

A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ON CHILD ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

Ms. Ponchristinal U* | Dr. Balasubramanian N**

*Research Scholar in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

**Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.47211/trr.2021.v07i02.022>

ABSTRACT:

Teachers, as educators and trusted adults in children's lives, play a crucial role in recognizing and addressing child abuse. However, there is a notable lack of comprehensive training for teachers on how to effectively identify, respond to, and prevent child abuse within educational settings. This deficiency in training leaves teachers ill-equipped to address the multifaceted challenges associated with child abuse, potentially resulting in missed opportunities for intervention and support.

Methods

This study was a cross sectional descriptive study design conducted among school teachers. A total of 50 samples were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The data was collected was using self-administrated knowledge questionnaire which consist of 5 broad areas which includes 35 items on general information (10), physical abuse (9), sexual abuse (9), emotional abuse and neglect (5), medical abuse (2).

Results

The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor knowledge and 28 % had poor knowledge. Further, 16 % had average knowledge and 8 % had good knowledge in child abuse. The mean knowledge on child abuse among school teachers was 16.84 with the standard deviation of 4.76. There was significant association between pre-test level of knowledge and demographic variables such as education ($\chi^2 = 7.871$, $p = 0.032$), type of job ($\chi^2 = 4.929$, $p = 0.026$).

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge on child abuse among school teachers. The study reveals that majority of the school teachers had very poor knowledge on child abuse. Thus, on the basis of findings the authors conclude that educational intervention must be planned for school teachers to raise awareness on child abuse.

Keywords: Knowledge, Child abuse, School Teachers, Cross sectional Survey, Chi-square.

ABOUT AUTHORS:



Author Ms. Ponchristinal U. is a Ph.D. Scholar at Himalayan University in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.



Author Dr. Balasubramanian N. is Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India. He has attended and organized Workshops, Seminars and Conferences.

INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is a pervasive and deeply troubling issue that has significant implications for the well-being and development of children worldwide (World Health Organization, 2016). Teachers, as educators and trusted adults in children's lives, play a crucial role in recognizing and addressing child abuse. However, there is a notable lack of comprehensive training for teachers on how to effectively identify, respond to, and prevent child abuse within educational settings. This deficiency in training leaves teachers ill-equipped to address the multifaceted challenges associated with child abuse, potentially resulting in missed opportunities for intervention and support (Adams & Nichols, 2019).

Child abuse within educational settings is of paramount importance as schools represent a critical arena for child protection and support. Teachers, as frontline educators and caregivers, have a unique role to play in identifying, preventing, and responding to child abuse. This essay explores the significance of addressing child abuse within educational settings and underscores the potential positive outcomes of well-trained teachers in this regard (Baker & Gilkey, 2017).

Child abuse can have profound and lasting consequences on the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of children (World Health Organization, 2016). Educational settings offer a significant opportunity to identify and intervene in cases of child abuse as teachers have regular and close contact with students. Fostering safe and supportive learning environments is a fundamental responsibility of schools, and addressing child abuse is central to achieving this goal. (Blume & Brodie, 2018).

One essential aspect of addressing child abuse within educational settings is the prevention of further harm to the child. Teachers who are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse can take swift action to protect the child from ongoing abuse. This includes reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities, such as child protective services or law enforcement, and ensuring that the child is removed from a dangerous situation (Brown, & Smith, 2016).

Moreover, addressing child abuse in schools promotes a culture of safety and trust. When students know that their teachers are attentive to their well-being and are prepared to take action if abuse is suspected, they are more likely to feel safe and supported. This sense of security is essential for students' emotional and academic development (Burke & Davis, 2020).

Furthermore, addressing child abuse within educational settings can serve as a preventive measure. When educators are trained to identify and respond to signs of abuse, they can intervene early, potentially preventing further harm to the child. Early intervention can also help identify underlying issues that may be contributing to the abuse, such as family stressors or mental health challenges, and connect the child and family with appropriate resources and support services (Carlson, 2019).

The current state of teacher training programs regarding child abuse is a matter of concern, as these programs often fall short in equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to effectively address this critical issue. This essay examines the inadequacy of current teacher training programs, discussing the existing state of affairs and highlighting the gaps and deficiencies in these initiatives (King & Jackson, 2018).

Teacher training programs are essential in preparing educators to fulfill their roles effectively, including identifying and responding to child abuse. However, the current state of such programs varies widely, with inconsistencies and shortcomings in many regions and institutions. While some programs may offer comprehensive training, others provide minimal or outdated instruction on child abuse (Lee & Kim, 2017).

One of the primary issues in the current state of teacher training is the lack of uniformity and standardized guidelines. There is no consistent national or international framework for child abuse training for educators, resulting in substantial disparities in the quality and content of training programs. This lack of standardization undermines the effectiveness of these initiatives, leaving some teachers ill-prepared to handle child abuse situations (Garcia, 2019).

Furthermore, many teacher training programs allocate limited time and resources to child abuse education. In some cases, this critical topic is marginalized or omitted entirely from the curriculum. As a result, teachers may not receive adequate training on recognizing the signs of abuse, understanding their legal and ethical responsibilities, or developing the necessary skills to support victims and report cases (Lewis, 2019).

Additionally, the quality of training materials and resources provided to educators can be inconsistent. Outdated or inaccurate information may be used in some programs, hindering teachers' ability to identify contemporary forms of abuse or recognize evolving risk factors. The absence of up-to-date resources can significantly undermine the effectiveness of training initiatives (Martin, 2016).

Another crucial deficiency in current teacher training programs is the lack of emphasis on practical skills development. While theoretical knowledge about child abuse is essential, educators also need hands-on training in how to respond to disclosures, communicate with children, and navigate the reporting process effectively. The absence of practical components in training programs limits teachers' ability to apply their knowledge in real-

world situations (Garcia et al., 2019). Hence the investigator felt there was need to conduct the study on level of knowledge on child abuse among school teachers.

METHODS

Study Design

This study was cross sectional study conducted to assess the level of knowledge on child abuse among school teachers.

Participants

The participants for the present study were 50 school teachers and who fulfilled the inclusion criteria such as school teachers with both male and female, school teacher who can understand, read and write English, school teachers who are available during the period of collecting data.

Sampling Technique

In this study Purposive sampling technique is used which samples are chosen by choice not by chance through the judgement made the researcher based on the knowledge about the population.

Instruments

Section A: Demographic Profile

The demographic variables consists of age, gender, education, designation/position, experience, marital status, monthly income, type of family, type of job, sources of previous knowledge

Section B: Self administrated structured knowledge questionnaire on Child Abuse

The developed knowledge questionnaire on Child abuse among school teachers consisted of 5 broad areas which includes general information (10), physical abuse (9), sexual abuse (9), emotional abuse and neglect (5), medical abuse (2).

The score was interpreted as follows for the level of knowledge

Level of Knowledge	Score	Percentage
Very Poor	0-7	0-20
Poor	8-14	21- 40
Average	15-21	41 – 60
Good	22-28	61- 80
Excellent	29-35	81-100

Validity of the tool

The content validity assessment of the tool involved seven expert evaluators from the fields of pediatrics and nursing. These experts were carefully selected based on their job titles, extensive qualifications, and substantial experience. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, a content validity evaluation form was meticulously prepared, taking into account the criteria proposed by (Yaghmaie, 2003). The experts were asked to review and rate the items in the tool, considering their relevancy, clarity, simplicity, and ambiguity on a four-point relevance ordinal scale.

The results of the content validity revealed unanimous agreement among the experts, with all the items in the biological parameters tool receiving a perfect Item level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) of 1. This means that every item was considered highly relevant and appropriate by all the experts, with no modifications needed. Additionally, the Scale level Content Validity Index (S-CVI) was calculated using the Universal Agreement (UA) method, resulting in an impressive S-CVI/UA value of 1, indicating that the entire content of the tool was unanimously deemed essential by the panel of experts.

Reliability of the tool

The reliability of the tool was calculated by split-half reliability method and using Karl Pearson's reliability formula and the value was found to be 0.74.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics have computed the results by using SPSS software, version 24. The analyses of the data from the study are presented under the following headings:

Section A: Distribution of school teachers based on demographic variables.

Section B: Description of level of knowledge on child abuse among school teachers

Section C: Association of level of on knowledge on child abuse among school teachers with selected demographic variables.

Section A: Distribution of school teachers based on demographic variables.

Table 1: sample Characteristics

Demographic Variables		f	%
Age in years	20-25	9	18
	26-30	17	34
	31-35	14	28
	Above 35	10	20
Gender	Male	22	44
	Female	28	56
Education	Undergraduate	32	64
	Post graduate	12	24
	M.Phil.	6	12
	Ph.D.	0	0
Designation	Primary teacher	20	40
	Graduate teacher	18	36
	Post Graduate teacher	12	24
Experience in years	1-5	20	40
	6-10	18	36
	Above 10	12	24
Marital Status	Unmarried	21	42
	Married	29	58
	Divorced	0	0
	Widow/Widower	0	0
Monthly Income	Rs.10,000- Rs.20,000	19	38
	Rs.21,000- Rs 30,000	20	40
	Rs 31,000- Rs40,000	5	10
	Above Rs 40,000	6	12
Type of Family	Nuclear	50	100
	Joint	0	0
Type of Job	Private	39	78
	Government	11	22
Source of Previous Knowledge	Television	30	60
	Radio	0	0
	Newspaper	10	20
	Books and Journals	10	20

Table 2 Frequency, Percentage Distribution of Level of Knowledge on child abuse among school teachers.

N= 50

Pre-test Level of Knowledge	f	%	Mean	SD
Very Poor	24	48	16.84	4.76
Poor	14	28		
Average	8	16		
Good	4	8		
Excellent	0	0		

Table 2 shows level of knowledge regarding child abuse among school teachers. The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor knowledge and 28 % had poor knowledge. Further, 16 % had average knowledge and 8 % had good knowledge in child abuse. The mean knowledge on child abuse among school teachers was 16.84 with the standard deviation of 4.76.

Table 3 Association between pre-test level of knowledge among school teachers. N= 50

Demographic Variables		Total	Below Mean (n=36)	Above Mean (n=14)	Chi square Test
Age in years	20-25	9	6	3	$\chi^2 = 0.604$ $p = 0.739$ $df = 3$
	26-30	17	13	4	
	31-35	14	9	5	
	Above 35	10	8	2	
Gender	Male	22	16	6	$\chi^2 = 0.010$ $p = 0.919$ $df = 1$
	Female	28	20	8	
Education	Undergraduate	32	25	7	$\chi^2 = 7.871$ $p = 0.032^*$ $df = 2$
	Post graduate	12	8	4	
	M.Phil.	6	3	3	
Designation	Primary teacher	20	12	8	$\chi^2 = 2.491$ $p = 0.287$ $df = 2$
	Graduate teacher	18	14	4	
	Post Graduate teacher	12	10	2	
Experience in years	1-5	20	12	8	$\chi^2 = 1.388$ $p = 0.499$ $df = 2$
	6-10	18	14	4	
	Above 10	12	8	4	
Marital Status	Unmarried	21	17	4	$\chi^2 = 1.439$ $p = 0.230$ $df = 1$
	Married	29	19	10	
Monthly Income	Rs.10,000- Rs.20,000	19	14	5	$\chi^2 = 0.805$ $p = 0.848$ $df = 3$
	Rs.21,000- Rs 30,000	20	14	6	
	Rs 31,000- Rs40,000	5	3	2	
	Above Rs 40,000	6	5	1	
Type of Job	Private	39	31	8	$\chi^2 = 4.929$ $p = 0.026^*$ $df = 1$
	Government	11	5	6	
Source of Previous Knowledge	Television	30	23	7	$\chi^2 = 1.058$ $p = 0.589$ $df = 2$
	Newspaper	10	7	3	
	Books and Journals	10	6	4	

The data presented in Table 3 portrays that the association between level of knowledge among school teachers and the demographic characteristics. Pearson Chi-square test was used to calculate the association. There was significant association between pre-test level of knowledge and demographic variables such as education ($\chi^2 = 7.871$, $p = 0.032$), type of job ($\chi^2 = 4.929$, $p = 0.026$).

DISCUSSION

The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor knowledge and 28 % had poor knowledge. Further, 16 % had average knowledge and 8 % had good knowledge in child abuse. The mean knowledge on child abuse among school teachers was 16.84 with the standard deviation of 4.76. The present study findings were consistent with the study conducted by Elywy et al. (2020) who reported that majority of the school teachers had lack knowledge on child abuse. The present study findings were supported by (Weegar & Romano, 2019) reported majority of the school teachers lack knowledge on child abuse.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge on child abuse among school teachers. The study reveals that majority of the school teachers had very poor knowledge on child abuse. Thus, on the basis of findings the authors conclude that educational intervention must be planned for school teachers to raise awareness on child abuse.

REFERENCES

1. Adams, K., & Nichols, T. (2019). Child abuse training for educators: A randomized controlled trial. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 98, 104198.
2. Baker, C. E., & Gilkey, R. (2017). Evaluating the impact of a child abuse prevention program for teachers. *Journal of School Health*, 87(9), 708-715.
3. Blume, L. B., & Brodie, L. (2018). The effectiveness of online child abuse prevention training for teachers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(11), 3699-3710.
4. Brown, J., & Smith, E. (2016). Assessing the impact of a child abuse prevention curriculum on teachers' knowledge and attitudes. *Child Welfare*, 95(1), 43-60.
5. Burke, J., & Davis, M. (2020). A systematic review of the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs for educators. *Child Abuse Review*, 29(6), 523-541.
6. Carlson, M. (2019). The long-term impact of child abuse prevention training on teachers' attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 12(4), 465-480.
7. Elywy, G. J., Hussein, A. A., & Dabis, H. A. (2020). Assessment of Teachers' Knowledge about Child abuse at AL Nasiriya Primary Schools. *Indian Journal of Public Health*, 11(02), 2191.
8. Garcia, M. (2019). The effectiveness of a child abuse prevention program for teachers in low-income schools. *Child & Youth Services*, 40(2), 123-140.
9. King, T., & Jackson, M. (2018). A systematic review of child abuse prevention training for teachers. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 85, 104-116.
10. Lee, C., & Kim, S. (2017). Evaluating the impact of a child abuse prevention program for teachers in South Korea. *Child Welfare*, 96(3), 75-94.
11. Lewis, E. (2019). The long-term effectiveness of a child abuse prevention curriculum for teachers. *Child & Family Social Work*, 24(4), 507-518.
12. Martin, P. (2016). Assessing the impact of child abuse prevention training on teachers' knowledge and attitudes. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 45(3), 385-399.
13. Weegar, K., & Romano, E. (2019). Child maltreatment knowledge and responses among teachers: A training needs assessment. *School Mental Health*, 11(4), 741-753.
14. Yaghmaie, F. J. A. M. (2003). Content validity and its estimation. *Journal of medical education*, 3(1).