A study on Psychological Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of First-Time Parents, with special reference to Lakwa, Charaideo, Assam

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Social Work for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Work



Submitted to

Department of Social Work

MSSV, Guwahati Unit

Submitted by

Priya Boruah

MSW 4th Semester

Registration No: MSSV-0023-008-001401

Roll No: MSW-05/23

Session:2023-2025

MAHAPURUSHA SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA VISWAVIDYALAYA
GUWAHATI UNIT, RUPNAGAR 781032, ASSAM

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CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure of certifying that Miss Priya Boruah, an MSW 4th semester student bearing Roll No. MSW-05/23 and Registration No MSSV-0023-008-001401 of 2023 has successfully completed her dissertation entitled "A study on Psychological Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of First-Time Parents, with special reference to Lakwa, Charaideo, Assam." She has successfully completed this research independently.

I wish her a bright future.

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The work reported in this research has not been submitted elsewhere, and the facts presented here are true to the best of my knowledge.

I wish her all the very best for her future endeavors.

Dr. Deepshikha Carpenter

Head of the Department

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Priya Boruah, a student in the 4th Semester of the Department of Social Work (Roll No. MSW-05/23 and Registration No. MSSV-0023-008-001401 of 2023), Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya (MSSV), Guwahati Unit, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "A study on Psychological Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of First-Time Parents, with special reference to Lakwa, Charaideo, Assam" is my original work and the result of my academic effort and research, conducted under the guidance of Dr. Deepshikha Carpenter, Head of the Department (i/c) Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, MSSV, Guwahati Unit. I have appropriately acknowledged and cited all sources, including key documents and authors, that have contributed to the completion of this research work. I certify that this dissertation does not violate any copyright laws. Furthermore, I declare that the content of this dissertation has not been submitted previously, in part or in full, to this or any other university for the award of any degree or academic qualification.

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ABBREVIATIONS

	PPD	Post-Partum Depression
\triangleright	DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
\triangleright	MDD	Major Depressive Disorder.
	CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
	ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the emotional and psychological experiences of first-time parents, especially those from rural and working and non-working-class backgrounds, during the early years of parenting, particularly when their child is between zero to three years old. Becoming a parent for the first time brings happiness and bonding, but also brings many challenges such as emotional stress, lack of sleep, financial burden, and cultural expectations. The study aims to understand the real-life struggles of new mothers and fathers, the different types of stress they experience, how they divide responsibilities, and the coping strategies they use to handle parenting pressure. It also looks at how family support, online platforms, and work-life balance influence their emotional well-being. A qualitative research method was used to gather in-depth information. The study used purposive sampling, selecting 15 first-time parents (both mothers and fathers) with children under the age of three years. The main tool for data collection was semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to study the data, which helped identify major themes such as emotional stress, lack of sleep, gender role pressure, support systems, and coping mechanisms. The findings showed that mothers often felt mentally and physically exhausted because of continuous childcare and household work, especially after childbirth. Fathers, on the other hand, felt financial pressure and emotional stress but lacked people to talk to, as most parenting discussions focus only on mothers. Many fathers shared that they had to act strong even when they felt anxious or tired. Several parents said they were judged by family or society if they failed to meet expectations. Despite these challenges, many parents found support in their spouses, elders, or through online parenting videos. Some practiced yoga or meditation, shared responsibilities with their partner, or simply took small breaks to manage stress. These responses reflect real-life coping strategies. The study used the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman to understand how parents appraise stressful situations and respond, either emotionally or through problem-solving methods. Though the sample size was small, the rich, detailed responses helped paint a clear picture of the emotional world of first-time parents. The study recommends that there should be more focus on fathers' mental health, counseling services for new parents. and awareness programs in rural areas.

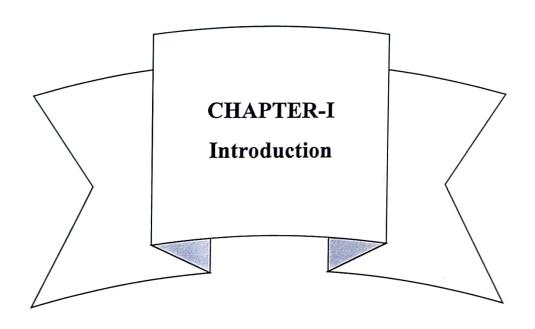
Key words: First-time parents, Psychological Challenges, Coping strategies, support systems.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Meaning of Parenting:

Parenting is a process of taking care of a child from the moment they are born, helping them grow healthy, responsible individuals, and preparing them for future life. It is not just feeding and clothing the child, but also teaching them good values, supporting their learning, and guiding them to understand right from wrong. Parenting means being there when the child is happy or sad, when they succeed or fail. Parenting also means managing a lot of responsibilities, like making sure the child goes to school, gets proper medical care, and learns how to treat others with respect. It may be stressful, especially for first-time parents, but it is also a fulfilling experience for the parents because they watch their child grow. learning new things and becoming independent.

"Parenting is the art of helping children to develop into free human beings, capable of thinking for themselves and acting autonomously."- Rudolph Dreikurs.

"Parenting is the process by which children are given the values and social norms that will enable them to live appropriately in society."- Jean Piaget.

"Parenting is the process by which children are taught to be responsible, independent, and capable of making their own decisions."-Benjamin Spock.

"Parenting is the process of guiding a child toward the realization of his or her full potential as a human being."- Nels Nelson.

Meaning of first-time parents:

First-time parents are an experience where individuals who have a child and raise them for the first time. It is a very new experience, and also a mix of emotions for them, which includes joy, excitement, and love, but they also faced stress, fear, and confusion, because they had not cared for a baby before that why they learning from the beginning, like how to feed, bath and understand the need for their child. They may feel nervous about whether they are doing right or wrong.

Meaning of post-partum depression:

DSM-5 defines maternal Post Partum Depression (PPD) as a major depressive episode for which the specifier "with peripartum onset" can be applied if the most recent episode occurs during pregnancy or in the four weeks following delivery. According to DSM-5, symptoms are not distinct from symptoms of MDD, like having a depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, changes in weight, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue, feeling worthless or excessive/inappropriate guilt, decreased concentration, thoughts of death/suicide.

Psychological challenges of first-time parents:

Psychological challenges among first-time parents include emotional and mental difficulties they face when they become parents for the first time. This includes feelings like stress, worry, fear, or confusion about taking care of a new baby and managing changes in their life. They may feel tired, overwhelmed, or unsure about how to balance their own needs with their baby's needs.

1.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Parent: Parents are individuals who are responsible for raising and caring for the child. It can be either born or through adoption

First-time parents: First-time parents are defined as a mother or father who is becoming a parent for the first time. They are adapting to the new responsibilities and feelings, emotions. It includes working and non-working parents, single parents, to understand their psychological experiences, stress factors, and coping methods, and the support they receive during this important life transition. And the child age between zero to three years of age.

Post-partum depression: Postpartum depression refers to the emotional struggle faced by first-time parents after childbirth, as shared in their personal experiences. It includes feelings of sadness, emotional tiredness, and a sense of being overwhelmed while adjusting to the new role of a parent. This condition is seen as a natural part of the

psychological challenges that arise due to sudden changes in daily life, lack of rest, increased responsibilities, and limited support.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Becoming a first-time parent is a special and emotional experience, but it also brings many changes and challenges that can be difficult to handle for first-time parents. New parents often feel happy and excited to raise their baby, but at the same time, they also feel stressed, tired, and confused. Everything becomes new from them, like feeding the baby, changing diapers, and waking up many times at night, to learning how to take care of the baby's health and needs. Many parents feel pressure to do everything perfectly, which can cause self-doubt and anxiety. For working parents, managing a job while taking care of a baby becomes very tiring and stressful. They may feel guilty for not spending enough time at home or feel overwhelmed trying to balance both responsibilities. These challenges can lead to mental health problems like stress, sadness, anger, or even postpartum depression. Sometimes parents also feel lonely because they do not get enough emotional support from family or friends, or they hesitate to ask for help due to fear of being judged. Many new parents do not know where to go for help or may feel ashamed to talk about their struggles. If this stress continues for a long time, it can affect their relationship with their partner and child, and can even hurt the environment in the home. That is why it is important to understand the emotional and mental health experiences of first-time parents. This study looks closely at the feelings, challenges, and support systems of first-time mothers and fathers. especially those who work or live in rural areas and try to find out how they deal with stress, what support they have, and what more can be done to help them. Understanding their real-life problems can help society and professionals build better ways to guide and support new parents in their parenting journey.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

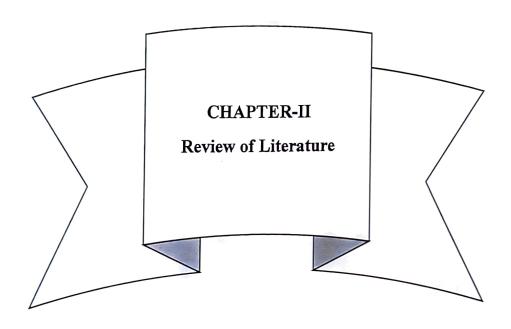
This study is important because it helps people to look closely at what first-time parents really experience, especially those who are working or living in rural areas where resources may be limited. Becoming a parent for the first time is not easy. It brings many new responsibilities, emotional ups and downs, sleepless nights, and moments of selfdoubt. While some parents may feel excited and ready, others may feel overwhelmed, lonely, and unsure about how to handle everything. These emotional and mental struggles are often hidden or ignored because parents may feel they have to be strong all the time. By studying the real-life experiences of both mothers and fathers, this research will help us understand their stress, fears, and how they try to cope, whether by talking to family, using online support, or finding time to relax. It will also show how support systems like family help, job flexibility, and emotional understanding play a big role in their mental well-being. The findings can be useful for creating better support programs in hospitals, workplaces, and communities, so that first-time parents feel less alone and more confident. This study aims to make their journey smoother, healthier, and more supported, not just for the parents, but for the growth and happiness of their children too.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the psychological challenges of first-time parents.
- To identify the major stress faced by first-time parents.
- To explore the causes of stress experienced by first-time parents.
- To assess the role of the support systems in managing the psychological challenges of caregivers.
- To examine the coping strategies that caregivers use to manage difficulties.
- To study the division of parent's roles and responsibilities between first-time mothers and fathers.
- To explore how first-time parents balance work and family responsibilities.
- To identify how social media and online platforms help first-time parents.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do first-time parents describe their emotional and psychological experiences during parenting?
- What are the main stressors experienced by first-time parents?
- How do support systems help in adjusting to psychological challenges for first-time parents?
- How do first-time parents cope with these challenges?
- How do first-time parents divide their roles and responsibilities in parenting?
- How do first-time parents balance professional and personal lives?
- Do first-time parents use social media and technology for parenting guidance?



LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on the experiences of first-time parents and how they manage the emotional, mental, and practical challenges of parenting. The selected literatures look at important areas such as how new mothers balance work and family, how parenting tasks are shared between mothers and fathers, how social media is a resource used for parenting support, and to explore how parents manage stress. These articles help us understand the pressures faced by new parents. They also show how the way parents share responsibilities and the kind of support they receive can affect their mental well-being and family relationships. These studies provide a clear picture of the difficulties first-time parents face and the coping strategies they use during this major life transition.

Nelson (2003) in the article "Transition to Motherhood Becoming a mother' is an incredibly emotional and revolutionary experience." In this study, Antonia M. Nelson dives into how new moms faced this important life change and some of the obstacles they encountered along the way. The results reveal that first-time moms often face emotional insecurity, uncertainty, and stress, especially when separated from their newborns, like in situations where babies need intensive care. The research emphasizes the importance of nurses and healthcare professionals providing emotional support and guidance, particularly during the first six months after birth. The study highlights the importance of realistic prenatal discussions, strong postpartum support programs, and accessible role models to facilitate a smooth transition for new mothers. While the journey into motherhood is transformative, it also presents real challenges, and having the right support is crucial for a positive experience.

Wise et al (2010) in the article "Gender-Role Attitudes and Behavior Across the Transition to Parenthood" explore how individuals attitudes and behaviors around gender roles evolve during the transition to parenthood. The study found that when people become parents for the first time, their views and behaviors about gender roles often change. Even couples who believed in sharing work equally started taking on more traditional roles after having a baby. Women especially took on more housework and

childcare than men, and their beliefs became more traditional. Some first-time parents started returning to more equal thinking, but this was less common among parents who already had children. Both mothers and fathers began to value their role in the family more after the baby was born, but mothers felt this change more strongly. The study shows that parenthood can push couples toward traditional roles, even if they did not expect it, and highlights the need for better support to help families share responsibilities more equally.

Alio et al (2013) in the article "A Community Perspective on the Role of Fathers During Pregnancy: A Qualitative Study," explore how communities view the role of fathers during pregnancy, especially within African American populations. The main goal of this study was to understand community beliefs, expectations, and cultural attitudes surrounding men's involvement during pregnancy. The study found that most people believe fathers play a very important role in supporting mothers emotionally and helping ensure healthier outcomes for both mother and baby. Many fathers face challenges such as poverty, unemployment, broken relationships, and negative societal stereotypes that make it hard for them to be involved. The study also pointed out that healthcare systems often do not include fathers in prenatal care, leaving them feeling ignored or unsupported. Although faced with several challenges, many men showed a genuine desire to participate during the pregnancy period. The authors suggest that creating more welcoming spaces for fathers in healthcare settings, offering education tailored for men, and addressing social and cultural challenges can help increase father involvement. This community-focused approach can lead to stronger families and better support for both parents during the journey to parenthood.

Parfitt et al (2014) in the article "Transition to parenthood and mental health in first-time parents." The researchers provide an in-depth examination of the psychological experiences of first-time parents during the early stages of parenthood. This research is to understand how new mothers and fathers adjust emotionally after the birth of their first child. It found that both mothers and fathers face significant emotional challenges during this period. Around 25% of both reported anxiety during pregnancy, and after birth, 21% of women and 8% of men continued to experience anxiety. Depression

affected 11% of mothers and 8% of fathers, while 5% of parents experienced symptoms of PTSD. The study identified several causes of distress, such as sleep deprivation, difficult childbirth, lack of support from partners, feelings of failure as a parent, and even anger towards their baby. These findings highlight that both men and women can struggle with mental health after having a child, not just mothers. The article strongly suggests that mental health care and support should be offered to both parents, focusing on their emotional needs during this major life transition to help build healthier family environments.

Laney et al (2015) in the article "Becoming a Mother: The Influence of Motherhood on Women's Identity Development," researchers explore how the experience of motherhood transforms women's identities. The findings revealed three central themes: first, many women experienced a temporary sense of losing their pre-motherhood selves as they integrated their new role into their identities; Motherhood helped women grow as individuals, as they began to see their children as a part of their identity. The strong bond they formed with their children also made some parts of their personality and identity feel stronger. These themes highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of identity development during the transition to motherhood, emphasizing both the challenges and the enriching aspects of this life stage. The study underscores the importance of supporting women through this identity transformation, suggesting that acknowledging and addressing these Changes can lead to better psychological well-being for new mothers.

Devi (2016) in the article "Stressors, level of stress, and coping mechanism adopted by first-time expectant fathers," in this study said that becoming a dad for the first time is an exciting journey, but it can also come with stress, as fathers are new responsibilities and uncertainties. The findings revealed that first-time fathers encounter stress from various angles, such as financial worries, fear about childbirth complications, feeling unprepared, shifts in their relationships, and societal expectations. Many dads voiced their concerns about being able to support their children both emotionally and financially. Balancing work and family life also became an important challenge, with

many fathers struggling with job commitments while prepping for their new role. Another point raised was how some fathers felt left out of the pregnancy journey, as the focus tends to be more on the mother. The study showed that fathers use different coping mechanisms to tackle their stress. While many turned to emotional support from partners, family, or friends, others found comfort in relaxation techniques like exercise, meditation, or engaging hobbies. Some dads resorted to avoidance strategies like diving into work or seeking distractions, which were less effective in managing stress over time.

Costa et al (2017) in the article "Dads Get Sad Too: Depressive Symptoms and Associated Factors in Expectant First-Time Fathers," the study looked emotional struggles of men who are about to become fathers for the first time. The study found that around 13.3% of these men showed signs of depression, which could affect not only their well-being but also their family relationships. The main causes of these depressive symptoms included low social support, financial worries, poor sleep, and dissatisfaction in their romantic relationships. The research emphasizes that men, just like women, go through emotional changes during pregnancy, but their struggles are often overlooked. It calls for more inclusive mental health support and prenatal care that also focuses on fathers. The authors suggest creating programs that help fathers talk about their feelings, understand their emotions, and manage stress in healthy ways. By supporting fathers during pregnancy, we can help build stronger families and improve outcomes for both parents and children. This study highlights the need for society and healthcare systems to recognize and address the emotional needs of expectant fathers.

Darwin et al (2017) in the article "Fathers' views and experiences of their mental health during pregnancy and the first postnatal year: a qualitative interview study of men participating in the UK Born and Bred in Yorkshire (BaBY) cohort". This study explores father's mental health during pregnancy and the first year after birth, a topic often overshadowed by maternal health. The research found that many fathers experienced stress, exhaustion, and emotional struggles, but felt unsure about seeking help, believing that services should focus on mothers. Fathers saw supporting their partners as their main role, often ignoring their well-being. They described challenges like tiredness.

irritability, and adjusting to new responsibilities, but found little formal support designed for them. Some relied on personal networks, while others lacked resources. The study highlights the need for father-specific mental health support that aligns with their role as caregivers. It has some limitations, such as a small sample size, a lack of diversity in participants, and the possibility of bias in self-reported experiences. The findings suggest that recognizing and addressing fathers' mental health can improve overall family well-being. Future research should explore the experiences of fathers from different backgrounds, ways to include them in perinatal mental health care, and how tailored interventions can help. The study calls for changes in healthcare services to better support fathers, ultimately benefiting both parents and children.

Baldwin et al (2018) in the article "Mental Health and Wellbeing During the Transition to Fatherhood: A Systematic Review of First-Time Fathers' Experiences," this study explores how new fathers feel and what they need during the life-changing journey into fatherhood. After reviewing 22 studies from different countries, the researchers found that many first-time fathers experience stress, fear, and emotional struggles as they try to adjust to their new role. Key issues included feeling unsure about their new identity as a father, facing challenges like work-life balance, and struggling with negative emotions without enough support. Many fathers coped by avoiding their feelings or distracting themselves, such as by working longer hours or using habits like smoking. They also felt left out by health professionals and said there weren't enough resources designed specifically for them. Despite the difficulties, some men also found joy and pride in becoming fathers. The study highlights the need for better preparation, emotional support, and information for new dads to help them manage stress and improve their mental health during this important time.

Albanese et al (2019) in the article "The Role of Parental Self-Efficacy in Parent and Child Wellbeing: A Systematic Review of Associated Outcomes" this study reviews existing research to understand about parental self-efficacy (PSE), which means how confident parents feel in their ability to care for and raise children affects both the parents and children's well-being. The study found that when parents believe they can

handle parenting well, they feel less stress, anxiety, and depression. They are more positive and consistent with their children, which helps kids grow up healthier, emotionally, socially, and even in school. On the other hand, parents who do not feel confident often struggle more, may be stricter or more negative, and may find it harder to manage their child's behavior. The article also says that support from family, friends, or professionals can help parents feel more confident. So, programs that support parents should focus on building their confidence through education, counseling, or parenting groups. When parents believe in themselves, both they and their children do better.

Baldwin et al. (2019) in the article "A qualitative exploratory study of UK first-time fathers' experiences, mental health and wellbeing needs during their transition to fatherhood", explored what first-time fathers go through emotionally and mentally during the first year of having a child. The study interviewed 21 new fathers from different backgrounds and found that many experienced a mix of emotions, including excitement, anxiety, and stress. Fathers talked about struggles with their new identity, relationship changes with their partners, and challenges in balancing work and family life. They also felt that health services mainly focused on mothers, leaving fathers feeling left out and unsupported. Many fathers said they needed more guidance, better involvement in parenting support programs, and recognition from health professionals. This study highlights that new dads also need emotional support and practical help, and it encourages healthcare providers to include fathers more actively in early parenting support services.

Keizer et al (2019) in the article "The Influence of Fathers and Mothers Equally Sharing Childcare Responsibilities on Children's Cognitive Development from Early Childhood to School Age: An Overlooked Mechanism in the Intergenerational Transmission of (Dis)Advantages?" studied explain how sharing childcare equally between parents affects a child's brain development over time. Using data from the Study in the Netherlands, they looked at families where both parents reported how involved they were in childcare when their child was about 3 years old. They then tracked the children's cognitive skills using standard tests from early childhood to school age. The

researchers found that children whose parents shared childcare tasks equally showed better cognitive development compared to those where one parent (usually the mother) did most of the work. This result stayed strong even after considering factors like family income, education, and ethnicity. The study suggests that when fathers are more involved in early childcare, it positively affects children's learning and thinking skills. It also points out that encouraging shared parenting can help reduce differences in children's development across families.

Moon et al (2019) in the article "Mothers' Perceptions of the Internet and Social Media as Sources of Parenting and Health Information: Qualitative Study," explored how mothers use online platforms to find information about parenting and infant health. They interviewed 28 mothers of babies under six months old in Washington, D.C., and found that most mothers valued the internet for its quick and wide access to information, especially for sensitive questions. Social media was seen as helpful for emotional support and advice from other parents, making mothers feel less alone. However, many were also cautious, saying that not all information online is trustworthy. The study shows that while the internet and social media are important tools for parenting, there's a need for healthcare professionals to help guide parents toward safe and accurate sources of information.

Rajariah et al (2020) in the article "Parenting stress and coping strategies adopted among working and non-working mothers and its association with socio-demographic variables: A cross-sectional study," which explored how Indian mothers handle parenting stress and which coping strategies they use. The researchers compared working and non-working mothers and found that working mothers faced more stress due to the pressure of balancing job responsibilities with childcare and household work. However, non-working mothers also experienced stress from managing their homes and children. The study used questionnaires and SPSS software to analyze the data. Results showed that 26% of working mothers had high stress, compared to 13% of non-working mothers. Those with higher stress often used coping strategies like suppressing competitive activities, while mothers with lower stress used emotional support, venting,

researchers found that children whose parents shared childcare tasks equally showed better cognitive development compared to those where one parent (usually the mother) did most of the work. This result stayed strong even after considering factors like family income, education, and ethnicity. The study suggests that when fathers are more involved in early childcare, it positively affects children's learning and thinking skills. It also points out that encouraging shared parenting can help reduce differences in children's development across families.

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or mentally distracting themselves. The study highlights that the type of coping method used can make a difference in how mothers handle parenting stress, and that support systems and personal background factors (like age and education) also play a role.

Gibore et al (2020) in the article "Community Perspectives: An Exploration of Potential Barriers to Men's Involvement in Maternity Care in a Central Tanzanian Community" looked into why many men in central Tanzania are not actively involved in maternity care. Through interviews and group discussions with both men and women, the study found that traditional beliefs, gender roles, and social expectations discourage men from helping during pregnancy and childbirth. Many men see maternity care as a woman's duty, while they focus on earning money. Other reasons included lack of knowledge, busy work schedules, and fear of being judged by society or treated poorly by healthcare workers. Some men even felt uncomfortable or unwelcome at clinics. The researchers suggest that to increase male involvement, there should be more awareness in the community, better training for health staff, and supportive policies. In short, many men are willing to help, but social norms and practical barriers stop them. Making changes in attitudes and systems can help fathers play a bigger role in supporting mothers and babies.

Levesque et al (2020) in the article "Parenting and Relational Well-being During the Transition to Parenthood: Challenges for First-time Parents," examine how becoming a parent impacts individuals and their relationships. Conducted in the Greater Montreal Area, the study involved 23 couples (both heterosexual and same-sex) with infants aged 6 to 18 months. Using interviews, the researchers identified three major challenges: loss of individuality and strain on romantic relationships, unequal sharing of parenting tasks, and pressure from societal expectations. Many parents felt their identity faded into the parenting role, which affected their well-being and connection as a couple. Fatigue, sleep deprivation, and social isolation made these issues worse. The study also found that experiences varied depending on gender and whether the parent had given birth, with birthing mothers, especially in same-sex couples, feeling a heavier emotional load.

The authors suggest promoting equal parenting roles, fair parental leave policies, and addressing gender stereotypes to better support first-time parents.

Karimi et.al (2021) in the study "Psychological challenges of transition to parenthood in first-time parents" in this study authors used a qualitative content analysis approach, researcher's conducted semi- structured interviews with 17 couples who had a child under four years old and researchers' population included all the first-time parents who were referred to the amajadieh khaghani community counselling center in Tehran city, Iran. The study identified key challenges, including shifts in spousal roles, conflicts in motherhood, feelings of restriction, lack of emotional support, disagreements in parenting, changes in intimacy, financial stress, body image concerns, and differing parenting styles. The central theme was the transition from being a couple to becoming parents, emphasizing the significant emotional and psychological impact of this change. The authors conclude that structured support programs, such as counseling and educational sessions, should be offered to couples before they enter parenthood to better prepare them for these challenges. Their findings provide valuable insights for family counselors, midwives, and healthcare professionals working with new parents. mental health problems were sleeping deprivation, complications in labor, lack of postpartum partner support, feelings of parental unworthiness, and anger toward the infant. This research contributes valuable insights into the mental health trajectories of first-time parents, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems that address the emotional well-being of both mothers and fathers during the critical transition to parenthood.

Huang et al. (2022) in the article "Maternal confidence and parenting stress of first-time mothers in Taiwan: The impact of sources and types of social support," explore how social support affects new mothers' confidence and stress levels. The researchers used a survey method to collect data from first-time mothers in hospitals and community health centers. They used specific tools like the Maternal Confidence Scale, Parenting Stress Index, and Social Support Rating Scale to measure how confident mothers felt, how stressed they were, and the kind of support they received. The results showed that

emotional support, such as encouragement, listening, and understanding from family, friends, or healthcare professionals, was more helpful than just practical help like doing tasks. Mothers who received strong emotional support were more confident and less stressed, while those with less support felt more anxious and unsure. The study highlights the importance of building strong support systems for new mothers and suggests that healthcare providers and communities should offer programs like counseling, parenting classes, and peer groups to help new mothers adjust better and feel more supported.

Hwang et al (2022) in the article "Concept analysis of transition to motherhood: A methodological study" in this study explore how becoming a mother is a major life change that affects women emotionally, mentally, and socially. The researchers used a concept analysis method to better understand what the transition to motherhood really means. They studied various existing research papers and data to identify common themes, challenges, and influencing factors. The study found that first-time mothers often experience stress, anxiety, identity changes, and pressure to meet parenting expectations. At the same time, they may struggle with a lack of sleep, physical recovery, and changes in relationships. The researchers also included insights about first-time fathers, who face emotional and psychological challenges like feeling left out, a lack of proper support, and pressure to be strong providers. The study emphasizes that support systems such as emotional help from partners, professional guidance from health workers, and practical support from family can make a big difference in easing this transition. It suggests that healthcare providers should create programs that include both mothers and fathers, offer mental health support, and promote shared parenting roles. Overall, the article highlights that understanding the full experience of becoming a parent can lead to better support and a healthier family life.

Schbinger et.al (2022) in the article "Social support needs of first-time parents in the early-postpartum period: A qualitative study," this study explore the emotional and practical support first-time parents need after childbirth. Conducted in a Swiss hospital with interviews of 15 mothers and 11 fathers, the research highlights how mothers often need emotional support, struggle with self-esteem, and find it hard to express their

needs. Fathers, meanwhile, want to be more involved in baby care but feel sidelined and face stigma around expressing their emotional struggles. The study shows that both parents worry about caring for their baby and adjusting to life at home, but their support needs are different. While mothers require direct emotional support, fathers see themselves as their partner's support and often don't receive enough attention or resources. Barriers like a lack of workplace flexibility, societal expectations, and poor father inclusion in prenatal and postnatal care worsen this problem. The study uses Walker and Avant's framework for concept analysis and also discusses how the transition to parenthood is a gradual, emotional process that requires strong support systems. Researchers recommend improving mental health services, including fathers in prenatal education, and creating family-friendly policies to ensure both parents feel supported. This approach not only helps reduce stress but also leads to healthier and more confident parenting for both mothers and fathers.

Walker et al (2022) in the article "Maternal stressors and coping strategies during the extended postpartum period: A retrospective analysis with contemporary implications," which explored the often-neglected challenges that mothers face beyond the early weeks after childbirth. Focusing on the first six weeks postpartum, the study analyzed responses from 346 mothers using surveys and content analysis to understand their stressors and coping methods. The researchers identified seven key stressors: feelings of being overwhelmed, challenges of being a working mother, isolation, lack of support, fatigue, parenting demands, and changes in body and sexuality. Mothers coped by spending time alone or with others, managing their emotions and thoughts, and maintaining a manageable workload. The study stresses the importance of understanding the diverse and ongoing stressors mothers face during this extended postpartum period, and the need for personalized coping strategies and stronger support systems to promote both maternal and infant health.

Chawla (2023) in the article "Understanding experiences of first-time fathers in India," explored how Indian men adjust emotionally, psychologically, and practically to

becoming fathers for the first time. Using a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews, the study included fathers from both urban and rural areas, capturing diverse backgrounds. It found that first-time fathers experience a mix of joy, anxiety, responsibility, and stress, especially due to traditional expectations that men should be providers, not caregivers. Many struggled with work-life balance, financial pressure, and the lack of paternity leave or workplace support. Some felt excluded from parenting roles but expressed a strong desire to be emotionally and physically present for their children. Support from partners and family made the transition easier. The study emphasizes the need for father-friendly policies, emotional support programs, and societal change to encourage active fatherhood and improve overall family well-being.

Saether et al. (2023) in the article "First-time parents' support needs and perceived support from a child health service with the integrated new families home visiting programme." which explored how home-visiting services help first-time parents during early parenthood. Using a qualitative method, the researchers interviewed both mothers and fathers who had taken part in the programme. The study found that first-time parents often feel stressed and uncertain and need guidance on caring for their babies, managing emotional well-being, and sharing parenting duties. Parents appreciated the professional advice and emotional support offered through regular home visits, which made them feel more confident. Co-parenting was a key focus, with many parents saying that teamwork and good communication were essential. However, some fathers felt left out, as the programme seemed more focused on mothers. The study suggests that child health services should be more inclusive and better tailored to meet the individual needs of both parents, especially fathers, to make the parenting journey smoother and more balanced.

Saharoy et al. (2023) in the article "Postpartum Depression and Maternal Care: Exploring the Complex Effects on Mothers and Infants." This study focuses on that postpartum depression (PPD) is a serious mental health issue affecting 10–20% of new mothers worldwide. This condition can deeply impact a mother's emotional state, bonding with her baby, and overall ability to care for the child. The study found that key

risk factors for PPD include hormonal changes, past mental health issues, lack of social support, financial stress, and difficult childbirth experiences. Mothers with PPD may struggle to form strong emotional connections with their babies, which can affect the infant's emotional development, sleep patterns, and social skills. The study also revealed that PPD often leads to changes in feeding choices some mothers stop breastfeeding early, which may influence the baby's nutrition and cognitive growth. Infants of mothers with PPD are more likely to face emotional, behavioral, and developmental challenges later in life. To address these problems, the study emphasized the importance of early detection and support, recommending interventions like therapy, counseling, medication, and support groups. It urges healthcare providers and policymakers to create awareness, introduce regular mental health screenings, and ensure easily accessible services for new mothers. Overall, the study stresses that tackling PPD early not only improves the mother's health but also positively affects the child's well-being and supports healthier families.

Wainwright et al (2023) in the article "Screening fathers for postpartum depression in a maternal-child health clinic: a program evaluation in a midwest urban academic medical center" this study to understand if fathers should also be screened for postpartum depression (PPD) just like mothers, since many new fathers silently face emotional struggles after their baby is born. This study took place in a health clinic in an urban area of the Midwest, where they screened 24 fathers and found that 7 of them (about 30%) showed signs of depression, much higher than the usual 8–13% seen in fathers generally. Many of these fathers did not have any earlier mental health diagnosis, which shows that their depression was unnoticed. The researchers explained that problems like money issues, poor housing, and lack of support can increase stress and lead to depression. The study also found that while some fathers were uncomfortable talking about their feelings at first, most appreciated being asked and supported. The program showed that it's possible and helpful to screen fathers for depression during postpartum checkups. It helps raise awareness that fathers also need care and attention during this emotional time. The researchers recommend that health clinics include

fathers in postpartum care, create more father-friendly support systems, and do more studies to find better ways to help fathers with their mental health. This kind of support can make a big difference not only for fathers but also for mothers, babies, and the family's overall well-being.

Garcia et al (2024) in the article titled "Postpartum Depression in Fathers: A Systematic Review;" talk about how new fathers can also go through emotional and mental struggles after their baby is born, something that is often not noticed or discussed. The study looked at many research papers and found that around 8% to 10% of new fathers experience symptoms of postpartum depression (PPD), such as sadness, tiredness, irritability, and feeling distant from their baby. It also shows that fathers often do not seek help, which means their depression goes unnoticed. The article explains that stress from money, work, relationship changes, and poor sleep can increase the chances of depression. It also says that when mothers have PPD, fathers are more likely to have it too. The authors suggest that we need better ways to check fathers' mental health and more support systems to help them. The article highlights the importance of including fathers in mental health care after childbirth to support the whole family.

Basamma et al (2024) in the article "Assessment of level and source of stress in mothers of newborns admitted to neonatal intensive care unit in tertiary care hospital", the research focuses on understanding the emotional challenges faced by mothers when their newborns are placed in the NICU. The study involved 400 mothers from two hospitals in Kalaburagi, India, and used a detailed questionnaire to measure stress related to the NICU environment, the baby's condition, and changes in the mother's role. The results showed that the biggest stress came from mothers feeling helpless because they couldn't care for their babies as they wished. Mothers of premature babies, those who couldn't breastfeed, less educated mothers, and those from rural areas or not working outside felt even more stress. The study highlights how the NICU's medical environment and the baby's condition increase mothers' emotional burden. The authors stress the need for early identification and support, suggesting counseling and emotional

care tailored to mothers' backgrounds. They also recommend training hospital staff to better understand and respond to these emotional challenges. The article shows that while NICUs save lives, they also cause significant stress for mothers, making emotional support in hospitals very important.

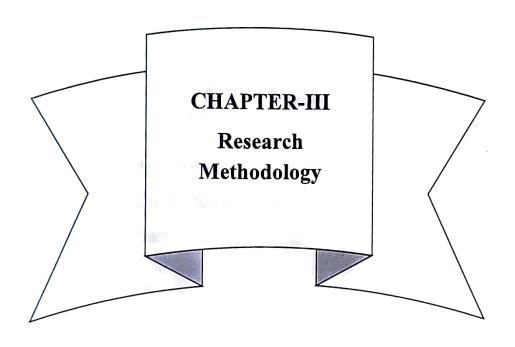
Mertens et al (2024) in the article "Parenting Information on Social Media: Systematic Literature Review;" examine how parents use social media to find parenting advice and support. They reviewed 338 studies from many different fields to understand the overall trends. The research shows that since 2015, there has been a big increase in studies about this topic. Four main themes emerged: why parents seek information on social media (mainly for peer support and easy advice), the type of parenting content online (often from popular "momfluencers" and other users), how social media affects parents, and parenting support programs on these platforms. The study also points out that most research focuses on mothers, while fathers' use of social media is less studied. Parents often turn to social media for health advice and community, but they also face problems like misinformation and too much information. The authors suggest more research is needed, especially about fathers and different social media platforms, and call for better ways to help parents evaluate online information. Social media is a useful parenting tool, but careful support and more study are necessary to meet parents' changing needs in today's digital world.

Olivieri et al (2024) in the article "Mothers Balancing Work and Family: The Associations with Emotional Well-being, Sleep-Wake Problems and the Role of Basic Needs" studied how managing both work and family affects the mental health and sleep of working mothers. They surveyed 218 mothers in Italy with children aged 1 to 36 months, focusing on how well these mothers balanced their roles and how that balance influenced their basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and feeling connected. The study found that mothers who had a better work-family balance felt more in control, capable, and supported, which helped reduce feelings of depression, anger, and sleep problems, while boosting energy and emotional well-being. On the other hand,

mothers who struggled with this balance were more likely to feel emotionally drained and suffer from poor sleep. The research highlights the importance of supporting mothers in the workplace and at home by creating conditions that fulfill their psychological needs, which can lead to healthier, happier lives for both mothers and their families. These findings also suggest that workplaces and policymakers should consider better support systems to help working mothers during the early years of parenting.

Martin et al (2024) in the article "How New Mothers' and Fathers' Allocation of Tasks Relate to Their Coparenting Relationship," this article studied how new parents divide tasks like housework, childcare, and financial responsibilities, and how this division affects how well they work together as a parenting team. The study included 198 first-time heterosexual couples from low- to moderate-income backgrounds and found that mothers often took on more housework and childcare, while fathers handled more financial tasks. When mothers felt that the task division was unfair or different from what they wanted, or that their efforts were not appreciated, their relationship with their partner around parenting suffered. However, this was not the casefor fathers, who were less emotionally affected by the imbalance. The study shows that unequal task sharing can strain mothers emotionally and hurt the parenting partnership. The authors suggest that couples need to talk openly about dividing responsibilities and that support programs should help parents communicate and share tasks more fairly to improve their relationship and teamwork.

During the review of different articles, a researcher noticed some important gaps in the existing studies. Most of the research focused only on mothers, while the emotional experiences and struggles of fathers were mostly ignored. Many studies were based on parenting in urban or Western settings, and very few looked at the challenges faced by first-time parents in rural or economically weaker areas, especially in India. Researchers also found that not enough studies talked about how society's expectations, cultural beliefs, lack of time, disturbed sleep, and financial stress affect the mental health of both parents.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is a process in which the researcher collects the data and examines and evaluates the gathered information. For this research, the researcher used a qualitative method, which means it focused on understanding people's real experiences instead of using numbers or statistics. The study was about the psychological challenges and coping strategies of first-time parents, both mothers and fathers, and how they feel, what problems they face, and how they deal with stress during early parenting. The information was collected by talking to parents directly with caregivers and listening to their stories. These stories helped to understand their emotions, struggles, and ways of coping in an in-depth and personal way. In the literature review, earlier studies were collected from secondary sources like Google Scholar and arranged in chronological order in the order of time. This study was about listening to people and learning from their real-life experiences as new parents.

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Stress and Coping Theory:

Stress and Coping theory was provided by Lazarus and Folkman. It is an inclusive framework for understanding how individuals experience and manage stress, emphasizing that stress is not the result of external events but arises from the ongoing interaction between a person and their environment. This theory argues that stress occurs when a person thinks a situation is too difficult, dangerous, or more than they can handle, so how they think about and understand the situation is very important in feeling stressed. Cognitive appraisal has two main parts: first, primary appraisal, where a person decides if a situation is important or not, and whether it could harm them, be a threat, or a challenge; and secondary appraisal, where they think about what resources they have to handle it, like their own skills and confidence or help from others such as friends, money, or experts. If they believe their coping resources are insufficient, the situation is more likely to be experienced as stressful. Once a situation is appraised as stressful, individuals engage in coping strategies, which the theory divides into two broad types: problem-focused coping, which involves taking direct action to address Coping

strategies include problem-focused approaches, such as making plans, seeking solutions, or directly confronting the source of stress. In contrast, emotion-focused coping aims to regulate emotional responses to the stressor, which may involve seeking emotional support, denial, distraction, or reinterpreting the situation in a more positive light. The theory explains that the way people deal with stress is always changing, not fixed. This means that as a situation changes, people can rethink or reappraise it, and their ways of coping can also change. For example, something that first seems very threatening might later feel more manageable or even like a chance to learn and grow, depending on how the person's thoughts and resources change. By focusing on how people think about the situation, manage their emotions, and adjust their behavior, Lazarus and Folkman's theory helps us understand how people experience and respond to stress in everyday life.

For first-time parents, this theory helps explain how they deal with the emotional and practical challenges of parenthood. During the primary appraisal stage, individuals assess whether the transition to parenthood is perceived as a threat, a loss, or a challenge to their well-being or resources. This determines if they feel anxious or motivated. In the secondary appraisal, they evaluate whether they have the resources, like knowledge, emotional strength, and social support, to manage the stress of parenting. If parents feel confident in their abilities, the stress is reduced. Based on these appraisals, they use two types of coping strategies. Problem-focused coping is used when they believe they can control the situation, such as by learning parenting skills through books, attending parenting classes, watching informative videos, managing time by creating a daily schedule, and sharing childcare tasks with their partner. Emotion-focused coping is used when the situation cannot be changed, and the focus is on managing feelings. Examples include talking to friends or family for support, practicing meditation or yoga to stay calm, distracting themselves by watching movies, engaging in hobbies, or reframing parenting struggles as learning experiences. This theory helps in understanding how first-time parents perceive and react to stress, how their coping depends on their confidence and support system, and how work-life balance, emotional health, and the use of technology or social media influence their ability to cope effectively.

Transition Theory:

Afaf Meleis's Transitions Theory, developed over two decades, provides a structured framework to help nurses support individuals undergoing significant life and health-related changes. It identifies four main types of transitions: developmental, such as birth, adolescence, or becoming a parent; situational, like personal loss or rehabilitation. health-related, such as a new diagnosis, and organizational, including sudden environmental changes. The theory emphasizes that such transitions often require people to adopt new behaviors or skills, and many patients struggle with this process. Nurses are encouraged to assess the individual's situation and emotional state, offering care tailored to both practical needs and emotional support. For example, a young man coping with the death of his wife during childbirth must adjust to fatherhood while grieving, facing both developmental and situational transitions. In such cases, nurses play a critical role in guiding and emotionally supporting the patient to ensure smoother adaptation. The theory is not only useful for understanding patient needs but also helps nurses plan interventions in both hospital and community settings, regardless of the patient's background. It promotes holistic care by encouraging providers to consider the emotional, psychological, and situational aspects of patient experiences.

Theory is strongly related to the psychological impact of first-time parenting. This theory focuses on how individuals experience, respond to, and adapt to life transitions, including developmental transitions such as becoming a parent. First-time parenting involves a significant psychological and emotional shift that requires individuals to take on new responsibilities, adjust their roles, and develop new coping strategies. Meleis emphasizes that transitions often create vulnerability and stress, especially when individuals lack sufficient internal or external resources. Your research looks at how first-time parents, both mothers and fathers, manage stress, divide responsibilities, and seek support from professionals, family, or digital platforms. Transitions Theory provides a theoretical foundation to understand these changes not as isolated problems but as a dynamic process requiring guided support. The theory shows that when healthcare providers, such as nurses or counselors, actively support parents during this

transition, outcomes improve. It also aligns with your focus on the emotional strain and the need for adaptive coping strategies. The theory's emphasis on context, emotional well-being, and tailored support directly connects with your interest in how social support systems and stressors influence first-time parenting experiences, especially in rural and working families.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the blueprint that outlines how a study is to be conducted, including methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It helps guide how the research will be done, including what kind of information will be collected, how it will be collected, and how it will be analyzed. The research design chosen for this study will be qualitative, to explore and understand the psychological impact of first-time parents. This research design helps the researcher collect in-depth information. And it provides rich and insightful details of the first-time parents. The descriptive research design was used to conduct the study.

3.3 UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The researcher collected the details from first-time parents within the Lakwa area under the Charaideo district. The researcher selected this area because this topic is related to first-time parents and post-partum depression, and people do not feel free to talk about these. If the researcher collected the details from the known area, it helped the researcher to get in-depth details, and people will easily trust the researcher.



Photo: Lakwa, Charaideo, Assam

Photo Source: Google Maps

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Lakwa,+Assam/@27.0185043,94.8260011,13z/data=!3x

3.4 SAMPLE TECHNIQUES

The researcher employed purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, where participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. In this method, the researcher did not choose participants randomly but selected them based on purpose, based on specific criteria. The participants were chosen because they had direct experience as first-time parents and could provide meaningful and detailed information related to the topic. This method helped the researcher to focus on those individuals who were most likely to share relevant and useful insights about the psychological impact, challenges, and coping strategies of first-time parenting.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE

The researcher interviewed 15 individuals who had experienced parenthood for the first time. These respondents were carefully selected because they were able to provide meaningful and detailed insights based on their journey as new parents. The researcher focused on parents whose child was between 0 to 3 years of age. The data were collected through recalled memories, where parents shared their past experiences related to pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenting. This method allowed the researcher to understand the real challenges, stressors, coping strategies, and support systems that these first-time parents had encountered. Through these interviews, the study captured genuine stories and reflections that helped understand the psychological impact of becoming a parent for the first time.

3.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

For data collection, the researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule to collect the data. the researcher prepared some questions in advance, but also gave space for the participants to talk freely and add more information during the conversation. This helped the researcher to ask important questions and also understand the real feelings and experiences of the parents in detail. The researcher mainly collected primary data by personally interviewing first-time parents through methods such as interviews, observations. During the interviews, the researcher also used an audio recorder with permission to save the conversation so that nothing would be missed or forgotten. Some handwritten notes were also taken to mark important points. and secondary information collected from articles by others. including sources like books, journals, and websites.

3.7 SOURCES OF DATA

For this study, the researcher collected the data directly from the parents about their experiences, challenges, stress, and support systems. The primary data was obtained through interviews, and the researcher also used some secondary sources, like research articles and published studies, to get a basic understanding of what other researchers have found on similar topics. This helped the researcher compare and understand how

first-time parents are affected mentally and emotionally in different situations. This method helped the researcher deeply understand the psychological impact of first-time parenting and the coping strategies used by first-time parents.

3.8 TOOLS OF DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to understand the answers given by first-time parents. After taking interviews, the researcher listened to the recordings and wrote them down. The interviews were in Assamese, so the researcher were translated into English. Then, the researcher read all the answers carefully, looked for common ideas, and grouped similar points through QDA Miner. The researcher understood what problems parents faced, how they felt, and what kind of support they needed. Thematic analysis made it easier to learn from the parent's real experiences.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSENT

All the respondents who took part in this study were told about the purpose and goals of the research. They joined the study willingly and were not forced in any way. The researcher explained everything to them before starting the interview and took their permission, either by speaking or writing. Researchers were also told that they could stop being part of the study at any time if they wanted to, without any problem. All participants agreed to let the researcher use their real names in the dissertation. During the whole process, the researcher followed all the ethical rules to make sure everyone was treated fairly and respectfully.

3.10 INCLUSIVE CRITERIA

This study included participants who were first-time parents, meaning individuals who were experiencing parenthood for the very first time. The focus was on parents with infants or young children aged between zero to three years. Both mothers and fathers were included in the study to ensure a balanced understanding of parenting experiences from both perspectives. The parents selected were from both working and non-working parents to explore diverse parenting contexts and stressors.

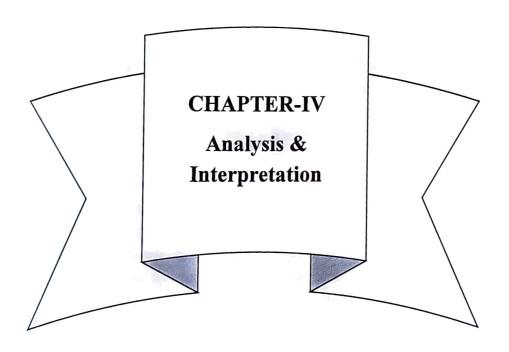
3.11 EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA

Parents who had more than one child were not included in this study, as their experiences would be different from those of first-time parents and may involve different stressors and coping strategies. Parents with children older than three years were excluded. Since the study focused on in-depth, present-day experiences, parents recalling events from many years ago were excluded, as memory recall may affect the accuracy and relevance of the data.

3.12 <u>LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</u>

During the research, the researcher faced limitations in data collection, which are:

- The researcher faced a small sample size, with only 15 first-time parents included in the study due to time constraints.
- The study only focused on parents whose children were between zero to three years old, which is why the researcher faced a limited age range of children.
- The researcher faced memory recall issues from some parents, like some parents had difficulty remembering their early parenting experiences clearly, which may have affected the accuracy of the data.
- The researcher faced a limited geographical area because the study was done in a specific area, so cultural and social factors from that region may not apply to parents in other places.



In this section, the Researcher explained the discussion and findings. Research discussed the details shared by the first-time parents during the interview process. After collecting the data, the researcher carefully transcribed the respondent's words so that this helped to closely analyze and understand the emotional, psychological, and social challenges that parents faced. In this section, the researcher analyzes the data of 15 respondents.

Interview transcript:

Respondent -1

Doly Gogoi, a 29-year-old graduate, homemaker, and first-time mother of a three-year-old child, shared that parenting brought many emotional and mental changes in her life. Her biggest challenge was parenting alone, as her husband works in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and was away during most of their child early stages. She felt physically and emotionally tired, especially when her child was unwell, and was deeply hurt by people who judged her unfairly. Initially, she often doubted herself and feared making mistakes, but later understood that such feelings were common for new parents. She said that becoming parents changed her and her husband lives and identities completely, as their focus shifted fully to their child needs and future. Her husband supported her emotionally through calls and helped with parenting during his visits, while her family and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers also gave her guidance and help. She experienced loneliness and emotional exhaustion, especially during the first seven to eight months, when she had to care for both her baby and her in-laws. Financially, they struggled. She did not follow any specific stress relief method, but coped through self-care, like yoga, healthy eating, and crying when overwhelmed. She appreciated that her husband never pressured her and gave her freedom in parenting. She did not use social media for parenting advice but felt it could help others. Her story shows the real emotions, struggles, and strength that come with first-time parenting.

Respondent -2

Dipjyoti Gogoi, a 38-year-old Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel and first-time father of a three-year-old son, shared that parenting had brought many emotional challenges, mainly because he had to stay away from his family for long periods. He felt deep emotional stress and helplessness, especially during difficult times like when his son suffered a burn injury, and he could not be there to help. Becoming a father had changed his priorities and identity, making him more focused on his child needs. He believed in shared parenting and was grateful for the strong support of his wife, who took care of their child in his absence. He had not received professional parenting advice, but regular emotional conversations with his wife had helped him cope. He had not faced financial or social pressure, but he struggled with the emotional pain of being far from his child. He managed stress by staying quiet, thinking positively, and calming himself. He did not believe in traditional gender roles and shared responsibilities equally when he was home. Even though his job did not provide quick support for parenting needs, he felt proud to balance his duties as both a father and a soldier. His story highlighted the importance of emotional connection, communication, and inner strength in first-time parenting.

Respondent-3

Trishna, a 29-year-old MBA graduate and first-time mother, lived in a joint family with her three-year-old child and faced many emotional and psychological challenges during her parenting journey. She often felt emotionally exhausted, especially on sleepless nights when her child did not rest, which left her tired and drained the next day. Balancing childcare and household responsibilities without much time for herself made her feel overwhelmed. She experienced common psychological issues like mood swings, anxiety, memory problems, and irritability, which she believed were due to hormonal changes after childbirth. Watching her baby grow gave her happiness, but also brought new worries at every stage. She was constantly concerned about her child's health, diet, and development, her family's strong support helped her cope and feel more confident. Sometimes, she felt isolated and left out when the pressure of parenting

became too much. To manage her emotions, she cried, watched TV shows, talked to friends and family, and took short breaks to relax. Her biggest stress came when her child fell ill, especially when cultural expectations pressured her to follow certain rituals that she did not always agree with. She did not face financial issues, but emotional challenges remained strong. Trishna took care of herself by practicing yoga, meditation, eating healthy food, and maintaining a balanced lifestyle. She found strength in spending quality time with her husband, going on family outings, and sharing parenting responsibilities equally with him. She appreciated that he never enforced traditional gender roles and always supported her. They had small disagreements at times, but they solved them peacefully. Trishna also used social media sometimes for parenting tips, but was cautious about what to trust, and she never joined formal parenting groups. Her experience showed the emotional ups and downs new mothers face, and highlighted how support from family, open communication, and self-care make parenting more manageable and fulfilling.

Respondent:4

Pinky, a 33-year-old graduate working as ground staff at Indigo Airlines, lives in a joint family and is a first-time mother to a six-month-old baby. During the day, she often stayed alone with her baby, which made it challenging to balance housework and childcare, sometimes leaving her overwhelmed. Though she did not identify specific psychological challenges, she experienced stress, anxiety, and mood swings like many new mothers. Motherhood brought a positive shift in her identity, giving her motivation to face difficulties with happiness. Her greatest support was her mother, along with trusted guidance from her gynecologist and pediatrician, whom she preferred over traditional advice due to changing times and conditions. While Pinky respected her elder's opinions, she followed medical advice more closely for her baby's health. She acknowledged the physical and emotional toll mothers face post-delivery and felt that with proper family and spousal support, any mother could succeed. Although she once felt lonely and hopeless, her baby's smile gave her the strength to move forward. She

had not faced any major stress or unexpected events, though some cultural and social pressures existed. Pinky ignored negative comments with her belief that "Kuch to log kahenge logo ka kaam hai kehna." Financially, she faced no hardship and managed emotional distress by listening to music. She and her husband shared parenting equally without any conflicts or pressure from traditional gender roles. Her time management helped her balance job and motherhood efficiently, and she found her workplace supportive. Pinky did not follow any particular parenting method or use social media for advice, but believed that love and care are enough for raising a child. Her story shows how a strong support system, medical trust, emotional balance, and teamwork helped her manage parenting with confidence and calmness.

Respondent-5

Deepjyoti Gogoi, a 31-year-old graduate working at Oil India Pvt. Limited, lived in a joint family, and was a first-time father to a seven-month-old baby. He sometimes felt emotionally exhausted, especially due to an unbalanced sleep routine that caused him stress and anxiety, feelings he believed were normal for first-time parents adjusting to a new phase of life. Becoming a father positively changed his identity, adding new responsibilities beyond his earlier roles as a son, husband, and brother. His wife's continuous support made the parenting journey smoother, and although he had not received professional advice from healthcare workers or counselors, he did not feel it had affected him negatively. Deepjyoti did not experience feelings of isolation and coped with tough situations by staying calm and avoiding overthinking. His greatest challenge was balancing work, life, and family, especially since his shift-based job often required him to be away from home for five to six days. This became particularly stressful when his child was unwell. While he did not face social or cultural pressures, financial responsibilities sometimes weighed heavily on him. To manage stress, he spent time alone, traveled, meditated, and practiced relaxation techniques. He and his wife shared parenting duties equally, she handled feeding while he took care of tasks like washing the baby's clothes. This balance helped reduce their burdens. He had not faced

pressure from traditional gender roles, though occasional conflicts with his wife arose, which they resolved together. Despite his demanding job, Deepjyoti ensured he fulfilled both work and parenting roles responsibly, and he received adequate support from his employer. He did not rely on social media for parenting advice, but strongly believed that emotional struggles were not limited to mothers; fathers also silently experienced mental health challenges due to stigma. He emphasized the need for equal emotional support and counseling for fathers. His story reflected a thoughtful, responsible father who valued teamwork, emotional well-being, and family support in navigating first-time parenting.

Respondent-6

Ilorah Gogoi, a 31-year-old graduate and homemaker, became a mother for the first time six months ago. Her journey into motherhood was filled with both love and emotional exhaustion. She often felt overwhelmed, especially when her baby cried even after feeding, leaving her confused and helpless. Though elders often said the baby was hungry, Ilorah sometimes sensed deeper issues, but did not know how to respond. After her cesarean delivery, she struggled to care for herself due to the baby's demanding schedule, which led to frustration, mood swings, and doubts about her parenting abilities. However, the peaceful sight of her sleeping baby gave her moments of deep emotional relief. She received strong support from her in-laws, especially her experienced sister-in-law, who helped her during stressful moments. While she had good prenatal care, she felt a lack of follow-up from healthcare professionals after delivery, which added to her sense of isolation. Sometimes, when the baby would not stop crying, she felt that the whole burden was on her and cried silently to release stress. Time management became her biggest challenge, as she rushed through housework to spend more time with her baby and avoided social events due to constant worry. Her husband supported her whenever he was home, helping with diapers and laundry, though traditional gender roles occasionally caused tension, like when in-laws disapproved of him washing her clothes. Ilorah believed that such cultural expectations should change, and parenting should be flexible to each child's needs. She occasionally browsed

parenting tips on social media but did not rely on them entirely. She also recognized that fathers face emotional challenges too and believed their role should be equally acknowledged. Despite the ups and downs, Ilorah's love for her child gave her the strength to move forward each day with hope and commitment.

Respondent-7:

Sarfi Ara Ahmed, a 23-year-old graduate and homemaker, lives in a joint family and is a first-time mother to a three-month-old baby. Her parenting journey has been filled with both love and emotional exhaustion. One of her biggest struggles has been a lack of sleep, especially when her baby refuses to sleep or eat properly, which affects her mood and drains her energy. She experiences stress, anxiety, and mood swings because she constantly worries about her baby's health, future, and whether she's fulfilling her responsibilities as a mother. Although these feelings often make her nervous, she does not feel her identity has completely changed instead, she sees motherhood as an important and proud part of who she is. Her parents play a big role in supporting her emotionally and physically, helping with daily tasks. She also received valuable guidance from an Accredited Social Health Worker (ASHA), which helped her understand how to better care for her newborn. Sarfi does not feel isolated because she lives with family, but she feels most stressed when her baby is sick or will not stop crying. To manage these emotional lows, she openly communicates with her husband and parents, which helps her feel comforted and less alone. She also practices self-care through meditation, skincare routines, and positive thinking, reminding herself that many new parents go through the same struggles. Her husband actively participates in parenting tasks such as bathing, feeding, and diaper changes whenever he is free, which gives her time to rest and manage household chores. She has not experienced pressure from traditional gender roles or societal expectations, and there is harmony in her relationship with her husband. Sarfi also uses social media to find parenting tips, which she finds helpful, although she's careful about what advice to follow. Though the emotional challenges, Sarfi sees motherhood as a deeply joyful and meaningful experience. With family support, equal parenting, and a positive outlook, she feels blessed and confident in handling the ups and downs of early motherhood.

Respondent-8

Precti Gogoi, a 31-year-old single mother and B.A. graduate, runs a small business while raising her two-year-old daughter. Her life changed drastically two years ago when she lost her husband while her child was just ten months old. Since then, she has been managing parenting and work alone, which has brought emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and frequent mood swings. Preeti feels her identity has shifted. Earlier, she had her dreams, but now her daughter is her sole focus. She receives some support from her mother but lacks a strong emotional or professional support system and has not received guidance from doctors or counselors. The sense of loneliness and responsibility is often overwhelming, and she sometimes feels isolated and misunderstood by society. Financial pressure and lack of a partner add to her burden, but her patience and focus on her child help her stay strong. She finds strength and motivation in her daughter's smile and manages her emotional stress by staying determined and focused. She has little time for self-care, and she finds comfort through parenting content on social media, which reminds her that she's not alone. While facing societal pressure and hurtful comments as a single mother, Preeti remains resilient, working hard to give her daughter the best life possible. Her story reflects courage, sacrifice, and the deep strength that comes from a mother's love.

Respondent-9

Rimi Gogoi, a 29-year-old mother of a three-year-old child, faced many emotional and psychological challenges as a first-time parent. With only matriculation education and no prior experience, she felt overwhelmed when her newborn cried often, and she could not figure out why. Her stress grew worse when her son experienced a serious health issue, losing his senses twice in two consecutive Aprils. Doctors said the condition might last until age five, which left Rimi and her husband constantly fearful and anxious. While Rimi does not feel she has lost her identity, instead, she sees motherhood as an added role filled with new responsibilities. She often felt frustrated,

tired, and cried silently due to the physical and emotional exhaustion of parenting, especially when she couldn't sleep or eat properly. However, strong support from her husband and mother-in-law helped her stay grounded, even though she found Accredited Social Health Worker (ASHA) support lacking. She felt isolated at times due to missing social events, but accepted this as part of motherhood. Financial stress is also a concern, yet she has not faced traditional gender role pressures; her husband shares parenting equally, giving her much-needed relief. Rimi does not follow any self-care routine and makes no major lifestyle changes, but stays mentally strong through positivity and hope. She uses social media occasionally for parenting advice but remains cautious. though ongoing fears about her child's health, Rimi is proud of how she and her husband manage challenges with love, teamwork, and patience.

Respondent-10

Bidyut Gogoi, a 34-year-old contractual worker and father of a young son, describes his parenting journey as both joyful and emotionally challenging. Living in a nuclear family, he faced one of the toughest times when his child lost consciousness due to a serious health issue at age one, an incident that repeated the following April. Doctors warned the problem could continue until the child turns five, leaving Bidyut anxious every year during that month. His biggest psychological burden is the constant pressure of financial responsibility, as he often feels his income is not enough to fully support his family. Still, Bidyut sees fatherhood as a valuable addition to his identity rather than a loss. He receives strong support from his wife, family, and friends, and while he has never felt isolated, he worries that his wife might. To help, he shares parenting duties whenever he can, especially when she is tired or busy. Though he has not faced societal or cultural pressure, the stress of providing the best for his child weighs heavily on him. He manages emotional strain by talking to friends, taking time for reflection, and spending more time at home with his family instead of socializing like before. Bidyut values teamwork with his wife and supports her well-being by giving her time. They occasionally argue but work together to balance parenting and household duties. He has

not used social media or professional parenting support, but believes such resources could be useful. He also feels that first-time parents lack access to proper guidance and counseling, which could ease their parenting journey. Despite the challenges, Bidyut is committed to being a responsible and caring father.

Respondent:11

Ritupan Gogoi, a 32-year-old graduate working in a company and living in a joint family, is the father of a two-year-old child. His parenting journey began with emotional and mental challenges when his newborn faced serious health issues due to underdeveloped lungs. At that time, Ritupan had to manage hospital visits in two cities, Golaghat for his wife and Guwahati for his child, all while balancing his job. This period left him emotionally drained, stressed, and overwhelmed with constant worry about his child's health and future. He experienced mood swings and mental exhaustion, feeling his identity shift from just a husband to a responsible father. Support from his landlord, parents, and doctors helped him during this crisis. Financial strain, especially due to medical expenses and concerns about future education costs, became one of his major stressors. Ritupan believes traditional parenting ideas need to change, as parents best understand their own child needs. While he never felt isolated or pressured culturally, balancing work and parenting was tough, especially when his wife and child moved to the village and he remained in Golaghat. Despite this, he and his wife shared parenting duties equally, and his workplace provided leave when needed. Ritupan did not follow formal coping strategies or use social media for advice but relied on elders' experiences to deal with stress. He emphasizes that fathers also experience emotional pain, anxiety, and pressure during parenting and feels society should recognize and value fathers mental health just as much as mothers. His story highlights how deeply involved and affected fathers can be in the parenting process.

Respondent-12

Deepshikha Gogoi, a 34-year-old graduate and homemaker living in a joint family, became a mother after 12 years of marriage, making her pregnancy a time of special care. However, after childbirth, she couldn't produce breast milk, which caused deep

guilt, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, leading to what she later realized was postpartum depression. She often cried, felt hopeless, and doubted her worth, but slowly gained strength by focusing on her baby. Her support system was weak; she received little help from her in-laws, though her sister-in-law, also a mother, provided emotional comfort. She faced painful societal comments both for her long delay in conceiving and for not being able to breastfeed, which added to her stress. Her husband works in another district, so Deepshikha had to manage parenting mostly on her own, which was physically and mentally tiring. Financial pressure existed, but it was not extreme. To cope with the challenges, she listened to music and read books, but did not get much time for self-care. She used social media for parenting tips but did not join any formal groups or counseling. She believes counseling is important for first-time parents. Though the challenges, Deepshikha sees motherhood as a role that has made her more responsible and stronger, and she hopes society becomes more understanding toward mothers.

Respondent-13

Anup Gogoi is a 36-year-old man who has completed his HSLC and runs a small grocery shop. He lives in a nuclear family with his wife and their three-year-old daughter. Becoming a father changed his perspective on life, making him more thoughtful, responsible, and focused on his daughter's well-being. While he enjoys spending quality time with her in the mornings and at night, he struggles to balance parenting and managing his shop. His irregular income causes financial stress, and he often worries about meeting his daughter's needs and providing for her future, especially her education. Sometimes, he feels guilty for not spending enough time with her and questions whether he is doing enough as a father. He does not use social media for parenting advice, as he feels online content does not relate to his situation. His wife is supportive, and they try to share parenting duties. he takes care of their daughter when he is home so she can rest or manage other work. Anup believes that both parents should support each other and be equally involved in raising a child. He has not used any particular strategies to manage stress, but finds peace by playing with his daughter. He

Respondent-15

Rajib Gogoi, a 35-year-old private company employee living in a joint family, is the father of a three-year-old child. He feels that becoming a father has changed his identity, making him more responsible and thoughtful about his child's future. Though happy in his role, Rajib experiences emotional fatigue, especially when balancing work and family duties. The early months were tough due to sleepless nights, causing stress and irritation, but he remained patient. He has not sought professional counseling but believes it could help parents facing confusion or emotional strain. His wife and elder brother provide strong emotional support, helping him cope when he feels low. Rajib sometimes faces societal pressure to be perfect in all roles, which adds to his stress, alongside financial worries about his child's education and future. Busy workdays and overtime cause guilt when he misses special moments with his child. To manage stress, Rajib takes evening walks, spends quality time with his child, practices deep breathing, and manages time to prioritize family. At home, he shares parenting duties fairly with his wife, who handles meals and study, while he takes care of outdoor activities. Despite traditional expectations of women, Rajib supports equal parenting roles. His workplace supports family leave, which he values. Though he has not joined formal parenting groups, he uses some platforms for ideas, and believes counseling services would benefit new parents. Rajib story highlights that fathers face emotional ups and downs too, and simple strategies like communication, self-care, time management, and support help manage parenting stress effectively.

ANALYSIS

4.1 Psychological parenting experiences:

4.1.1 Emotional overwhelm and exhaustion:

First-time parents often experience deep emotional strain due to various challenges in their parenting journey. Many mothers felt emotionally tired and physically drained because they had to manage household responsibilities and care for their children alone, especially when their partners were away due to work. This lack of physical and emotional support led to feelings of helplessness and being overwhelmed. Difficult situations, such as the child not sleeping through the night, refusing to eat, or crying excessively, increase parents stress. Some mothers reported a strong sense of guilt, particularly when they were unable to breastfeed or meet societal expectations, which resulted in mood swings and symptoms of postpartum depression. On the other hand, fathers also experienced emotional exhaustion due to being away from their families, missing important moments, and facing constant pressure to balance work and provide financially. Both mothers and fathers reported feeling mentally tired and emotionally drained as they tried to meet their child's needs while also managing personal, social, and financial responsibilities. The analysis clearly showed that emotional overwhelm and exhaustion also came from isolation, lack of support, high expectations, and the constant emotional and physical demands of parenting.

4.1.2 Anxiety:

Anxiety was a major psychological challenge experienced by many first-time parents, which deeply affected their mental and emotional well-being. It often appeared as regular worry, nervousness, and fear, especially related to the care and safety of their child. Parents often found themselves overthinking simple decisions and doubting their abilities. This kind of anxiety made them feel mentally tired and caused them to lose sleep. It often led them to constantly check on their baby, avoid going out, or ignore their own needs because they were too focused on their child. Some parents also felt uneasy when they were not with their child, worrying that something might go wrong in their absence. Fathers who were away for work silently suffered from anxiety, imagining difficult situations at home and feeling helpless about not being able to help. This emotional state built up over time and affected their confidence, daily routine, and overall happiness. Even small challenges felt big because their anxious minds kept thinking of all the things that could go wrong. As a result, parenting, which was supposed to be joyful, became stressful and filled with self-doubt. Anxiety was not just a passing feeling for new parents; it became a part of their daily life and a strong

emotional hurdle that they had to carry while trying their best to raise their child with love and care.

4.1.3 Identity change:

Identity change in first-time parents happened when an individual's sense of who they were shifted deeply after the birth of their child. Before becoming parents, they mostly saw themselves as individuals, partners, or children in their own families. Their focus was on their own lives, dreams, and daily routines. After the baby's birth, everything changed. Their roles expanded to include being a mother or father, and their thoughts and priorities shifted almost entirely to the child's needs, such as health, diet, growth, and future well-being. This shift affected parents psychologically because they had to redefine their sense of self. For example, a father who once thought mainly about his work or his relationship with his spouse began to feel a strong responsibility for the child's future and safety. He began to see himself primarily as a protector and caregiver, which changed how he viewed his identity and lifestyle. Similarly, mothers often experienced a deep transformation as their focus moved from personal goals and independence to their child's full-time care and nurturing. Their identity became centered around motherhood. This psychological adjustment was not always easy; it involved time, emotional energy, and support to accept the new self that included being a parent fully. Thus, identity change was a significant psychological challenge that firsttime parents faced as they navigated their new roles and responsibilities.

4.1.4 Loneliness:

Loneliness is an important psychological challenge faced by many first-time parents, especially when they have to manage parenting responsibilities without their partner's physical presence. In this case, the mother experienced deep feelings of isolation due to her husband's absence. She had to handle every task alone, from taking care of the baby to managing the household, which left her emotionally and physically tired. The constant responsibility with no one to share the burden made her feel overwhelmed and helpless. This emotional loneliness led her to cry alone and feel disconnected, point out

how the lack of support and companionship during early parenting can result in intense loneliness, which takes a toll on mental well-being.

4.1.5 Mood swings:

Mood swings are a common psychological challenge faced by many first-time parents. both mothers and fathers go through sudden changes in emotions during their parenting journey. Parents often feel happy seeing their baby grow, but at the same time, they feel tired, stressed, or even sad without any clear reason. Mothers, especially those feeling low or nervous due to a lack of sleep, constant worrying about the baby's health, and managing everything alone. Some fathers also felt emotionally disturbed because of thinking about financial, child, and mother health problems. These emotional ups and downs show that mood swings are faced by first-time parents and can make it harder for parents to stay mentally strong without enough rest or support.

4.1.6 Anger:

Anger is a common psychological challenge faced by many first-time parents as they face difficult to handle the demands of caring for a newborn. This feeling often arises from the exhaustion and stress that come with sleepless nights, constant worry about the baby's health, and the frustration when the baby cries, refuses to eat, or does not sleep properly. First-time parents may feel tired by the new responsibilities and unsure if they are doing the right things, which can lead to moments of anger and irritability. This anger is usually not directed at the baby but is a natural response to feeling tired, anxious, and sometimes helpless.

4.1.7 Isolation:

Isolation is a common psychological challenge that many first-time parents experienced during their parenting journey. As they focused on caring for their newborn, some parents, like Preeti and Ilorah, felt lonely or cut off from others because they spent most of their time at home, worried about their baby's needs. This feeling can be stronger when the baby is sick or difficult to soothe, making parents hesitate to went out or meet people. Even though some parents, like Sarfi and Rimi, have family support around

them and do not feel completely isolated, there are still moments when they feel emotionally alone, especially during tough or stressful times. For single parents or those with less help, isolation can feel deeper and more challenging. Many parents find that talking openly with family, friends, or even using social media to connect with other parents can reduce this sense of loneliness and provide comfort during this demanding time. Isolation is a natural part of early parenthood, but support and communication help parents feel less alone and more confident.

4.2 Source of stress among parents:

4.2.1 Societal pressure

Society was a major source of psychological difficulties for many first-time parents. A large number of them felt judged, misunderstood, or pressured due to traditional expectations and cultural beliefs regarding how parenting should be conducted. Parents often faced additional pressure to meet high standards of parenting, and many people made hurtful comments without understanding their struggles. Some were blamed for not conceiving early or for being unable to breastfeed, which made them feel sad and unsupported. Even when they gave their best efforts, society made them feel as though they were still not doing enough. These pressures led to emotional stress, anxiety, and a sense of isolation. Although many parents tried to remain strong for their children by ignoring negative remarks and trusting their parenting methods, it became evident how deeply societal expectations and opinions affected the mental well-being of first-time parents, especially when they were already dealing with the challenges of a new parenting journey.

4.2.2 Economic pressure faced by the fathers

Economic pressure was a significant source of psychological distress for first-time parents, particularly among fathers. After the birth of the child, parents had to manage many new expenses such as hospital bills, baby food, clothes, medicines, and future savings for education. When the family income was low or unstable, managing these costs became extremely difficult, leading to constant worry and stress. In some cases,

one parent had to stop working to care for the child, which further reduced the family's income. This financial strain often resulted in anxiety, sleeplessness, frustration, and even conflicts between partners. Parents sometimes felt guilty for not being able to provide everything their child needed, which impacted their mental health. They felt pressured by society to maintain a certain standard of living or to give their child the best, even when they could not afford it. This pressure made parents feel overwhelmed and emotionally exhausted. Therefore, economic challenges were not only financial but also deeply affected the emotional and psychological well-being of first-time parents.

4.2.3 Child health issues

Child health issues were a major source of psychological stress for first-time parents. Many parents experienced intense emotional pain and fear when their child suffered from serious health conditions at a very young age. Dipjyotil recalled the traumatic incident when his baby suffered severe burns from hot water. Rimi and her husband underwent a terrifying experience when their child suddenly lost consciousness, not once but in two different years during the same month, which heightened their anxiety regarding their child's health. Ritupan faced a very challenging time when his child was born with underdeveloped lungs and had to be taken to the GMCH Hospital in Guwahati for treatment, while his wife remained admitted in another hospital in Golaghat. These situations created persistent fear, helplessness, and emotional exhaustion. For first-time parents still adjusting to the demands of parenthood, such medical emergencies became a heavy emotional burden. These real-life experiences demonstrated how child health problems profoundly impacted the mental well-being of new parents and represented one of their greatest psychological challenges.

4.2.4 Mother's health issues:

Mother's health issues after childbirth became a serious psychological challenge for many first-time parents. During this time, many mothers experienced physical weakness, pain from delivery, or complications such as infections, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions. These health issues not only affected the physical condition of the mother but also her mental and emotional state. Deepshikha reported feeling tired

all the time, struggling with breastfeeding and caring for the baby, and experiencing guilt for not being able to fulfill all the expectations placed upon her. This guilt often turned into sadness, stress, or anxiety. At the same time, the father or other family members felt worried or helpless as they were unsure how to support the mother adequately or manage everything on their own. This created a stressful environment at home where everyone felt the pressure of balancing the care of both the mother and the child. In many cases, mothers did not speak openly about their struggles due to societal expectations that they should "be strong," which led to emotional isolation. When a mother's health suffered, it affected the entire parenting journey and had a deep impact on the mental well-being of both parents, especially during their initial transition into parenthood.

4.2.5 Cultural pressures:

Cultural pressures are also a major source of stress for first-time parents. In the experienced of several respondents. Deepshikha shared how she was judged for not being able to conceive for 12 years after marriage and later for not being able to breastfeed her child. These comments deeply hurt her, even though she kept her feelings to herself and tried to stay strong. Another parent expressed that in their community, there are fixed ideas about the "right" way to raise a child. Preeti, a single mother, felt especially burdened by society's high expectations and the lack of understanding about her efforts to raise her child alone. Some parents are faced with comments that make them feel unsupported, yet they continue to stay strong for their child. One respondent pointed out that traditional parenting beliefs are outdated and should be changed to fit modern needs and individual parenting styles. Many of them agreed that society often pressures parents to follow old customs without considering the unique needs of each child and family. These cultural expectations lead to emotional stress, feelings of guilt, and the constant fear of being judged, making the parenting journey more difficult for first-time parents.

4.2.6 Sleep routine:

Sleep routine was found to be a major source of stress among many first-time parents, as several respondents shared their experiences. Deepjyoti2 mentioned that managing his child irregular sleep timings was difficult and often left him tired. Preeti explained that her child would stay awake late at night and wanted to play, which made it hard for her to rest. Rimi also said that her child sleep cycle was disturbed, which affected her own sleep and daily energy. Ilorah shared that her baby sleeping time did not match hers, and she had to stay awake even when she was exhausted. These experiences highlight how disturbed sleep routines in babies directly impact the parents physical and emotional well-being, making sleep-related stress a common psychological challenge in their early parenting journey.

4.2.7 Time starved:

Time starve is a major source of psychological stress for first-time parents. Many parents shared that they often felt like there was not enough time in the day to complete all their responsibilities. Rimi struggled with managing her child, household work, and other tasks, which made her felt mentally drained. Preeti, as a single mother, had to do everything on her own, caring for her daughter, working, and handling the home, leaving her with no time for herself. Ilorah also mentioned that parenting takes up most of her day, and she rarely gets any free time to relax. These examples show that when first-time parents are constantly busy and have little time for rest or personal care, it affects their mental well-being and becomes a real psychological challenge in their parenting journey.

4.3 Support system that helps First-time parents:

4.3.1 Family support

Family support played a key role in reducing the emotional and physical burden of parenting for many first-time parents. Respondents like Preeti, Rimi, Dipjyoti, and Ritupan explained how their families stood by them during difficult times. When Preeti faced criticism from society as a single mother, her family offered her emotional strength

and encouraged her to ignore negative comments. Rimi, during her son's serious health issues, found relief knowing that her parents were helping with household work and offering emotional comfort. Dipjyotil shared that his parents helped take care of the baby when he was emotionally disturbed after his son's accidental burn injury. Ritupan, who had to travel long distances for his child's treatment, said his relatives helped manage his wife's care in a different hospital, which reduced his mental stress. Family support helped the parents feel less isolated, more supported, and emotionally grounded.

4.3.2 Health worker support

Health workers helped reduce uncertainty and fear among new parents by giving them timely and accurate medical information. Respondents like Rimi, Ritupan, Dipjyotil, and Deepjyoti2 benefited greatly from their guidance. For example, Rimi explained that during her child's recurring health issues, the advice from doctors and nurses gave her clarity on what to expect and how to handle the situation calmly. Ritupan, whose child was born with serious health conditions, shared that medical staff at GMCH Guwahati supported him throughout the child's treatment, which helped him stay calm and make better decisions. Dipjyotil, after his child's burn injury, received detailed care instructions from health professionals that helped him manage the recovery at home and reduced his anxiety. These health experts played a calming role by addressing the parents' doubts and fears and guiding them through critical situations.

4.3.3 Spouse support

Support from a spouse or partner helped reduce stress through emotional support and shared responsibilities. Respondents like Ilorah, Preeti, Rimi, and Ritupan spoke about how their partners were a constant source of strength. Deepjyoti2 shared that whenever he felt overwhelmed, his partner's comforting words and involvement in childcare helped him stay calm. Preeti mentioned that although society judged her harshly, her partner's understanding nature allowed her to continue her parenting journey with dignity. Rimi explained how both she and her husband worked as a team to manage their child's medical needs and household work, which helped her avoid burnout. Ritupan said that during stressful hospital visits and emergencies, his wife's presence and

teamwork gave him confidence. This mutual support between partners made it easier to cope with parenting stress by reducing loneliness and strengthening decision-making.

4.3.4 Professional support

Professional support from doctors was very helpful for several first-time parents who faced serious challenges. Rimi shared that during her child's repeated health problems. Dipjyotil talked about how professional advice was a big help when his child suffered a burn injury, as it guided him through the treatment and gave him emotional strength. Ritupan also found medical professionals extremely helpful when his newborn had severe health issues and needed to be taken to GMCH for treatment. He felt that the doctor's support gave him clear direction and hope. These parents felt less alone and more confident in handling their situations because of the care, guidance, and reassurance they received from professionals, showing how important this kind of support is in a parent's journey.

4.4 Coping strategies to handle challenges

4.4.1 Self-care activities taken by parents

Self-care was one of the most helpful ways for parents to managed the stress of first-time parenting. Trishna and Doly shared that they did yoga and made sure to eat healthy, protein-rich foods, which helped them stay mentally and physically strong. Self-care practices gave them the energy and peace of mind needed to take care of their children. Taking care of themselves helped them take better care of their babies.

4.4.2 Venting out emotions

Several parents found that crying helped them release emotional pain. Ilorah and Preeti said she often cried silently when she felt overwhelmed, which helped her feel better after doing this. Rimi also mentioned crying during stressful moments, especially when her child was unwell. Trishna expressed that she sometimes cried alone when parenting felt too heavy. For these mothers, letting the tears out was a natural and healing way to cope. It allowed them to feel lighter and gain emotional strength to move forward

4.4.3 Communicate with others

Talking to someone they trust helped many parents reduce stress. Deepjyoti2 said that regular conversations with his wife helped him deal with parenting tension. Whenever he felt stressed, he would talk to her, and that made him feel supported and relaxed. Trishna mentioned that she often spoke on the telephone to close friends and family members when she felt emotionally tired. These chats helped her feel understood and comforted. Communication helped them feel that they were not alone in their journey.

4.4.4 Self-regulation

Self-regulation means learning how to control your emotions during hard times. Preeti shared that when she felt emotionally weak, just looking at her daughter gave her the strength to keep going. Dipjyotil said that whenever he felt upset, he stayed quiet, took a moment to think positively, and calmed himself down. Pinky also said she liked spending a few moments in silence to calm herself. These small habits helped them stay emotionally balanced and face parenting challenges with a clear mind.

4.4.5 Relaxation habits

Relaxation habits played an important role in helping first-time parents cope with everyday stress. Many respondents shared that doing small calming activities gave them mental relief and emotional comfort. Trishna and Deepshikha mentioned that during her free time, she would listen to music or surf the internet, which helped distract her from worries and made her feel better. This simple practice gave her a short mental break from parenting duties. Bidyut shared that although he used to spend time outside with friends earlier, he now prefers to stay home and enjoy quiet time with his child, which has become his new form of relaxation. Deepjyoti2 is traveling with his friend to cope with his stress. These personal habits. Whether it was music, staying indoors, or spending quiet time, it helped each parent find their way to relax and recharge emotionally, even during the most difficult days of early parenting.

4.4.6 Spending time with the child

Bonding with their children brought emotional relief to many parents. Rimi and Ilorah shared that whenever she felt isolated or emotionally weak, she would remind herself that this phase of her child's life was special and temporary. Spending time playing with her child helped her feel better and more connected. Deepjyoti2 said that after coming home from work, he would play with his baby, and this made him feel refreshed and calm. For them, their children were not only their responsibility but also their biggest emotional support.

4.5 Shared parenting responsibilities

Many first-time parents emphasized that dividing parenting tasks equally helped them cope better with the emotional and physical demands of raising a child. Deepjyoti2 and his wife split responsibilities, which helped them stay balanced and avoid burnout. Trishna described equal sharing as the "magic" that reduced parenting stress. Pinky felt less burdened because her husband helped with diaper changes and washing. Rimi said her husband cared for the child while she managed housework, giving her time to rest. Sarfi shared that her husband took over baby care, feeding, bathing, and diapering whenever he was free, allowing her some relief. Bidyut tried to support his wife when she was tired of looking after their baby. Rajib shared that although traditional roles still exist, he made efforts to take the child out and do outdoor chores so his wife could focus on meals and studies. Preeti said shared tasks like playing with the baby helped prevent exhaustion. Ritupan looked after the baby when home to give his wife a break, which strengthened their bond. These shared efforts not only made daily routines easier but also created emotional balance and partnership, making first-time parenting a smoother and more meaningful experience. Deepshikha also said that she had not received adequate support from her partner.

4.6 Balancing Work and Parenting

4.6.1 Difficulties in balancing work and parenting

Many first-time parents shared that balancing work and parenting is very challenging, especially the first first-time fathers, when jobs are demanding or time-consuming. Dipjyotil, who works in shifts and travels often, finds it hard to manage parenting, especially when his child is sick and he is far from home. Ritupan struggled to give time to his child because of his serious work duties, though he tries his best. Pinky, a working mother, felt tired and emotionally drained while trying to handle both work and childcare. Bidyut also felt stressed when he had to help during doctor visits or when his wife could not manage the child alone, as he also had to handle his job. Rajib went through a tough time when he had to look after a newborn, care for his sick wife, and continue working all by himself, which left him mentally exhausted. Ritupan felt emotionally disconnected because his wife and child had to move back to their village, while he stayed in Golaghat for work. He felt sad and helpless when he could not be with them during difficult moments. These experiences show that managing work and parenting together is not just about time. It deeply affects parents emotionally and can lead to stress, guilt, and exhaustion.

4.6.2 Insufficient workplace support

Several first-time fathers shared their experiences regarding the lack of sufficient support from their workplaces when it comes to managed parenting responsibilities. Dipjyoti1, for example, mentioned that while he did not face direct conflicts or problems at work due to his parenting duties, the official workplace system was slow and rigid in responding to the specific needs of parents. His workplace did not provide enough support for his parenting needs because the official processes are slow. Even though he had not faced direct problems at work because of being a father, the slow and limited help from his workplace made it harder for him to balance his job and family life. This lack of quick support means he had to handle many parenting responsibilities without much help from his work environment.

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Some parents said their wordplaces were helpful and expressive when it came to managed work and parenting. For example, Plady shared that her job gave her environmental made it exercises for nearpole care or her child while still work that Exib will need to his employer was kind and understanding, bridge him safe time off when his family needed him, expectably for important chilgs his diving visits. Hereign this kind of express a work made a big difference for these parents helpfully them handle the seress of parenting better and their less overwhelmed.

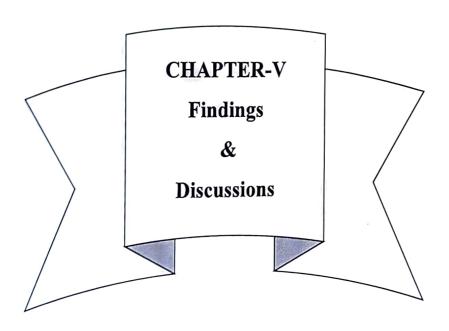
4.7 Use of social media and online platforms for parenting support

Many first-time parents had mixed experiences when it came to using social media and online plantorms for parenting support. Some parents, like Trichna, Rimi, Sarti, and Preeni, mennioned that they used social media to read parenting tipo, followed helpful pages, and learn from other parents' stories. These platforms gave them comfort and ideas, though they were careful about trusting everything they saw online. For example, Rimi said social media was sometimes helpful but not always reliable, and Trishna also felt that while she found some good advice, she did not fully rely on it. Preeti found emotional comfort knowing she was not alone in her parenting struggles. On the other hand, many respondents like Dipjyotil, Ritupan, and others shared that they never used social media, parenting groups, or counseling services. They believed such platforms could be helpful, especially for parents facing emotional stress or needing practical advice, but they did not use them. Some parents felt these online platforms did not matched their lifestyle or preferences, while others, like one respondent, believed there should be better guidance and counseling available for new parents in general. One mother even said she did not join any parenting group but believed that sharing experiences with other parents could be useful. While some parents benefited from online support, many others either avoided it or remained cautious about its reliability,

INTERPRETATION

The experiences of first-time parents collected by the respondents revealed that firsttime parents faced an emotional and challenging journey that brought many changes in a person's life. One of the most common issues faced by new parents was emotional exhaustion. Many of them felt mentally tired because of constantly worrying about their child's safety, being away from their family due to job demands, or trying to manage everything alone. This emotional fatigue was not just about doing physical tasks; it was about feeling responsible, anxious, and overwhelmed by the parents. Parents often experienced helplessness, especially when they could not be present during emergencies or important moments in their child's early years. Some parents shared how deeply hurt and stressed they felt when their child fell sick or got injured, and they could not be there to help. This emotional pain had a lasting effect on their mental well-being. Balancing work and parenting was another major struggle. Parents who had to travel frequently or worked long shifts said that they found it hard to give enough time to their children and often felt guilty or stressed. Some parents had to manage work, a newborn baby, and take care of other family members all at once, which led to extreme mental pressure and exhaustion. Even those who shared responsibilities with their partners still felt that it was a good way to support their parents while their job was too much at times. The lack of proper support from the workplace made things worse for many. While a few workplaces offered some flexibility or leave during emergencies, others also said that sometimes it became slow to respond, or did not provide any special help for parenting needs. This made parents feel unsupported and forced to handle everything on their own. When it came to finding parenting advice or emotional support, some of them said that it supported them in some way, but most parents said they did not use social media or online platforms. Some felt these resources were not reliable or did not match their personal experiences. Others had never tried them at all but believed they might be helpful for other parents who needed ideas or support. Only those parents who used social media sometimes were careful about what they trusted. Though they faced these difficulties, many parents found strength in their personal coping methods. Some chose to stay calm and reflect silently when they felt overwhelmed, while others said that

and supporting each other emotionally played an important role in reducing their emotional burden. A few parents also said that becoming a parent changed their mixed completely, and they then focused more on their child's needs and thought less about themselves. First-time parenting brought a mix of joy, stress, and emotional growth. Emotional exhaustion, lack of workplace support, and limited use of parenting platforms added to the burden, but mutual support and small coping strategies helped parents manage. This interpretation highlighted the need for better support systems both within families and from workplaces to help new parents feel stronger and more confident in their parenting journey.



This study shows that becoming a parent for the first time is a very emotional and life-changing experience for both mothers and fathers. Many parents said they were happy to welcome their child, but at the same time, they felt tired, anxious, and stressed. The sudden changes in their daily life, sleepless nights, and constant responsibility for the baby made them feel emotionally and physically exhausted. Mothers shared their feelings and said they sometimes felt lonely, especially when they did not have support from their partner or family. On the other hand, fathers mostly kept their feelings inside because society often expects them to be strong and not express emotions. This made many fathers feel lonely and stressed, too, even though they helped with childcare and worked hard to provide for the family. Many parents also said it was hard to manage work and baby care together, and they felt guilty when they could not give enough time to their child. Financial problems added more stress for them, as they worried about money for baby food, health checkups, and daily needs. Parents who got support from their partners or family members said that it helped them feel better and more confident. Sharing duties like feeding the baby or putting the baby to sleep made things easier and improved their relationship. To cope with stress, many parents used simple ways like staying quiet during arguments, talking to their partner, thinking positively, or taking small breaks. But most of them did not get any help or counseling from doctors or health workers, which they felt would have helped them manage better. Some parents used the internet or YouTube to learn about baby care, but many felt that personal support and real-life advice were more helpful. The discussion shows that first-time parents need emotional support, shared responsibilities, and mental health guidance to handle the challenges of parenthood better.

FINDINGS

This section explains the key findings from the study on the psychological experiences of first-time parents. It explored how both mothers and fathers went through emotional ups and downs during their early parenting journey. The findings were based on real-life experiences shared by the respondents and identified their challenges, sources of stress, available support systems, coping strategies, the role of shared responsibilities, and professional help.

· Psychological parenting experiences

First-time parents shared that they felt happy but also emotionally overwhelmed. After the birth of their child, parents experienced joy, but also anxiety, constant worry, and mental tiredness. Fathers often kept their emotions to themselves, feeling invisible and unsupported. Mothers felt exhausted due to the lack of rest and the ongoing care of the child. It was difficult for them to stay emotionally balanced, especially when they did not receive proper support.

Sources of Stress

The main sources of stress were balancing work and parenting, financial concerns, and a lack of help. Working parents reported feeling guilty about being away from their child. Fathers mainly faced pressure to meet financial needs and deal with child health issues. Mothers struggled with tiredness, sleeplessness, and having no time for themselves.

Prenting Supports

Support from partners and family members helped reduce emotional stress. Couples who shared tasks like feeding and calming the baby felt more connected and emotionally stable. On the other hand, those without support often felt lonely and emotionally burdened. Having help made the parenting journey easier to manage.

Copying Strategies

Parents used different coping strategies. Some respondents said they remained silent during stressful moments, while others talked with their partners or practiced positive thinking. A few took short breaks or used deep breathing techniques. Though small, these efforts helped them stay emotionally strong.

· Health Worker and Professional Support

Parents reported that they rarely received emotional support from doctors or health professionals. While some got professional help, most felt unprepared for the emotional side of parenting because proper support was missing. Fathers, in particular, felt that their mental health needs were ignored. Many parents expressed a strong need for counseling and mental health programs for new parents.

• Divided Responsibilities

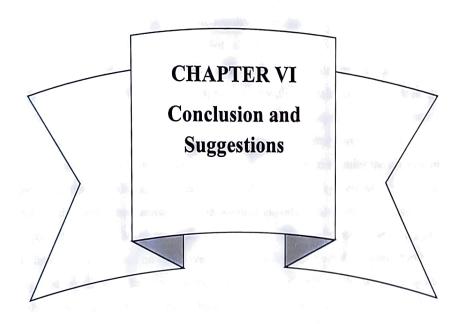
Many parents shared parenting duties, which helped reduce stress. Fathers who took active roles helped mothers feel more relaxed and emotionally supported. This also improved bonding between both parents. In cases where responsibilities were not shared equally, mothers often faced burnout from handling everything on their own.

Social Media and Online Platform Support

The researcher found that some parents used online platforms for parenting tips and emotional support. Although digital sources were helpful, most parents preferred real-life support from people around them. They believed that online advice could not replace the care and understanding of a real person.

The findings also showed that there was a common gap in emotional and psychological support for new parents. Most of the parents had not joined any parenting groups or formal counseling programs, either because these services were not available to them or they did not know about them. Respondents believed that such services would have been very helpful and hoped that society would offer more awareness and access to emotional

and mental health support for both mothers and fathers in the future. The findings further showed that when both parents shared responsibilities equally, it reduced stress and emotional pressure on both sides. Parents felt more supported, connected, and emotionally balanced when they knew their partner was equally involved in raising the child. The findings showed that first-time parenting was an emotionally challenging journey filled with stress, confusion, joy, and continuous learning. Mothers and fathers faced different but equally important emotional struggles. The data clearly highlighted the need for mental health support and counseling services to help parents handle the emotional aspects of parenting more effectively.



CONCLUSION

This research was an in-depth study of the psychological challenges and coping strategies of first-time parents, including both mothers and fathers. The research aimed to understand how becoming a parent for the first time affects people mentally, emotionally, and socially. The study also looked into the sources of stress, the support systems available, the coping strategies used by parents, how responsibilities are shared between partners, and how technology and social media help during this phase. The research included real-life experiences of parents from different backgrounds to give a broader understanding of the parenting journey. A qualitative method was used, with a semi-structured interview schedule that allowed parents to share their feelings, struggles, and coping strategies in their own words. The sample size included selected respondents, both mothers and fathers, who were willing to talk about their parenting journey. The researcher transcribes to understand emotional responses, mental pressure, and support systems in depth. The key objectives of the study were to explore the psychological impact of becoming a parent for the first time, to examine the division of parenting responsibilities, to understand the stressors faced by new parents, and to analyze the coping mechanisms they use. Another important objective was to study how support from family, health professionals, and online platforms helps new parents adjust to their new role. Based on this, several important findings were discovered. Mothers reported experiencing anxiety, emotional breakdowns, identity confusion, and physical exhaustion after childbirth. Fathers, though often silent about their feelings, faced stress due to financial responsibilities, the need to appear emotionally strong, and sometimes feelings of being left out or ignored during the parenting process. Both parents struggled with balancing work and family life. The lack of paternity leave and flexible work environments added more pressure on fathers, especially in rural and traditional households. Support systems played a big role in making this transition easier. Emotional support from partners, practical help from family members, and guidance from health workers helped many parents cope better. Some parents, especially fathers, reported a lack of emotional support and space to express their feelings. Several respondents mentioned that online platforms, parenting videos, and social media helped

them learn about baby care and managing stress. Parents also used yoga, meditation, and fun activities with children as coping strategies The findings of the research are closely related to the articles reviewed in the literature section. For example, the study by Hwang et al. (2022) matched our findings that first-time mothers go through emotional, mental, and social changes and need strong support from partners and professionals. Similarly, Chawla (2023) highlighted how Indian fathers experience emotional pressure and a lack of recognition in their caregiving role, which was also reflected in our respondent's views. The article by Wainwright et al. (2023) supports our findings that screening fathers for postpartum depression is important because many suffer silently. Studies by Saether et al. (2023) and Schbinger et al. (2022) also support the idea that fathers are often left out of early parenting support programs, which can lead to emotional imbalance and a sense of isolation. Articles on postpartum depression by Saharoy et al. (2023) and Alvarez-Garcia et al. (2024) were very helpful in understanding the deeper emotional impact on both parents, especially when mental health care is not addressed early. This study suggests that programs for new parents should include both mothers and fathers equally and focus not just on child care, but also on the emotional needs of parents. Parenting is not just a mother's job; it is a shared responsibility that requires teamwork, understanding, and support from the family and the community. The study recommends increasing awareness about mental health support for both parents, offering parenting sessions that include fathers, promoting flexible work policies and paternity leave, and encouraging early screening for emotional problems in both mothers and fathers. Health professionals should be trained to listen to and support both parents equally. Community support, especially in rural areas, should be improved so that parents do not feel alone. Social media and online learning tools should be made more accessible and trustworthy, so that parents can find useful information and emotional support easily. The emotional journey of becoming a parent for the first time and the importance of recognizing the struggles of both mothers and fathers. A balanced supports are needed for both parents emotionally, socially, and mentally can lead to healthier families and happier parenting experiences.

SUGGESTIONS

- Many respondents expressed that they faced emotional fatigue and a lack of guidance. So researcher want to suggest that health care and hospitals should offer counselling for both mothers and fathers during the antenatal and postnatal periods.
- Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) can conduct home visits not just for physical checkups, but also to assess emotional well-being.
- Local institutions and NGOs can form parent support groups where both parents can share their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in a safe and nonjudgmental space.
- First-time parents often face emotional stress silently due to social norms that men should be strong. It is important to recognize their emotional struggles and provide a safe space for them to share.
- Conduct awareness programs in rural areas so that people can be aware that postpartum depression is a normal problem faced by every first-time parent, and people can openly talk.
- Educate communities about modern, shared parenting roles and reduce the stigma around fathers expressing emotions or seeking help. Promoting open conversations around mental health and parenting stress within families and communities can help break cultural taboos and create a more supportive environment for both mothers and fathers.

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APENDIX

INFORMED CONSENT

I, Priya Boruah, a student of the Department of Social Work at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Guwahati Unit, am conducting a research study as part of my dissertation titled "A study on psychological challenges and coping mechanisms of first-time parents, with special reference to Lakwa, Charaideo." Under the guidance of Dr. Deepshikha Carpenter, Head of the Department, Department of Social Work, MSSV, Guwahati Unit. This interview is only for my research project. Everything you said will only be used for study. Your name or identity is only shared with permission. You can stop anytime if you feel uncomfortable. I kindly ask for your honest answers to the questions. Your help is very important and supports my research

Thank you for your time and help.

Priya Boruah

MSW 4th semester

Roll No: MSW-05/23

Department of Social Work

MSSV, Guwahati Unit.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- Name:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Education:
- Marital Status:
- Occupation:
- Family type:
- Child age:
- Can you share any experiences where you felt overwhelmed or emotionally exhausted as a parent?
- Can you describe any specific psychological challenges you have faced as a first-time parent?
- Have you experienced any stress, anxiety, or mood swings after becoming a parent?
- Have you thought that self-identity has changed after a parent?
- Who provides you with the most support in your parenting journey?
- Have you received any guidance from a healthcare professional or counselor?
- How can guidance be helpful in the parenting journey?
- How does a support system help parents in parenting?
- Have you ever felt isolated or unsupported in your parenting role?
- What are the biggest stressors you have encountered since becoming a parent?
- Have you faced any unexpected challenges in parenting that caused stress?
- Do you feel any societal or cultural pressure in your parenting way?
- Has the economic responsibility affected your parenting experience?
- What strategies do you use to manage parenting stress?
- Have you made any lifestyle changes to help you cope with parenting challenges?
- Do you practice any self-care activities to maintain your well-being?

- How division of responsibilities help during parenting?
- How do you and your partner divide parenting responsibilities?
- Have traditional gender roles influenced your parenting responsibilities?
- Have you faced conflict between you and your partner regarding parenting responsibilities?
- If you are working, how do you balance your job and parenting responsibilities?
- Do you feel that your employment provides adequate support for a working parent?
- Have you faced workplace challenges due to parenting responsibilities?
- What strategies have you found helpful in managing both work and parenting effectively?
- Have you ever struggled with balancing personal and parenting time?
- Do you use social media or online platforms for parenting advice and support?
- How is social media helpful in guiding parents?
- Have you joined any parenting groups and counseling programmes?
- If yes, how do they guide first-time parents?