oil is regarded to be cold thand producing in nature and is believed to
strengthen the skin and make it hard. If the skin is hard, it will not get scraped
easily, or the child will not get hurt or wounded easily. Ganetail is applied just
before bath, so that it acts as a protective layer against the skin. If oil is not
applied, infant will feel the burning sensation when hot water is poured.

Infant is patted dry after bath and then oil is again applied all over the body
and massaged passoka in circular movements. Hands and legs are massaged and
pulled applying some pressure. Hands and legs are crossed and uncrossed, which
is believed to make them supple. Oil is applied on feet and palm and rubbed softly.
And oil is applied and massaged with a single finger over eyes and eyebrows for
keeping eyes clean and this massage is also regarded to make the infant sleep well.
A couple of drops of oil are put in the ear. Putting a couple of drops of oil in the ear is believed to remove if any mucus *saundy* is remaining in the ear from the time of birth. If any mucus remains, it is believed to cause earache. Whatever mucus has remained will be removed by putting couple of drops of oil for a week. After a week also, oil is put in the ears so that the ears remain clean.

Women, who visit to see the infant for the first time, apply oil over the head saying *thand dayee,* which literally means 'always remain cool'. Here cool does not mean cold. It means that 'let it never become hot' and let it be warm. It is a blessing which implies that the individual should grow up into a healthy, happy and balanced person. Excess heat causes problems and excess heat is generated when one is upset. Therefore, this blessing is directed beyond mere physical well-being. It is to do with the shaping of the personality of the individual. When a woman visits, she usually asks whether the infant has had its massage, if it has had massage once, or twice also, then the visiting woman asks for oil and again massages the infant.

Especially, the women who have helped during the delivery are the ones who do this, since they come to visit frequently to check on the mother and child up to two to three weeks. The infant thus receives as many as three to four massages in a day. The massage is also said to help the infant sleep well. Oil massage is continued throughout the first year. From second year onwards oil is applied to the scalp while combing hair and applied on the body at night so that the child sleeps well. The women, who have helped during the delivery, consider it their responsibility to check on the well-being of the mother and the child they have helped deliver. Once, two or three weeks are past, the parturient woman will have recovered and be able to take care of the infant *balshe* on her own.

Oil is applied on the head and feet at night for children *porgo,* so that the heat *garmi* from the body gets reduced *thand dayinte* and enables them to sleep well. The *garmi* will have increased in the body due to playing and running around *khelate* that children are believed to do. Increased *garmi* can lead to problems like burning sensation in the feet and eyes, headache and body ache. Oil is applied
when the girl’s hair is combed and then plaited. During winter, oil is applied on
the legs and hands because the skin would have cracked due to cold.

4. 4. Dollo pollo, bedrun, māru (evil eye, fright and spirits)

Dollo pollo can be literally translated as ‘casting of eye’. Everyday evil eye
is warded-off. It is a preventive as well as curative measure against evil eye. After
bath, the infant is taken near the hearth and the person holding the infant takes
some salt meeth in her hand and waves it three times to the infant and says gella
gella ‘gone gone’ and throws it into the fire. This is done in order to ward-off evil
eye dollo pollo. Salt is believed to have the power of removing the evil eye
because of its salty nature.

After the period of birth pollution is over, people come to visit and admire
the infant. Therefore, performing this warding-off evil eye is begun after the
naming ceremony nāv vadcha has been performed (which is performed after the
pollution period is over). It is believed to prevent the harm that may be caused to
the infant because of evil eye of people who come to see the infant. During the
period of pollution, visitors from other families do not come, since it leads to
transference of pollution. Only after this period is over, people begin to visit the
mother and the newborn baby. That is why, the chances of the bālshe being
affected by evil eye increases after the pollution period is over.

The consequences of evil eye are that the bālshe will not feed properly,
and cries persistently kuyinte and at times small red boils podyo appear all over the
body. The consequences of evil eye among older children are that small red boils
podyo (similar to those found among infants) appear all over the body of the child.
It does not eat properly, stomach pottan protrudes and the child does not sleep
well, has nightmares and cries without reason.

To prevent dollo pollo, a charm dollo mani consisting of beads yellow,
black, red and green in color is tied around the neck of the infant after the
performance of naming ceremony. Antu relates that the beads look so beautiful
around the neck of the bālshe, that the person’s attention is focused on the beads
instead of on the bālshe. As a result, the infant or the child is not affected by the
evil eye. Even if evil eye occurs then beads break and prevent the effect on the
infant. That is, breaking of the bead prevents the effect of evil eye. If the beads have become less in the charm, it is inferred that evil eye might have affected the child, that is why, the beads have cracked or broken and fallen away. Dollo mani is brought from the market pyate in Yellapur.

It is believed that until all the teeth spurt, the child is very susceptible to evil eye because the babies in this stage are considered to be very attractive. Dollo pollo can occur if someone appreciates or even thinks in ones' mind looking at the infant as being ‘plump’ ang bharuna or a child is appreciated as being ‘beautiful’ or if someone comments about the quantity of food intake of the child. It is believed that if someone comments on the amount of milk produced by the mother or consumed by the bālshe, it results in drying up of milk in the mother. If the evil eye is believed to be caused, because somebody has cast an eye while the child was eating then, it is said that the stomach bulges, the child refuses to eat and becomes inactive. It does not play and feels pain in the hands and legs.

If it is suspected that, the infant has been affected by evil eye, then the warding-off evil eye is performed by an elderly woman or mother by taking salt meeth in the hand waving it three times to the bālshe and throwing it in the hearth ranni. Salt is believed to have the power to remove the effect of evil eye.

Evil eye is also removed by performing another process. Half a shell of a coconut is taken and, coal, bitter pepper kalanjeero, and a cut piece of nail naak of the child are put in the shell. A piece of nail is taken because it is a part of the child and along with the nail, the evil eye is believed to be taken away from the child. This shell is moved around the child three times saying that evil eye has gone dollo gella. Then, this is kept in the forest where three paths meet. This process is performed to the lactating mother also, if the breast milk is suspected to have dried up because of evil eye.

If the symptoms persist even after three days of performing the warding-off, it is regarded that the evil eye is powerful and that is why it has not been removed. In such case, one seeks bammun. He gives vermillion kunku chanted with sacred chants mantra and hence having the power to ward-off the evil eye. The chants are believed to protect the person from the harm that the evil eye may
cause. Vermilion *kunku* is applied to the child to cure the effects of evil eye. Vermilion is believed to be both sacred and powerful. Also, whenever one visits a temple, they apply vermilion, which has been applied on the deity on their forehead as a blessing.

*Bammun* also gives an amulet *cheeti* (piece of paper on which, sacred chants *mantra* are written) to protect the child from evil eye. It is tied in a thread and tied around the neck of the child. This is done if the child is frequently affected by evil eye. Tying *cheeti*, is a preventive and also a curative measure. Because, the *cheeti* will not only ward-off the effect that the evil eye has presently caused but also, protects the child from the future effects.

The removal of evil eye in the house is also a preventive as well as curative measure. However, tying of *cheeti* is said to be more powerful in protecting the child both in the present, as well as in the future. The power of *cheeti* is reduced, if it comes in contact with pollution. Even if the *cheeti* has become redundant, it is not removed because, it is sacred and cannot be removed and thrown. Children can be seen wearing three or four *cheeti* tied around their necks.

Apart from *dollo pollo*, symptoms similar to it appear when a child is frightened *bedrun* or startled *byalallo*. A child is believed to get startled and become frightened, if it sees a snake suddenly crawling past it. Or, if the child is walking through the forest and suddenly hears some kind of noise or, if a leaf or twig falls on its shoulder or head. If it wakes up during the night suddenly, because of a nightmare then also it gets frightened.

When the child is startled because of such reasons, it develops fever, does not sleep well, does not show any interest in eating, and is believed to cry a great deal without any reason. When the child has experienced *bedrun*, it has to be performed *haan* ‘a warding-off’ ritual. In the evening, after lighting the sacred light *deev ulano*, in the name of *kuldev*, the warding-off is performed. Vermilion applied to the *kuldev* is taken, and is mixed with water in a plate and seven kinds of flowers are put in the plate and moved three times in front of the child. The child is taken to the stream and the contents in the plate are left in the water. Performance of *haan* is believed to make the fright flow away in the water.
Performance of *haan* is believed to be effective in removing the fright. However, even after the performance of *haan*, if the child is scared and has fever or other symptoms, *bammun* is sought. The resorts can be ineffective, if the effect of *bedrun* is more than the power of the process of *haan* or evil eye removal processes. More powerful treatment may be required like the power of the *bammun*. He gives *cheeti* (an amulet with vermilion chanted with sacred chants) which is tied around the neck of the child.

Symptoms similar to fright can also be caused by *māru*, then shaman is also sought in order to ward-off the effect of *māru*. If there is affliction of *māru*, the child suffers from fever, mumbling in sleep, and persistent crying. The performance of *khuddoche* (supernatural process of warding-off the spirit) is believed to remove the effect of *māru*. Once *khuddoche* is performed, the *māru* is warded-off. As a result, the child is cured of the fright. If the fright is caused by *māru*, the performance of *haan* has no curative effect.

Tarey is a ten-year old girl, who was walking home from school alone. And on the way, a snake fell from the tree suddenly and crawled past her. She says, the snake was very big and she could have almost stepped on it. She came home crying. When her grandfather asked her why she was crying, she said, she saw a snake. Since, coming across snakes is quite a common phenomenon, he asked her to stop crying. She had her dinner and went to sleep and woke up crying in the night saying she was scared. Her grandmother asked her to keep the ritual stick *bett boddo* beside her and go back to sleep so that, she will not be scared. In the morning, she had fever and did not wake up at her usual time. Her grandmother said that, she woke up crying during the night and her grandfather said she had come home crying, since she had seen a snake. Her grandmother said that, she must have been frightened and decided to perform *haan*. Tarey did not go to school on that day. In the evening, her mother performed *haan* to her. She slept without waking up during the night. By next morning, she no longer had fever and went to school.

*Bett boddo* is a ritual stick, which is believed to protect the person holding it, from the effect of *māru*. It is prepared from cane and by performing rituals by
the Kunabi priest mirashe by keeping it in front of dev. There are two kinds of bett boddo, one which is kept by the kuldev and used only by men and which has to be prevented from becoming polluted. Therefore, women are not supposed to touch it. If there is a birth or death in the household, it has to be purified by the mirashe after the pollution period is over. Men may take it when they go for hunting in the forest. When one goes hunting, one is likely to be affected by māru, because māru dwell in the forests. Or when a man gets married, bridegroom keeps it by his side to prevent himself from the affliction of māru, since he is believed to be susceptible to māru. The other bett boddo is the one used by women and children, which is also prepared by cane and is sanctified by the mirāshe. However, this bett boddo is not considered to be as sacred as the one used by men.

Experiences of the people endorse that the performances of anyone of these processes cure the effect whether it is of evil eye or fright. Research is being carried out in the recent years into the ‘placebo effect’. This research has been carried out mainly in medical settings, has shed light on other phenomenon such as the therapeutic effects of healing rituals in many cultures. Shapiro says, it is the psychological or psychophysiological effect of any medication or procedure given with therapeutic intent. It is independent of or minimally related to the pharmacologic effects of the medication or to the specific effects of the procedure. The effect operates through a psychological mechanism. It is therefore, the belief in the ‘efficacy’ of that placebo which can have both psychological and physiological effects on those receiving (and/or administering) a placebo substance or procedure. Although the power of the placebo effect has been widely reported, its exact mechanism is still not clearly understood. In their review of literature regarding placebo effect, Benson and Epstein point out that placebo effect may occur practically on any organ system in the body. For the placebo effect to occur, certain atmosphere or setting is required. Placebos are therefore culture bound (cited in Helman 1994).

4. 5. Sleeping pattern

Infant sleeps with the mother on the ground on a mat mandri and old cotton saris spread over it, to make it soft. A fire is kept burning by the parturient woman
and the infant all through the day and night during winter and rainy season to keep them warm. The parturient woman is in a cold-bodied constitution *walleli aang*. Therefore, if she is not warmed and external heat is not provided, there is a chance of her being affected by *naj*. Cold body and the external cold make her susceptible to *naj*. The baby also has to be protected from cold, kept warm so that it does not get affected by fever or catch cold. And also it is said that the baby sleeps well if it is warm. If it is cold, it cries and does not sleep well.

Up to two years, that is, during the period when the baby is breast-feeding, the baby sleeps with the mother. After two years, it will have stopped breast-feeding or the mother may be pregnant with the next child and the milk may have dried up. Therefore, it may sleep either with its parents, grandparents or elder siblings.

For the first three months, the *balshe* is said to sleep most of the time during the day and wake up when hungry or wet. After third month, the *balshe* is believed to stay awake for longer duration of time. It is often said that, for the first three months, the mother does not do much work and has the time to spend with the infant and all infant does is sleep. And after three months, she has to start doing work and infant keeps awake and wants her to hold it all the time.

When the mother is working, the grandmother or the grandfather is near the infant and she attends to it, if it starts crying to be fed or because it is wet due to urination or defecation. The infant is wrapped in a piece of old sari for the first three or four months if it is summer and if it is winter, it is worn clothes generally belonging to an elder sibling, which are softened with washing. It is a matter of economy that the old clothes are made use of. If there is no elder sibling, clothes are borrowed from a neighbor or a kin. New clothes are bought for the most significant festival of Kunabi, *daulyarbay*.

When the baby starts to move forward on its stomach *bukkarunche* around sixth or seventh month, it is tied to a pole or pillar in the kitchen, by its leg, while the mother is working near by. Taking care of a baby during the period when it begins to crawl on its stomach, is said to be very difficult because, they can cause themselves a great deal of harm. It is regarded to be risky because, the hearth (with
fire burning) is on the ground, and there is the grinding stone, vegetable cutter, lamp, sickle, that is, objects which can hurt the child. Further, the baby can crawl out of the house and fall down since there are steps at the main threshold and generally this threshold does not have a door. There are also all kinds of insects like red ants, crabs, leaches, and snakes, which can bite the baby.

Even if a grandmother or some elderly person is taking care of the baby, sitting outside the house, baby’s leg is tied with a long piece of cloth or a soft rope so that it cannot crawl beyond the limited area. The elders who take care, are generally busy doing some work or the other while keeping an eye on the baby, like weaving a mat, making flower garland, making ropes or basket. Mothers say that, until the child begins to learn to take its first step, even if it is tied, it is content if the rope is long enough for it to move and crawl. But, when it learns to walk chaunkunche, that is, after generally around a year, it cries persistently to be freed of the binding.

Suta, a one and a half year old boy, is kept tied most of the time. One day he got himself out of the bind because, the knot was not tied tight enough. As a result, he removed his leg from the rope and he wandered into the bush. And he caught hold of a small snake lying in the bush and was about to put it into his mouth. His mother, who was fetching a pot of water from the stream beside the house, saw and immediately snatched the snake and threw it in the fire. She says, not all snakes are poisonous, but if the child is let to wander, it can really be risky since it can harm itself. That is why, it is safer to keep children tied even if they cry.

If there are small children in the house, then the grandmother and one of the daughters-in-law do not go to work. Because, one is needed to take care of the children while the other, performs the cooking and other household chores. Usually, the daughter-in-law, whose child is still solely on breast milk that is, a year old stays at home. So that, she can feed the baby as well as perform the day-to-day chores.
4.6. Mummo duncho (breast feeding)

*Bälše* is exclusively fed breast milk *mummo* for most of the first year of life that is around ten to eleven months. During the day, milk is fed whenever the infant is awake and when it cries. Infants are said to cry generally for two reasons either because they are hungry or because they are wet. During the night, the mother feeds it whenever it is awake. The reasons given for weaning are mainly related to the birth of the next child or drying up of milk in the mother.

Honigmann (1959) notes that specific feeding periods occurring at regular intervals are rare. In general, the baby is fed whenever he signals hunger or other discomfort. In many cultures, people are ready to feed young children from the breast whenever he signals hunger or other discomfort. At night the child normally sleeps with the mother and can readily receive the breast. Further, prolonged breast feeding is common among small scale people. Out of the 45 communities for which information is available, in at least 31 children are nursed for 2 years or more. Weaning at 6 to 9 months, something that happens in many white, North American families, definitely is rare.

Among the Kunabi, in case of scarcity of milk or drying up of milk in the mother, the *bälše* is fed gruel *pose of navane* (Elusine. Coracana). Cow’s milk is also fed as a substitute for breast milk. Supplementary food *holyan jung* is begun around the first year. Because during this period, the child is considered to be growing up, and its needs are believed to have increased. It is fed three to four times a day. It is believed that, around ten months, the child begins to crawl and moves around a lot and as a result, if it is fed supplementary food it will be able to digest whatever is fed to it. Before this period, it is not very active and is not able to digest anything other than breast milk *mummo*.

It is regarded so because, Kunabi believe that if a person is not physically active, then the food consumed does not digest *kargoon*. As a result, he will experience stomach pain *pottan dubate*, difficulty in passing motion. Therefore, it is essential for a person to work in order for the food to digest. For the same reason, the parturient woman has to consume less food than she would normally do. Because, she is always sleeping and not doing any work and if she consumes
more food, it will lead to indigestion and stomach pain, and in case of infants, there is bulging of the stomach *pottan baruche* because of indigestion and it also does not pass motion. If the person remains inactive, the food remains as it has been consumed and does not get digested. If the person is active it gets digested.

At the age of one year, the child will have started crawling on all fours *chair utte* and starting to learn to take a few steps. Therefore, feeding supplementary food will not cause any problems. Further, since the baby is growing, it needs more food and breast milk is not sufficient and gradually the breast milk also goes on drying up *sukkate*. *Hollyan jung* consists of softly cooked rice, which is easy for the child to swallow. If there is milk available in the house, it is mixed with rice. From two years onwards, the child is fed the same food, which the adults consume, and also feeds on *mummo*.

Children of two to five years of age are not fed food considered to be spicy *teekh* like curry and vegetables cooked using green chilies. *Teekh* food are believed to cause burning sensation in the stomach *pottan urte* and also believed to cause loose motion. Meat *gaul* is also given in small quantities, because it is considered to be heavy for digestion for children.

If the child is still feeding on milk, it is believed that it will not want to consume food and will only feed on the milk, since it finds it tasty and is accustomed to feeding. So the mother tries to discourage the child by making it sleep with the grandmother, or try to apply bitter substances *khayya* like the juice of bitter gourd, and an herb called *manchikodi* to the breast. Elderly women give breast as pacifier to the child if it does not stop crying. The children are believed to cry a great deal if the mother does not feed milk.

Bhagi’s mother relates how difficult it was to make her daughter start to eat food. Around the age when Bhagi was thirteen months old, her mother began to feed her *navane pose* and rice *jung*. But Bhagi would not eat; so her mother would feed milk whenever she started crying. When Bhagi was around one and a half-year-old, her mother began to go to work. When Bhagi’s mother was out working, her grandmother would try to feed her. But she would not eat anything and keep crying and remain hungry until her mother came home from work. Then, her
mother tried applying *khayya* when she fed Bhagi, but Bhagi would just feed regardless of *khayya*. Then her mother started taking Bhagi along to work. She says her breast was drying up and there was not enough milk. By the end of two years, Bhagi had not gained weight and could not walk like other children. The *anganawadi* (kindergarten, part of Integrated Child Development Service ICDS aiming at nutritional care and health education of preschool children and pregnant and lactating women) worker seeing Bhagi suggested her parents to take her to a doctor. So her parents took her to the doctor. He gave her medicines *tonic* and asked her parents to make her eat food. Around the same time, Bhagi’s mother went to her natal home for a couple of days since her sister had delivered and left Bhagi behind in the house. Bhagi cried for a long time and when her father fed her biscuits and *poli* she ate them. Next day onwards, though she would cry she started to consume food in small quantities. When her mother came back, she no longer wanted to feed on *mummo*. Bhagi gradually gained weight and now goes to the *anganawadi* in the neighboring settlement and eats the food given there and is active like other children.

It is said that generally children do not react as Bhagi did and as the milk begins to dry up, they start consuming *hullyan jung* and breasts become pacifiers. And by two to three years, they will be completely weaned. Last-born child is said to feed for a longer duration that is, up to five years also, if the mother’s milk is not dried up.

According to Honigmann, “other foods are given to supplement breast milk while the child still nurses. This pattern prepares the way for weaning, a stage in development that usually presents something of a problem. Children do not outgrow the nursing habit willingly. Techniques for weaning vary but three are common. The first, requires removing the child from the mother, perhaps letting him spend sometime with grandparents where he will forget the nursing experience. Two other ways are to punish the baby for nursing, perhaps by smearing an unpleasant or frightening substance, like pepper or soot, on the nipples, or by use of threats” (1959: 571).
Kunabi children above five years begin to consume all foods, which adults consume. In the morning, at around 6.30 a.m. they eat breakfast cha with the elder siblings and father. Cha consists of poli, or jung and black tea arka. Then, in the afternoon at around midday, they have meal consisting of rice and curry. Curry is prepared with fish or meat if an animal has been hunted the previous day. If no meat, fish or crab is available, it is prepared of vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, mushrooms, brinjal, onions or local available varieties of vegetables like kesu, roots, pulp of plantain tree, jack fruit, and various kinds of green leafy vegetables. They drink tea in the evening, and the dinner is at night. The dinner is same as the afternoon meal.

School-going children also have a similar pattern of food consumption. They come home during the lunch break if the school is near enough or carry lunch boxes with them. If they bring lunch box they take it to the house of some kin of theirs who live near the school and eat their lunch. They do not eat in the school, since children from other castes are also present. It is believed that if they eat their food in the school it causes evil eye and the child has health problems.

The evil eye is said to be caused, because they believe that the children belonging to other communities cast evil eye. The children feel that, Kunabi food is tasty and they are not allowed to eat it for the reasons of purity and pollution. Therefore, their desire has an effect on the Kunabi children. If only the Kunabi children are present in the school, then they eat their lunch in the school itself. Because, the chances of evil eye is said to be less since the children share each others’ food.

Children of Kunabi, bhattur, and gouda attend the school at Rabe. Kunabi children from the neighboring settlements also come to this school. Though, the school is at some distance from the settlement, and one has to cross two big streams on a wooden log bridge, and pass through the paddy fields, which is very difficult during rainy season, all Kunabi children go to their kins’ house with their lunch boxes. If they do not have any kin in that settlement, they go along with the other classmates who have kin. It is not only the fear of evil eye but also it is said that the school is situated in the place which belongs to gouda, and it is believed
that there will be māru belonging to gouda community, which can affect the children. Māru are believed to be very powerful at mid-noon and can affect when the children are having food. Therefore, it is not just people, but also places which can affect an individual.

Children are also warned not to consume food in the premises of temple, and near places considered to belonging to deities represented by stones. Because, cooked food is regarded as musre, which is a kind of pollution mayl. If musre is taken near the deity, the deity becomes polluted. This leads to wrath of deity which can result in affliction to the child.

Children are told not to play immediately after consuming food, because just as inactivity leads to problems with digestion of food, doing physical activity immediately after consuming food can cause stomach ailments pottan dubate, vomiting uggar padte, and diarrhea bengela. They are told to rest for half an hour and then play. Elders also rest for some half an hour or so before resuming work.

Bālshe around the age of three months, begins to roll on its stomach pottin padta and lick the floor, put its fingers into the mouth and as a result, worms jant enter into its abdomen. This results in pain in the pottan and the infant cries persistently. Beginning from the stage when the infant begins to turn and roll on its abdomen, the infant is begun to be fed khayya hokkat. Khayya hokkat is prepared from the leaves of a plant called manchikodi. The leaves are ground and juice extracted is fed as medicine. Since it is bitter khayya in taste it is called ‘bitter medicine’. This medicine is said to remove worms from the pottan and even if any dust particles have entered into the pottan that is also removed.

The dosage of khayya hokkat for the infant is four to five drops. It is fed every fifteen days. The dosage is increased as the infant grows older and a year old baby is fed one spoon of khayya hokkat. This is a preventive as well as curative measure. It prevents itching sensation pottan kadche by removing the jant from the pottan. If the child is complaining of itching sensation pottan kadche in the pottan then khayya hokkat is fed twice a day for three days. Children after two or three years refuse to drink khayya hokkat regularly because of its bitter taste. They are fed only when there is pottan kadche, which is regarded as the major symptom
of the presence of worms. Eating sweets, drinking water which is not flowing, is also believed to cause worms. Jant are said to like sweets and if the child eats lots of sweets, then it will have more jant in its pottan.

If the khayya hokkat does not get rid of the worms, and the child complains of pottan kadche, they take the child to the doctor, to be treated. And often, when they visit the doctor they ask for ‘medicine for worms’ jantna maddu, because they feel that the child complains of pottan dubate and pottan kadche is because of the worms. Modern medicine for worms is believed to be effective in getting rid of worms and further, children do not refuse to consume it, since, it is not bitter in taste like khayya hokkat.

Like Santu says, everybody (all people not just Kunabi) have jant in his or her body. They do not cause any trouble when they are few. They increase due to drinking bad water (that which is stagnant), and eating sweets made of sugar every day. Thus, trouble begins when, they increase in number and start ‘eating away’ the food one consumes and the skin inside the pottan. This causes pottan dubate and the itching sensation.

Foods considered to be good for children are those, which do not cause garmi heat in the body. Cold producing foods like buttermilk, sugar, bananas are also to be consumed less. Cold producing foods are not considered to be as harmful as heat producing food. Beersa padarth that is those, which cause heat in the body should be consumed less and should not be consumed every day. Beersa padarth for children are jackfruit, raw mango, and papaya, urad dal a kind of gram, crab esadi, and meat of pisse, a wild animal, which resembles a cat. If it is considered that the child is to be of nanjache prakriti (nanj refers to a condition wherein wounds do not heal quickly, nanjache prakriti means a body constitution prone to nanj) then, it is not allowed to eat food which will increase nanj in the body like brinjal, potatoes, and spicy foods teekh. They are told not to consume too many sweets since it can cause jantk.

The heat producing foods can cause cough, indigestion, vomiting, diarrhea, and cold producing foods can cause cold, and fever. Even if they are consumed,
they should be consumed in limited quantities so that it does not affect the hot and cold balance.

Meat *gaul* is considered to be good for health since it gives strength *takat* to the body. Unpolished rice is considered as very strength giving. But these days nobody is said to pound paddy at home, so they consume semi-polished rice. It is often said that if children are fed completely polished rice like the *bhattur* do, they will not become strong and will not be able to work. They will get tired quickly.

Apart from the day today practices, the ‘caregiving package’ also includes rituals performed for the child. Rituals form an integral part of the caregiving package because they have a bearing on the well-being of the child.

4. 7. *Karya* (rituals performed during childhood)

“Rituals are an important part of the way that any social group celebrates, maintains, and renews the world in which they live, and the way they deal with the dangers that threaten that world. The rituals of social transition are present in one form or another in every society. They relate changes in the human life cycle to changes in social position within the society, by linking the physiological to the social aspects of an individual’s life” (Helman 1994:192).

Rituals *karya* play a significant role in the life a Kunabi. The rituals denote various transitional stages in the life span of an individual. As it was seen in the previous chapter, the well-being of the child has to be taken care of, even before its birth. Therefore, taboos during the ceremonies of *gontle banduche* and *dindi* are observed. Various rituals performed during the childhood are naming, ear piercing *kaan uddoche*, and tonsure *monde jowla*.

### Transition in social status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before the ritual (Initial social status)</th>
<th>Performance of the ritual (Period of transition)</th>
<th>After the ritual (New social status)</th>
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</table>
Before the performance of the ritual (the initial status) is the stage in which
the infant or the child is, before undergoing a ritual performance. The performance
of the ritual is the period of transition which points towards the direction of
change. This situation creates a new social status, which is associated with patterns
of behavior differing from the earlier status. These may be behavioral changes or
changes in the rituals performed to the individual as a result of change in social
status. A boy for instance, cannot be married before the performance of monde
jowla but he can be after the performance of monde jowla. The new social status is
acquired as a result of the performance of the ritual. Further, the death rites also
change along with the changed status from childhood to adulthood.

Comparing life-cycle rituals in a number of societies, Van Gennep, points
out in his *Les Rites de Passage* (1960) that most societies have rituals making the
transition of an individual or a group of individuals from one important status to
another. These rituals particularly associated with birth, maturation, procreation
and death are found in all societies, although they are celebrated in different
manner.

4. 7. 1. *Keru rokkatunche* (burial of placenta)

First ritual that is associated with the well-being of the child is the burying
of placenta *keru rokkatunche*. Though this ritual is not performed to the bālshe,
the performance of this ritual is believed to be of utmost importance to the health
of the bālshe. Placenta *keru*, the mud pot, which is used while cutting the
umbilical cord, the blade, are placed in a sheath of areca nut *poi* and buried in the
place where the bath water runs. It is believed that it has to be buried where water
runs. It is buried where the bath water runs because, the place is always cool and it
is believed that a person *jeev* remains healthy if his constitution is cool *thand*.

It is heat *garam* that causes great many health problems. Placenta is buried
also, so that it does not come under the effect *shaka* of māru. *Shaka* refers to
shadow. It is believed that if the shadow of māru falls on a person, he becomes
affected by the effect of māru. If placenta becomes affected by māru the newborn
baby will be affected by illness and it may also lead to the death of the baby. It
should also be protected from the animals which would eat it. since it would be a sin to show no regard to the placenta which protected the child in the womb of the mother. It is likened to a person jeev. Just as a person receives death rituals, the placenta is also given due respects.

Father of the bälshe has to perform the burial of the placenta. Since, placenta is likened to a person jeev it has to be buried. If the father of the bälshe is not present then the woman who has performed the delivery performs the burial of the placenta. On the day of purification ceremony shuddhachara, feast prepared is served to the placenta since it protected the bälshe in the pottan of the mother. In a plantain leaf the meal is served and placed in the spot where the placenta has been buried. According to Honigmann (1959) for the 64 communities that the information is available, the placenta is buried in 30 communities. It is not discarded carelessly, a precaution that definitely is adaptive in view of its infectious nature. People point out that careless disposal of the placenta risks its discovery by a sorcerer, into whose hands the child’s life would be committed and cause a great deal of harm to the infant.

4. 7. 2. Shuddhachara avudche (purification ceremony)

During the seven days after delivery, parturient woman and the bälshe are believed to be in a state of pollution mayl. The pollution is confined to the gär. This pollution is said to be similar to the pollution during menstruation. Since the woman is in the state of pollution she is confined to a room kono. She is not supposed to touch anybody or enter into any other part of the house. Transferring of pollution from a polluted person to a person, who is not in a state of pollution, can result in the wrath of the deity and ancestral spirits. This can not only, affect the mother and the newborn but also the other family members. After she is given bath, the bathing area is purified. One of the women in the household gives bath to her. Then she also takes a bath to rid herself of the pollution.

Helman (1994) points out thatsecluding parturient women as a part of ritual observances is found in various cultures across the world. Such ritual observances as secluding parturient woman and her child, due to polluted state can protect them from sources of infection.
Among Kunabi, on the eighth day after delivery, purification *shudhdhachara* is performed. All the family members take bath in the morning and the head of the family performs worshiping of *kuldev*. Utensils and clothes used by the parturient woman are washed. *Panchagame*, which consists of cow dung, cow’s urine, milk, curds, and butter, is brought home from *bhattur* for purification. *Panchagame* is believed to purify the house and the people in it. It is sprinkled all over the house and on the washed clothes and utensils of the parturient woman. Father of the newborn, sprinkles *panchagame* on the baby and a couple of drops are given to the parturient woman to drink. With this the woman is purified.

After the purification ritual is over, she goes to the stream along with the women who helped her during the delivery. The stream is the major source of water supply for the Kunabi. It is related to all the day-to-day activities like providing water for cooking, cleaning, washing, bathing. The parturient woman carries with her the cloth used to wrap the *bālshe* and a pot *thambo* to fill water from the stream. She also carries along with her ritual stick *bettboddo* in order to protect herself from *māru*. At the stream, she washes the cloth, which she has brought along with her. Then, she fills her pot with water. Only a woman who is not in a state of pollution can touch the utensils and clothes of the household. Therefore, the parturient woman carrying the pot and cloth signifies that she has come out of the period of pollution.

The women who have gone along with her perform blessing *shenshe* by applying rice grains on her forehead and ask *dev* to protect her and the *bālshe*. They then remove evil eye for her by throwing rice in all the cardinal directions so that *māru* does not affect her from any direction. This is performed since she has come out from seclusion of the house for the first time after delivery.

She comes home fetching water and washes the threshold *bageel patto* of the house and worships it by drawing *shedi* (patterns with chalk piece) on the *bageel patto*, putting flowers and lighting incense sticks. Drawing *shedi* is an auspicious act performed on auspicious days like marriage, ancestral feasts and festivals. Then, she enters into the cooking area and places the pot near the hearth.
This signifies that, she is purified and she can resume the day-to-day activities, which, she was refrained from, because of her state of pollution.

In case of the birth of the first child, on the day of *shudhdhachra avudche*, a feast is given to the kin and all the people in the settlement. For subsequent births, the mother of the parturient woman and the women who helped during the delivery are invited. This denotes that the first birth has a great deal of significance. The birth of the first child proves that the woman is fertile and can bear children which ensures that family will continue. Further, it provides a new and enhanced status to the parents of the newborn child. This is hence, an occasion to be rejoiced and that is why, kin and neighbors are invited to share the celebration of the occasion.

In case the parturient woman is ill, *shuddhachara* is performed on the eighth day but she does not go out of the house to the stream. She is given *panchagame* and purified.

4. 7. 3. **Nāv vadcha** (naming ceremony)

The day after the performance of *shudhdhachara*, naming ceremony *nāv vadcha* is performed. On the day of naming ceremony, women who had helped during the delivery are invited to bathe the parturient woman and the *bālshe*. Children *porgo* in the settlement are invited for the naming ceremony.

Naming ceremony begins with the preparation of *haldiche sooth* by the women, who have helped during delivery. *Haldiche sooth* is a thread, in which turmeric and garlic pieces are tied. Women who have helped during delivery apply oil on the head of the *bālshe* saying *thand dayi*. A girl who has not yet attained puberty sits on a wooden platform holding the *bālshe*. She is considered to be suitable for this occasion because, she is not yet polluted by menstrual pollution that comes along with attaining puberty. A plantain leaf on which, rice grains and pieces of betelnut and betel leaves are placed in front of her. She holds the infant on top of the plantain leaf. All these materials used in the naming ceremony are sacred for the Kunabi.

Then, paternal grandmother *ajji* of the infant ties *haldiche sooth* around the neck and the loin of the infant. The paternal grandmother plays the role of...
performing the naming ceremony because, the child belongs to her family and lineage. *Haldiche sooth* is said to protect the child from *nanj*. The pieces of garlic and turmeric are believed to have qualities, which prevent *nanj* that may be caused due to the bite of insects. The paternal grandmother then says loudly you are... your name is... *tu ka... tu ka nāv...* calling the name selected for the infant. Then she performs blessing *shenshe* by saying ‘be well always’ *layak* meaning, let the child be well, have good health. Betelnut, betel leaves and the rice is given to the girl who held the infant.

On the day of naming ceremony, a sweet dish called *chooru* is prepared. *Chooru* is prepared with partially boiled rice, jaggery and grated coconut. Paternal grandmother of the *bālshe* holds *bālshe* in her arms and puts a finger dipped in the *chooru* into the mouth of *bālshe*. With the performance of feeding the *chooru*, it is believed that the child is incorporated into the *gotri* of the lineage *kutumb* in which, it is born. Invitees are fed *chooru*. Pollution period has to be observed in case of the death of the infant after this performance because the *bālshe* is now a member of the lineage.

It is believed that, once *chooru* is fed, since it becomes the member of the lineage, and it cannot be adopted *pashoosi halla* by anybody else. If the child has to be adopted by a person belonging to other *gotri*, then the child has to be performed rituals, which will incorporate the child into the *gotri* of the person adopting it. But in case, if the *bālshe* is adopted before the feeding of *chooru*, then the person who adopts it performs the naming ceremony and feeds the *chooru* thereby making it the member of his *gotri*.

Keragu has two daughters and one son who is paralyzed leg down. His daughter gave birth to a son and she died when the child was six months old. Since her husband wanted to remarry, he married his deceased wife’s sister. His wife eloped after being married to him for a month. As there was no one to look after the child and also for the reason that Keragu’s son was physically handicapped, Keragu decided to adopt his grandson. As the child was already six months old, he had already been performed naming ceremony. Therefore, after bringing his grandson home, he sought the *bammun* asked for an auspicious day, and on that
day he again performed the naming ceremony for the child. The child was given a
different name and fed chooru. Thus, the child became the son of Keragu and
became a member of Keragu’s gotri.

Name for the child born is selected on the basis of horoscope jataka. It is
prepared by the bammun on the basis of day and time of birth. Bammun prescribes
as to, with which alphabet the name of the infant should begin so that, it has a
good future. A generation or two ago, children would be named after their paternal
and maternal grand parents and it was done without seeking a horoscope. But it is
felt that, naming the children without seeking jataka can harm them in future
because, wrong name may bring ill fate ched dayinte. In the earlier days, people
named their children without getting horoscopes made, and that is the reason they
believed as to why, children died in large numbers.

Tammani says sixteen years ago, when he had his first son, he named him
after his father and when the second son was born, he named him after his wife’s
father. Both the children died. When the third child was born, he sought bammun
and the bammun suggested getting horoscope done and naming the children
accordingly. For the children born subsequently jataka was prepared and the
children were named as per the alphabet suggested in the jataka and he says all
these children survived.

Name of the grandparents who are living or dead is given to the child so
that, the child gets the wisdom and experience of its grandparent. It is regarded
that, grandparents will have had many years of experience with life and wisdom,
that comes along with this experience. Therefore, when a child is given their
name, the wisdom also comes to it along with the name.

Unlike a boy’s name, a girl’s name is changed after her marriage. Bammun
sees if her name is compatible with that of her husband and whether it will bring
good fortune to the husband’s family. Because, she is now becoming the member
of another lineage and her fate is bound to have an affect on her husband’s lineage.
If the name is not compatible, a different name is selected and she is given that
name. And henceforth, she will be called by that name. The change in the name
therefore, does not only denote the change in the position and affiliation but also, an effort to create good fortune to the family of which she is a part.

Naming the children after seeking *jataka*, changing the name of the girl after marriage were not said to be present in the earlier customary practices of the Kunabi. They are the result of the association with the *bhattur* and consequence of assimilation of Brahminical practices into the fold of customs of Kunabi rituals. Further, it can also be said to be a result of the ritual dominance of the *bhattur* and their acceptance by Kunabi. This has lead to a greater degree of participation of *bhattur* in the rituals of the Kunabi and also has lead to degeneration of some of the indigenous practices of Kunabi.

The names of the children have changed because, the traditional Kunabi names are made fun of by the *bhattur* saying they are funny and meaningless. Children going to school say, they are insulted when they are made fun of. The names that were usually given earlier were like *Sata, Rasma, Keragu, Timmanna, Marthu, Bella Vallu, Ramani, Beera, Paiko* for boys and for girls names like *Keragi, Paiki, Timmu, Paki, Valli, Bellu, Rami, Satu*.

It is also known through *jataka*, if the child is born in an inauspicious moment *galige, raahu kaal*. If it is born in such a moment, then it is believed that the child will suffer from illness and it may even die. The concept of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness of moments of birth is Brahminical in origin and the Kunabi know of it as told and talked about by the *bhattur*.

Therefore, when one gets a *jataka* done, if any such thing comes to be known then, remedial measures can be taken. *Bammun* advises Kunabi as to what kind of worshipping or *homa* has to be performed in order to ward the effect that, the inauspicious moment of birth may bring. As a remedial measure, *Satyanarayana kathe* is performed. Since *Satyanarayana* is believed to be the God who will bring health and prosperity to the family, in which his worship is performed.

An auspicious day has to be selected for the performance of *Satyanarayana kathe*. *Bammun* has to be invited for the performance. The story of how the performance of worshipping of *Satyanarayana* can bring prosperity to the family
is narrated and he performs the worship of *Satyanarayana* and a *homa* is performed. People are invited for this worshipping and a feast is served.

Laxmi’s grandchild was born in an inauspicious moment *rahu kaala* as per the *jataka*. *Bammun* told her that *Satyanarayana kathe* had to be performed in order to ward-off the adverse effects of the inauspicious moment of birth. *Satyanarayana kathe* was advised to be performed on the day infant’s naming ceremony was performed. Since, the family could not afford to perform the *Satyanarayana kathe* right then, it was not performed.

After a couple of days of performance of naming ceremony, the infant developed a red spot in the left eye. Infants are generally not taken out of the settlement boundary for at least six months because infants are very vulnerable to the effect of *māru*. And, *māru* dwell in the outskirts of the settlement. Therefore, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife was asked to visit and check on the infant. She said nothing was wrong and said if it did not lessen in next two or three days, she would prescribe medicine.

Laxmi asked her daughter-in-law to put a couple of drops of breast milk in the eye. It was done for two days and the redness disappeared. Then after fifteen days, the infant started suffering from cough *kokli*. And indigenous medicine was given for four days but the cough did not reduce. So when the doctor visited the *anganawādi*, he was asked to check the infant. The doctor prescribed two kinds of syrups for the infant. Of the two, one syrup, which was inexpensive was brought and fed to the infant. The infant recovered to some extent but then again developed fever.

Shaman *gāḍi* was sought to see if there was any effect of *māru* in the family. The shaman said there was no trouble from the spirits. It was decided in the family that all the suffering the infant *jeevala tondar* was going through was due to, the inauspicious moment of birth. So *bammun* was again consulted and he suggested a day for the performance of *Satyanarayana kathe*. The family borrowed money from the *bhattur* for whom they usually work and performed the *Satyanarayana kathe*. The grandmother says that after the performance of *Satyanarayana kathe*, the infant is well and no longer has any illness.
4.7.4. Monde jowla ( tonsure)

Removing of the birth hair monde jowla is performed for the male child on an auspicious day selected for the purpose by bammun. On this day, all members of the family take bath in the morning and head of the family performs the worshiping of kuldev. The mother’s brother mamma of the child performs monde jowla. He plays an important role in the significant life crisis rituals of a boy. The ceremonies of monde jowla and ear piercing kaan uddoche are to be performed at the age of three years or five or seven or nine since, these odd years are considered to be auspicious for a male. Similar belief of odd numbers being associated with male is found in different castes of Karnataka like Brahmin, sub castes of Lingayat.

Mamma sits in front of kuldev with the child on his lap. He takes a rajje pan blade and prays to kuldev saying he is offering the hair of his sister’s child to kuldev and says jeevak, rogana, gar garveshi sukh dayeen ‘give the child health and happiness from house and family’. He removes the hair leaving just a tuft above the forehead. Shaving the head completely is done only at the death of a parent. He then applies shenshe to the forehead of the child. To protect the child from evil eye, he throws rice in all directions.

Hair removed is then, offered to a plantain tree. The plantain tree is regarded to be very useful when it is alive and also when it dies. And it goes on producing seedlings one after the other. In the same way the boy should continue the gār by bearing children. Mamma is given a token of money and betel leaves and nuts as a mark of respect for performing the ritual. Monde jowla is performed only for the boys and not for girls because cutting of hair for a girl is considered inauspicious for a girl.

4.7.5. Kaan uddoche ( ear piercing)

On the day of performance of monde jowla, ear piercing kaan uddoche is also performed. Ear piercing is also performed by the mamma. Thin wire of gold or silver majje is pierced since they are considered to be precious metals. Performance of ear piercing is for ‘doing away with the misfortune’ kantig utte. Kantig utte means misfortunes that a boy may face in his life are preempted by the
performance of ear piercing. By causing hurt in the form of piercing the ear, the future harm is preempted. This is a preventive measure for prevention of future unforeseen harms.

Boys are regarded to be naughty kiladi and this disposition of theirs, brings them harm. Because of their playful attitude, and due to their inability to listen to the advice of the elders they tend to harm themselves by, climbing trees, going into the forest alone, going near the streams, not observing taboos, going to play out of the village after its become dark. Acts considered as taboos, like not consuming food near temples, not taking musre near kuldev done without knowing also can cause trouble tondar by making them sick or getting hurt.

Along with warding-off misfortune, the custom of ear piercing is believed to be the symbol of their belonging to the fold of Hindu religion.

The mother's brother has to perform the rituals of naming ceremony and ear piercing, which are believed to be very important rituals in the life of a male. Mamma gets the honor of performing this ritual, because it is believed that, he is responsible for the continuation of the child's lineage. In the sense that, it was he, who gave away his sister in marriage. And because of his giving away the girl came into the lineage kutumb, bore children and helped in the continuation of the lineage.

Nagu is now, a five year old boy who, has been performed monde jowla. His parents relate as to how he kept suffering from one thing or the other, when he was three years old, like falling down, getting hurt, and becoming ill najje frequently. Because of economic constraints, he was not performed monde jowla. His parents sought the shaman and he said that māru were angry because monde jowla was not performed to the child.

The father went to the bammun and when the boy's jataka was seen, the bammun said there was no auspicious moment for the performance of monde jowla in the boy's jataka for the next nine months. But by the end of nine months the boy would already be four years old and monde jowla can be performed only in the odd years like three, five, seven, and nine. So during the next one year the
child was taken to the shaman whenever there was any sort of illness. As soon as
the child became five-year old, *monde jowla* was performed to the boy.

For a girl, ears and nose piercing has to be done, before the performance of
the ritual called *gontle banduche* (the pre-puberty ritual performed at the age of
around eight to ten years). It has to be performed before *gontle banduche* because
*gontle banduche* represents that the girl is ready to be married and a girl to be
married has to have her ears and nose pierced. A girl is considered as a girl when
her ears and nose are pierced and bejeweled.

The goldsmith *songar* performs the piercing of ear and nose. He is given
betel leaves, betelnut and some money. It is performed around the age of three to
four years that is, when the skin is still tender. Later on the skin is believed to
become hard and it hurts when the ears and nose are pierced. It is essential for a
girl to have her nose and ears bejeweled because only a woman, whose husband is
dead, is bare eared and bare nosed. Further, the pierced ears and nose which are
bejeweled are regarded to enhance the beauty of the girl or the woman. The
piercing of ears and wearing ear studs for a girl has beautification purposes
whereas for a boy it has religious purposes.

4. 8. Development phases

Rituals like, naming, becoming a member of a lineage are critical in the
development of a child. Only after a child has been given a name, is it
incorporated into the lineage and becomes eligible for mourning observances in
case of death. Kunabi have fears that infants may die within a week of birth if they
have any problems. Therefore, naming is performed after a week of birth. Such
rituals are indicative that, Kunabi perceive that the chances of infant mortality are
reduced once the infant survived the first week of its life. There are also different
expressions that indicate the phases of development (refer chart). The motor
developments in the infant and the accompanying changes in the responses of the
adults are closely related. These are indicated for instance, in the form of giving
preventive medication for worms or holding up the supplementary food till the
child begins to crawl.
### Definitions of developmental stages in children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions of the terms according to Kunabi Balshe</th>
<th>Fetal period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balshe</td>
<td>Infant (up to one year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanmala chedo</td>
<td>Small child (in the process of being weaned from 1-5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porgya</td>
<td>Child/children (general usage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porg/porgo</td>
<td>Female/Male child (from age 5-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevdu chedo</td>
<td>Girl/Boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As used in Ayurvedic medicine (Aziz and Maloney 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garbha</th>
<th>Fetal period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kshirda</td>
<td>From 0-6 months when the infant lives on milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kshirannada</td>
<td>From 6 months to two years, until the child is weaned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bala</td>
<td>From age 2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumara</td>
<td>From age 5-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to western notions (Hurlock 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infancy</th>
<th>Birth to end of second week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babyhood</td>
<td>End of the second week to end of second year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood</td>
<td>2-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late childhood</td>
<td>6-10/12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>13/14 – 18 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to modern pediatrics (Gupte 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newborn</th>
<th>First 4 weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>First year of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood (Preschool)</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle childhood (School going)</td>
<td>6-10 years (girls) and 12-14 (boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepubescent</td>
<td>10-12 (girls) and 12-14 (boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pubescent</td>
<td>12-14 (girls) and 14-16 (boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The infant at birth is measured as small or big by seeing whether it can be held on one’s palm. If it is smaller than the palm it is considered as small and it is usually said the infant’s hands and legs are as small as one’s fingers. If the baby fits or is bigger than the width of the palm it is considered to be normal. With regard to the motor developments the expectations of the child are as follows: at 3 months the bālshe is said to turn on its stomach pottin padta. By the age of 6-7 months the infant begins crawling dumben on its stomach. And by 10 to 11 months, the baby can crawl on all fours chaukun utte. Around one year it is able to stand and begins teething dant alyan. By 1 ½ years the child will have learnt to walk chair utte.

### Developmental skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>People’s perception</th>
<th>Biomedical median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crawl</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>9.12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit</td>
<td>8-9 months</td>
<td>9.3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>15-18 months</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat self</td>
<td>20 months</td>
<td>9.2-11 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak few words</td>
<td>12-16 months</td>
<td>9.2-12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a few differences in the perception of people and biomedical perspective with regard to age at which different motor developments take place. The external, visible developments are associated with the motor development and comparatively less focus on internal physiological changes. People often say it is not possible to know what is happening inside the body. This is also reflected in their anxieties when it comes to ‘internal health problems’ like stomach ailments. The perception of whether the child is growing well and is healthy is mainly related to amount of food consumed by the child and also importantly to its behavior whether it is playing that is, being active and sleeping well or not.

It is also related less predominantly to appearance of the child, that is whether big or small for its age compared to other children. Parents can be heard saying ‘my son/ daughter is small for his/her age’. Further, when the child is not
healthy, the child will be weak, and inactive. Persistent crying, not feeding well and not sleeping well are also indicators of not only ill-health but also supernatural affliction. Ghosh describes the way parents observe whether their children are developing fine, that is parents know that their children are growing, because they grow out of their clothes and seem to become taller and heavier. A healthy child is happy, full of energy, runs around and has a good appetite. Normal development is another sign that a child is well nourished. The first indication that the child is not well nourished is poor appetite, listlessness, decreased activity and peevishness. Usually there is an associated illness as well (cited in Janssen 2000).

Thus, an understanding of the beliefs and customs and conceptualizing the child’s well-being as embedded in everyday setting, can throw light on the concerns of the caregivers. The day-to-day care giving practices, the rituals, the food habits have health related dimensions though they are not always obvious. Therefore, the understanding of non-clinical everyday processes, can enable one to understand what people regard as the crucial stages of life, and what aspects of the day-to-day processes need to be of concern for the well-being of the child. For instance, the performance of ear piercing for a boy indicates the temperament of a prepubescent boy, the possible mishaps that may occur as a result of the adventurous nature of the boys. This temperament is not only recognized but also possible preventive action is taken in the form of piercing the ear with the belief that, the child has already been hurt and will not suffer anymore.

Mead (1953) points out that except possibly for variation associated with class and caste, all parents in a community tend to rear children in similar socially standardized ways. Each child therefore, encounters many of the same early experiences and is brought up by models that consistently reinforce one another. Honigmann in this regard says, each individual is a unique organism, different in make up and idiosyncratic experiences from all other individuals. However, there are typical characteristics. Aspects of personality regarded as typical of community’s members are referred to collectively as the typical personality. The modal personality in any community is a function of a particular combination of
experiences shared by members. These experiences include a relatively similar pattern of child rearing (1959).

With this background on the day-to-day caregiving practices, the next chapter deals with the natural and supernatural concepts related to health and illness.