



## A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON EFFECT OF RELIGIOUS FASTING OVER HEALTH OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY (URBAN AND RURAL)

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### <sup>1</sup>/<sub>15750</sub> ABSTRACT <sup>1</sup>/<sub>15750</sub>

*The present study was undertaken to identify the effect of religious fasting on health of women in urban and rural society. Fasting means absolute abstention from taking any kind of food for a definite period with a view to give rest to the different organs of the body and their processes, thereby helping them to get cleaned. Waste products and impurities which can show seeds of disease in the human body can be removed in simplest, easiest and most natural way through means of fasting. In other words fasting have several health benefits including increasing insulin sensitivity, stress resistance, reduced morbidity and increase in life span. The present study was conducted on hundred respondents of Sonbhadra district of which fifty respondents were from rural population and fifty were from urban population. The data was collected by a pretested and predesigned questionnaire-cum-interview schedule method. The study revealed that the rural population follow more rigid fasting pattern than urban population without taking any food sometimes even water which is not true for health. Restricted food and meals during twenty four and twelve hour fasting cause weakness, headache, flatulence, acidity and constipation more in rural women than urban women. The study shows that although rural women fast strictly on the fasting day but on the day next to fasting they take extra or compensatory diet to overcome the weakness whereas in urban population a less per cent (fourteen) does the same, because they were liberal in food intake during fasting.*

**Key words-** fasting, health benefits, complications, flatulence.

### Introduction

Religious fasting is a kind of austerity. Vrat bestows all kind of advantages at the physical & spiritual levels. Which in turn leads to ease (comfort) of digestion & purification of mind. The physical body of a person who regularly observes vrat remains free of disease. Vrat make our lives full of strength, full of confidence and virtues. Fasting maximizes the ability of immune system. It detoxify years of toxic built up, in the system due to alcohol, drugs and tobacco in weeks. Juice fasting can reestablish normal homeostatic balance and reduce the suffering from craving. Health of females is of great importance but due to various reasons like fasting, dieting, social restriction or carelessness, their nutritional requirement are not adequately met and this leads to many complications in growth and development. A fast means absolute abstention from taking any kind of food for a

definite period with a view to giving rest to the different organs of the body and their processes, their by helping them to get cleaned. A fast bestows health and purity on body. Fasting is a simple process of self-cleansing. It is beneficial because it enables to balance the auto-intoxication that results from dietary & drug Indication. It is a way to cleanse the body impurities & aid weight loss in addition to being an important tool for health & disease cure.

The study was done with the following objectives:

1. To find out fasting pattern and intake of food by women (urban and rural).
2. To identify common problems faced during and due to fasting.

### Research Design

**Sample Selection:** Samples were randomly selected with respect to the fasting habit of women (i.e. regular or occasional) in rural and urban area.



Tools of Study: Predesigned and pre-tested self-made questionnaire was used as a tool for the study.

1. Assessment of problems faced during fasting.
2. Metabolic problem assessment.

3. Dietary analysis

Techniques of Study: Anthropometric measurement was applied with respect to a) Body Mass Index (BMI) and b) Waist Hip Ratio (WHR) whereas Dietary Analysis was applied with respect to a) Dietary Habits and b) Dietary Intake.

### Results and Discussions

**Table 1**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF PROBLEMS FACED DURING FASTING**

Parameter	Category	Rural(N = 25)		Urban(N = 25)	
		Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Additional intake	Milk/curd	9	18	6	12
	Fruits &Vegetables	-	-	1	2
	No	41	82	43	86
	Total	50	100	50	100

From the above data it is clear that sixty six percent rural respondents face problem of weakness and headache whereas thirty

two percent urban respondents have the same problem.

**Table 2**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF METABOLIC PROBLEM FACED DUE TO FASTING**

Parameter	Category	Rural(N = 50)	
		Frequency	Perce
Problems faced due to fasting	Flatulence & Acidity	26	52
	Increase BMR	4	8
	Constipation & Anorexia	2	24
	No problem	8	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above data it is clear that fifty two percent of both the rural and urban population face the problem of flatulence and acidity.



**Table 3**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF ADDITIONAL NUTRIENT (FOOD) ON DAY NEXT TO FASTING**

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From the above data it is clear that eighty two per cent of rural respondents and eighty six per cent of urban respondents do not take any additional food on day next to fasting.

**Conclusions**

1. Rural respondents have more problems of weakness and headache due to fasting.
2. Flatulence and acidity are common metabolic problems faced due to fasting in both population.
3. Most of the population do not take any compensatory diet.

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Parameter	Category	Rural(N = 25)	
		Frequency	Per cent
Additional intake	Milk/curd	9	18
	Fruits & Vegetables	-	-
	None	82	82
	Total	50	100