



# A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING CHILD ABUSE AMONG MOTHERS AT SELECTED URBAN AREA IN COIMBATORE

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Child abuse is a global problem which can be defined as a variety of abnormal behaviors directed against children. It includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and child neglect. One of the important factors which are responsible for child abuse is lack of parenting knowledge regarding the various types of child abuse and its prevention. Hence this study focused on the mother's knowledge regarding child abuse.

**Methods:** Descriptive study design was adopted for this study. This study was conducted in selected urban area (Gandhimanagar), Coimbatore. 50 mothers were selected for this study by using purposive sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among the mothers.

**Result:** The result showed that 10% of the mothers had inadequate knowledge, 58% of the mothers had moderate knowledge and 32% of the mothers had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse.

**Conclusion:** The present study concluded that majority of the mothers had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse. The finding suggests that the awareness about child abuse can be beneficial for the mothers to save their children from child abuse.

**Key words:** Child abuse, knowledge of mothers.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### I. INTRODUCTION

Children are the pillars of nation and they are the valuable resources. Childhood is the period which is filled with the love, with new worlds to explore, and with the joy of mastery of oneself and the environment. In ancient times, general opinion accepted that children could be beaten and abused. The prevention of cruelty to children, as to animal, was beginning to be a matter of public concern in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Child abuse is a global problem. The child abuse can be defined as a variety of abnormal behaviors directed against children. It involves a complex and dangerous set of problems that include child neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse of the children. Child neglect is any form when it concerns a child's welfare, generally considered to be criminal behavior. Or otherwise the Child neglect is the withholding of or failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life like food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene and treated with indifferences.

Physical abuse of children is defined as an excessive intentional physical injury to a child or excessive corporal punishments of a child. The physical abuse of a child includes shaking, beating, dropping, submersion in hot water, intentional burning etc. The consequences of physical abuse include blindness, fracture, mental and emotional retardation, stunting of growth even it may end up

with death. Emotional abuse is a condition in which children do not get adequate attention from their parents or guardians. Emotional abuse can show itself in constant and persistent teasing, belittling, failure to provide psychological nurturing which is needed for the development of a child. It also includes the absence of love, care, support and guidance. One of the consequences of emotional abuse is mental retardation.

Sexual abuse is the engagement of the dependent children or developmentally immature individuals in exploitation or physically intimate sexual activity. The sexual abuse can be range from exhibitionism and fondling to intercourse or use of a child in the production of pornographic materials. The long term effects of sexual abuse are depression, sexual disturbances, suicide and substance abuse. Individuals with history of both physical and sexual abuse tend to experience more severe symptoms than children who experience one form of abuse. The factors responsible for the child abuse are lack of parenting knowledge, stress, high expectations of the parents beyond their ability, poverty, overcrowding in the family, mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, crisis situations and violence

According to the integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) Child protection is about keeping children safe from a risk to their lives or childhood. It is about recognizing that children are vulnerable and hence reducing their vulnerability by protecting them from any harmful situation. Child protection is about ensuring that children should have a security need to depend on, and if they happen to fall through the whole in the system, the system has the responsibility to provide the child with the necessary care and rehabilitation to bring them back into the safety net.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers at selected urban area in Coimbatore.

## III. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers.
- To identify the association between the level of knowledge with selected demographic variables.

## IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This Descriptive survey study was conducted at selected urban area in Coimbatore. In this study Purposive sampling technique was used to enroll the mothers of the children in the age of 0-18years. The total population of the study was 50 mothers. A pre-validated tool comprising Section A: It consists of demographic variables. Baseline data of mothers like sample number, age, education status, occupation, number of children and monthly income of the family. And Section B: Consists of questionnaire (MCQs-25 questions) to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse. Questionnaire on child abuse included general information about child abuse, types of child abuse, manifestations of different types of child abuse, and prevention of child abuse.

**Scoring:** Each multiple choice question has one correct answer and three distracters. Each correct answer was scored as one mark and wrong answer as zero. To interpret the level of knowledge scoring has been as follows.

LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE	RANGE
Inadequate knowledge	< 50 %
Moderate knowledge	51 - 75 %
Adequate knowledge	76 and above

After getting informed consent the pretest was conducted by using questionnaire followed by pamphlets were distributed to increase their knowledge regarding. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics Chi square test were used to find the association between the knowledge levels of mothers regarding child abuse with selected demographic variable.

## V. RESULTS

**Table 5.1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables.**

S.NO	DEMOGRAPHICDATA	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	<b>Age(years)</b>		
	20-29 years	19	38
	30-39 years	26	52
	40-49 years	5	10
2	<b>Religion</b>		
	Hindu	44	88
	Christians	5	10
	Muslim	1	2
3	<b>Number of children</b>		
	1	21	42
	2	29	58

4	<b>Education</b>		
	Illiterate	0	0
	Primary education	6	12
	Higher secondary	18	36
	Graduates	26	52
5	<b>Occupational status</b>		
	House wife	33	66
	Private Employee	9	18
	Government Employee	1	2
	Self Employed	7	14
6	<b>Return time to home</b>		
	3pm-5pm	6	12
	6pm-8pm	5	10
	8.30pm-10pm	2	4
	Not applicable	37	74
7	<b>Breadwinner</b>		
	Father	34	68
	Both (father & mother)	16	32
8	<b>Income</b>		
	Rs.5000-10000	7	14
	Rs.10000-15000	13	26
	Rs.15000-20000	13	26
	More than 20000	17	34
9	<b>Type of family</b>		
	Nuclear family	35	70
	Joint family	15	30
10	<b>Previous knowledge</b>		
	Yes	46	92
	No	4	8

Table 5.1 shows among 50 mothers, 19 mothers(38%) were in the age group of 20 - 29 years, 26 mothers (52%) were in the age group of 30 - 39 years, 5 mothers (10%) were in the age group of 40 - 50years. 44 mothers (88%) were belong to Hindu religion, 5 mothers (10%) were Christians, and 1mother (2%) was Muslim. 21 mothers (42%) had 1 child, 29 mothers (58%) had 2 childrenand none of them had more than 2 children. 6 mothers (12%) had completed primary education, 18 mothers (36%) had completed high school, and 26 mothers (52%) were graduates and no one is illiterate.

Among 50 mothers, 33 mothers (66%) were house wife, 9 mothers (18%) were private employees, 1 mother (2%) was government employee and 7 mothers (14%) were self employed. Among 50 mothers 6 mothers (12%) had returned to home between 3pm-5pm, 5 mothers (10%) had returned to home between 6pm - 8pm, 2 mothers had returned to home between 8pm - 10pm, and this question was not applicable for remaining 37 mothers (74%), In 34 families (68%) father was the breadwinner of the family, and in 16 families (32%) both (father and mother) were the bread winners. Among 50 families, 7 families (14%) had the monthly income of Rs.5000- 10000, 13 families (26%) had the monthly income of Rs.10000-15000, 13 families (26%) had the monthly income of Rs.15000-20000 and remaining had > Rs.20000. Majority 35 mothers (70%) belong to nuclear family, 15 mothers (30%) belong to joint family and none of them was neither extended nor any other type of family. Most of the mothers 46 (92%) had previous knowledge regarding child abuse and remaining 4 mothers (8%) did not have knowledge regarding child abuse.

**Table 5.2: Knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse.**

n =50

Score on level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate knowledge<50	5	10%
Moderate knowledge(51-75)	29	58%
Adequate knowledge>75	16	32%

Table 5.2 shows among 50 mothers, 5 mothers (10%) had inadequate knowledge, 29 mothers (58%) had moderate knowledge and 16 mothers (32%) had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse.

Table 5. 3 Mean and standard deviation of knowledge score of mothers regarding child abuse.

n =50

Aspects	Mean	Standard deviation
Knowledge on child abuse among mothers	16.36	3.17968

Table 5 . 4 Association of the selected demographic variable with the knowledgescore.

n =50

S.NO	DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	KNOWLEDGE ON CHILD ABUSE			CHI - SQUARE VALUE	TABLE VALUE
		INADEQUATE	MODERATE	ADEQUATE		
<b>1</b>	<b>Age(years)</b>					
	20-29 years	0	15	4		
	30-39 years	4	11	11	7.945	9.49
	40-50 years	1	3	1		NS
<b>2</b>	<b>Religion</b>					
	Hindu	4	27	13	3.209	9.49
	Christian	1	2	2		NS
	Muslim	0	0	1		
<b>3</b>	<b>Numberof children</b>					
	1	2	14	5		5.99
	2	3	15	11	1.232	NS
<b>4</b>	<b>Education</b>					
	Illiterate	0	0	0		
	Primary education	2	4	0		
	Higher secondary	2	11	5	7.339	12.59
	Graduates	1	14	11		NS
<b>5</b>	<b>Occupational status</b>					
	House wife	4	18	11		
	Private employee	0	8	1		
	Government employee	0	0	1	6.826	12.59
	Self employed	1	3	3		NS
<b>6</b>	<b>Return time to home</b>					
	3pm-5pm	0	4	2		
	6pm-8pm	0	4	1	4.120	12.59
	8.30pm-10pm	0	2	0		NS
	Not applicable	5	19	13		
<b>7</b>	<b>Bread winner of the family</b>					
	Father	6	17	11	1.393	5.99
	parents	1	10	5		NS
<b>8</b>	<b>Income</b>					
	Rs.5000-10000	2	5	0		
	Rs.10000-15000	1	9	3		
	Rs.15000-20000	2	6	5		12.59
	More than 20000	0	9	8	9.386	NS
<b>9</b>	<b>Type of family</b>					
	Nuclear family	3	22	10		
	Joint family	2	7	6		
	Extended family	0	0	0		12.592
	others	0	0	0	3.139	NS
<b>10</b>	<b>Previous knowledge regarding child abuse</b>					
	Yes	5	25	16	3.1475	5.991
	No	0	4	0		NS

\*\*p&lt;0.05, NS-Not Significant.

Table 5.4 shows that there is no significant association between the knowledge level of mothers and demographic variables



such as age, religion, number of children, educational status, occupational status, returning time, monthly income and previous knowledge.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Demographic variables of mothers were collected and analyzed. Majority of the mothers in the study were in the age group of 30 - 39 years (38%), belongs to Hindu religion (88%), Most of the study participants have 2 children (58%) 36 mothers were Graduates (52%). Many of them were house wife (66%), lives in nuclear family (70%) and 92% of the study participants had the previous knowledge regarding child abuse. 5 (10%) mothers had inadequate knowledge regarding child abuse. Most of the mothers 29 (58%) had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse, and 16 (32%) of them had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse.

In present study showed that the chi-square value was less than the tabulated value for demographic variables such as age, religion, number of children, education, occupation, return time to home, breadwinner of the family, monthly income, type of family, and previous knowledge regarding child abuse and the pretest knowledge level of mothers.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to assess the knowledge of mothers on child abuse. Relevant literature was reviewed to enrich the knowledge on selected study to choose the appropriate conceptual model, developing a frame work and research plan. Research design adopted for this study was descriptive approach. The study was conducted in Gandhimanagar, Coimbatore using purposive sampling technique. 50 mothers were selected and Informed consent was obtained from the study participants before carrying out the study. Questionnaire was prepared to obtain information on the preventive aspects and general knowledge of the mothers on child abuse. All the selected mothers were subjected to knowledge questionnaire on child abuse. The study highlighted that the knowledge level of the mothers about child abuse is inadequate. Among 50 mothers a very minimal mothers alone had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. Hence creating awareness among mothers regarding this is very important to prevent child abuse in our society at present and in future also.

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