



THE BLACK AND BLUES WILL FADE AWAY, BUT THE PAIN INFLICTED WILL STAY.....

# A Study to Assess the Knowledge Regarding Legal Aspects of Child Abuse among Care Takers of Children With A View to Develop an Information Pamphlet on Child Abuse in A Selected Hospital, Bangalore

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**Perspective**

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## Abstract

Child abuse or child maltreatment is any kind of physical, sexual or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or other caregiver. The prevalence of child abuse globally is estimated up to 1 billion children aged between 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect as per the statistics of 2020 by WHO. It is the responsibility of the caretakers to protect their child and be aware of all the legal aid which is available for children afflicted with child abuse. So the study was conducted with the objectives as follows:

- To assess the knowledge of caretakers regarding legal aspects on child abuse.
- To determine the association between knowledge regarding legal aspects of child abuse and selected demographic variables.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among the caregivers of children below 15 years of age visiting paediatric OPD of SJMCH, Bangalore. A structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge regarding legal aspects of child abuse. The data was analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

In our study, only 4.2% of parents had good knowledge about the topic whereas 50.9% had moderate knowledge. Therefore, the researcher felt a strong need to educate and spread awareness to the parents regarding the topic of child abuse.

**Keyword:** Child Abuse; Knowledge; Legal aspects; Information Pamphlet

## Introduction

*"CHILDREN ARE THE HANDS BY WHICH WE TAKE HOLD OF HEAVEN, IT FEELS LIKE THE HEAVENS ARE CALLING FOR YOU WHEN A CHILD SMILES AT YOU"*

Childhood is a time full of innocence, love, light and freedom with little to no worries. Children are the asset of the nation. Children have the right to be taken care of by their parents or guardian, to be treated with kindness and affection and their well-being looked after [1-5]. Although

childhood is a modern-day universal subject recognized, not all children get to live their lives the way they are meant to. Not all of them experience smiles but some suffer silently with tears and wounds. One of the most shameful evils that society faces in the 21st century is child abuse.

The prevalence child abuse globally is estimated up to 1 billion children aged between 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect as per the statistics of 2020 by WHO.

### Need For the Study

India is home to over 19 percent of the world's children, making it the country with the largest child population in the world. It inherently defines the country's role in becoming a safe haven for children in this ever-changing society. The nation therefore provides its children with a host of rights - fundamental and legal while enshrining the importance of their protection, care and development.

Karnataka reported highest child abuse cases amid Covid pandemic among the southern states of India. As per the data available with the department of women and Child welfare gathered through child line, Karnataka witnessed 312 child abuse cases, highest among the southern states.

According to Interpol data, India reported over 24 lakh incidence of online child sexual abuse during three years of period between 2017-2020 with 80% of girls below the age of 14 years [6-10]. Parental knowledge of child abuse and parenting techniques are very much essential for the child to grow up in a healthy manner without any distress or developing any abnormality. Therefore, the investigator had a keen experiencing interest to assess the knowledge of caregivers regarding legal impact of child abuse.

### Problem Statement

"To assess the knowledge regarding legal impact on child abuse among the caretakers of children with a view to develop an information pamphlet on child abuse in a selected hospital, Bangalore."

### Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge of caretakers regarding legal impact on child abuse.
2. To determine the association between knowledge regarding legal impact on child abuse and selected demographic variables of caretakers.

**Inclusion Criteria:** Care takers of children below 15 years

of age.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Care takers with physical and mental illness.

### Hypothesis

**H1:** There will be a significant association between knowledge regarding legal aspects on child abuse and selected demographic variables of caretakers with 0.05 level of significance.

### SECTION 2: Review of Literature Related to Knowledge

A non-experimental descriptive study was conducted on 2020 to assess the level of knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers in selected rural areas, Vadodara, Gujarat. Data was collected from 100 mothers with purposive sampling technique. The tools used for data collection was structured knowledge questionnaire to assess knowledge regarding child abuse. The analysis of study revealed that most mothers about (49%) had average knowledge and only (51%) of mothers had poor level of knowledge [11].

A cross sectional study was conducted in a tertiary hospital in central India to assess the knowledge and attitude about child abuse among parents visiting Paediatric department (OPD and ward) which was based on inclusion criteria. The sample sizes taken were about 200 families. A questionnaire in English language which included various parameters to collect data i.e., age limit of 15 years. The result showed that majority of parents lack knowledge regarding children's education and protection [12].

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers having children under 12 years of age residing at Karattupalayam, Tiruchengode (April 1 2012). A sample comprised of 80 mothers having children less than 12 years of age residing at Karattupalayam, Thrichengode. The tool used is semi structured questionnaire of knowledge regarding child abuse and socio demographic data. The result was, among 80 samples only 1.24% respondent had adequate knowledge, 3.75% respondent had moderate knowledge, 96% respondent had inadequate knowledge [13].

A non-experimental descriptive study was conducted on 2019 to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse among mothers of pre-schoolers in India. A sample of 30 mothers of pre-schoolers were selected for the study by convenience sampling method. The study was based on health belief model. The data collection instruments used was structured questionnaires and the data collected were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics for

the study. The research revealed that 53.3% of mothers are having good knowledge, 36.7% of mothers are having excellent knowledge and 10 % mothers are having average knowledge regarding child abuse [14].

A descriptive study was conducted on 2020 to assess the knowledge and attitude of mothers towards prevention of child sexual abuse at Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Sample consists of 100 mothers of school going children which was selected by purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-structured demographic Performa and knowledge and attitude assessment questionnaires. As per statistical analysis 54%, 34%, 12% of mothers are having average, good, and poor level of knowledge in prevention of child sexual abuse respectively where as 52%, 27%, 19%, 2% of mothers were having negative, positive, strongly positive, and stringy negative attitude towards prevention of child sexual abuse respectively [15].

A cross sectional study was conducted in Riyadh city from 1-05-2018 to 30-04-2019 to assess the awareness and knowledge of parents about child abuse among the general population in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed among the general public in Riyadh city. Study subjects included study subjects from Riyadh city with age above 18 years from both sexes, who approve to participate in the study, were included of which 4117 participants were recruited. The result suggests that majority of respondents, 82% reported that they had prior knowledge about child abuse. The types of child abuse that the respondent showed the best knowledge were physical neglect 47.8%, educational neglect 41.8% and physical abuse 40.3%. The least percentage of completed answers were in emotional abuse 28.5% and neglect of medical care 28.7% [16].

A cross sectional study was conducted in Swedish country to find the association between self-reported exposure and self-reported health problems. The subjects included all pupils in grade 7 and nine in compulsory school and grade 2 in upper secondary school (13,15,17 years old) in Sodermanland country, Sweden. The final sample consisted of 8024 respondents. The result suggests that 962 out of 8024 children reported that they have been exposed to child physical abuse committed by parent or another caregiver. 30 % of these reported that they have been abused last year [17].

A descriptive study was conducted on child abuse in India 2007, by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. In this study the country was divided into 6 zones (North, South, East, West, Central and North

East) The total sample size from 6 zones were 1000 in which equal number of girls and boys were included. A multistage purposive sampling design as adopted for the study. The tools and technique used for data collection was focused group discussion and one to one interaction with children. The result suggests that 2 out of every 3 children were subjected to physical abuse 53.22% children reported having faced one or more times of sexual abuse. Every second child reported facing emotional abuse [18].

## Methodology

The methodology undertook is the framework for conducting the study.

## Research Approach

This research follows a quantitative approach.

## Research Design

The research design used in this study is descriptive study design.

## Description of Tool

SECTION 1: Proforma to elicit baseline variables.

SECTION 2: Five-point Likert scale to assess the perception of child abuse among caretakers.

### SECTION 1: Proforma to Elicit Baseline Variables

A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of baseline variables of the subject. In this study baseline variables are related to caregivers who include Age, Marital status, Relationship with child, Type of family, educational status, Monthly family income and Occupational status (Table 1).

### SECTION 2: Structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge of care takers regarding legal aspects

Scoring Total questions- 10

Correct answer-1

Incorrect answer-0

## Interpretation of knowledge scores

Good knowledge above 75 %

Moderate knowledge 50-75%

Poor knowledge < 50%

## Results

### Section 1: Findings related to baseline variables of caretakers

AGE CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
21-29	45	27.3
30-39	98	59.4
40-49	20	12.1
>50	2	1.2
<b>RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD</b>		
Grandparent	2	1.2
Father	57	34.5
Mothers	97	58.5
Guardian	9	5.5
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>		
Single	5	3
Married	155	93.9
Separated/Divorced	1	0.6
Widow	4	2.4
<b>TYPE OF FAMILY</b>		
Nuclear	84	50.9
Joint	73	44.2
Extended	1	0.6
Single parent	7	4.2
<b>EDUCATIONAL STATUS</b>		
Professional	50	30.3
Graduate	69	38.8
Diploma	18	10.9
High School	18	10.9
Middle School	12	7.3
Primary School	2	1.2
Illiterate	1	0.6
<b>MONTHLY INCOME</b>		
>19500	87	52.7
9500-19499	35	21.2
7500-9499	16	9.7
2500-7499	13	7.9
950	10	6.1
<950	4	2.4
<b>OCCUPATIONAL STATUS</b>		
Professional	70	42.4
Semi-professional	19	11.5
Clerical	27	16.4
Skilled worker	14	8.5
Semi-Skilled worker	35	21.2

n=165

**Table 1:** Frequency and percentage distribution of perception with baseline variables.

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are between the age group of 30-39 (59.4%), 93.9% of the respondents were married, 58.8 % of the respondents were mothers, 50.9% belongs to nuclear family, (38.8%) were graduates, 52.7% has a monthly income of  $\geq 19500$ , 42.4% were professionals.

### Section 2: Findings Related To Knowledge of Caretakers Regarding Legal Aspects of Child Abuse

(Table 2) Range, Mean, and Standard deviation of knowledge of care takers.

KNOWLEDGE	MAXIMUM SCORE	RANGE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	10	0 - 9	4.61	1.786

**Table 2:** Shows that mean of knowledge is 4.61 and standard deviation is 1.786.

## Discussion

### Section-1 Findings related to baseline variables of caretakers

A total of 165 samples were studied. In the present study, 59.4% of caregivers belong to the age group of 30-39 years of which 58.8% are mothers and out of which 93.9% are married. In the present study 50.9% of caregivers belong to a nuclear family and 38.8% of caregivers were graduates among which 42.4% of them were notified as professionals, 52.7% has monthly income of greater than or equal to Rupees 19500 [19].

In a related descriptive study conducted in Delhi to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among parents, a sample size of 100 parents were selected, out of which 45% belonged to the age group of 31-40 among which 42.5% were mothers and 57.5% were fathers. 37.5% belonged to nuclear family and 27.5% of caregivers were graduates among which 72.5% belonged to the category of service, 40% has monthly income of more than 8000 [20].

### Section- 2 Findings related to knowledge of caretakers regarding legal aspects of child abuse

The purpose of the study was to assess the knowledge of caretakers regarding the legal impacts on child abuse. 4.2% had good knowledge, 50.9% had moderate knowledge and 44.8% had poor knowledge among caregivers. The results indicate that very few parents have good knowledge regarding legal aspects of child abuse so there is a need for health professionals to educate the parents regarding the legal aspects of child abuse in all settings.

In a related descriptive study conducted in Delhi to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among parents,

45% of parents had knowledge score below mean where as 55% parents had above mean knowledge. This shows that a fairly large proportion of parents had inadequate knowledge about child abuse.

## Conclusion

The study findings helped to spread awareness to the public. It will help staff nurses to conduct regular health education programs in the clinical setting, distribute pamphlets to visitors in the OPD as well as display the pamphlet information on screens in the OPD foyer to educate the general public about the different types of child abuse and the current laws regarding child abuse in India

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