



Cover Page



A COMPARATIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE AWARENESS OF MOTHERS REGARDING CHILD ABUSE IN SELECTED RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF BARDOLI, GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the awareness of mothers regarding child abuse in selected rural and urban areas of Bardoli, Gujarat. A quantitative descriptive survey approach was used for 100 mothers who were having children below the age group of 18 years. The sample where drawn through purposive sampling. The sample includes 100 mothers (50 Urban) and (50 Rural) from selected areas of Bardoli, Taluka. The purpose of study was to assess the awareness of mothers regarding child abuse and to compare the awareness between urban and rural mothers and to find out the association between awareness of mothers regarding child abuse with their selected socio demographic variables. A knowledge questionnaire was administered to the mothers to assess the level of awareness regarding child abuse. The collected data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results depict that there was a significant association between the awareness of rural mothers with age, education, occupation, type of family and history of substance abuse in family. Significant association was found between awareness of urban mothers with age, education, and history of substance abuse in family. The mean awareness score among mothers in urban areas was higher than that of mothers in rural areas. There was a significant difference between mean score of awareness among urban and rural mothers ($P < 0.05$) in three aspects of child abuse of abuse i.e. General aspects of abuse, Physical abuse and sexual abuse. It is required to take measures to improve awareness of rural mothers.

Keywords: Awareness; Child Abuse; Mothers, Rural Area, Urban Area.

Introduction

Child abuse has been identified as a serious public health concern. This issue has been a global challenge. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse as a coercive act with a child who is unable to comprehend or provide consent, leading to serious physical or psychological damage.¹ Child abuse brings about circumstances causing harm to a child's health, welfare, and safety. Child abuse, in its various forms can be found everywhere in India – in cities and rural homes, in the homes of the rich and the poor, and in the streets and schools.² India is a country of strong cultural beliefs where care of children is considered the purview of the family predominantly and child abuse, especially sexual abuse, is an issue surrounded by a conspiracy of muteness. It is not until recently that the government has intervened and child's rights and protection are being given importance. However, lack of substantial information and evidence on child abuse makes it difficult to approach this issue in a comprehensive manner. The present study underlined the fact that emotional, physical and sexual abuse is common in childhood and it continues to extend in young adults too. The gravity of the situation demands that the issue of addressing child abuse be given due importance to build up a healthier citizen.³

The objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge of urban and rural the mothers regarding child abuse and to compare the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and to find the association between knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse with their selected demographic variables. The study was based on the assumption that mothers residing urban and rural areas may have good knowledge regarding child abuse and. It was hypothesized that awareness of mothers regarding child abuse in urban area will be higher than that of rural mother along with a significant association with their selected demographic variables.

Materials and methods were used in this study were quantitative research approach and descriptive survey research design was used, research setting was Bardoli town under urban population and Nizar village under rural population. The total sample size of the study was 100 (50 Mothers from Urban area and 50 Mothers from Rural area) mothers. Target Population of the study were mothers residing at selected urban and rural population between the age group of 18-45 years and purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. Permission and ethical consideration were obtained from the competent authorities and consent was obtained from participants before data collection. Mothers were explained about the purpose of study. Mothers between the age group 18-45 years and who can follow Gujarati language was included in the study. Mothers who were sick during the time of data collection were excluded from the study.



Cover Page



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Development and description of the tool: The tool consisted of socio-demographic data of mothers which include age, education, and occupation, type of family, history of substance abuse, gender of child and age of children. Awareness level of mother was assessed using structured knowledge questionnaire regarding child abuse. The total number of questions are 30 items which are plotted into three domains of child abuse they were General concepts on child abuse (10 items), Physical abuse (10 items) and Sexual abuse (10 items). A scoring key was prepared '2'score was awarded for the correct response and '1' for the wrong response. Total attainable score was 60. To interpret the level of awareness the score was distributed arbitrarily graded as 1-20 Poor, 21-40 Moderate and 41-60 Good awareness regarding child abuse.

Results

Socio demographic variables of Urban Mothers

Majority 16 (32%) of the mothers belonged to the age group between 18-25 years and 13(26%) of them belonged to the age group between 26-30 years and 11(22%) of mothers were between the age group of 31-35 years and 5 (10 %) of them were in the age group 36 -40 years and 41-45 years respectively. Majority16 (32 %) of subjects were having primary education 15 (30%) having secondary education and 8(16%) were graduate or above and 11(22%) having no formal education. Most 31(62%) of the mothers were homemakers 14(28%) were laborers and 5(10%) of them were private employees. Majority 42(84%) them were belongs to nuclear family and 8(16%) belongs to joint family. 24(48%) of the urban mothers reported that spouse having history of substance abuse and 2(4%) of mothers have the habit of substance abuse and 18(36%) subjects reported the issue in other family members. Most 29(58%) of the mothers having male children and 21(42%) were having female children. Majority of the mothers having children between the age group of 9-13 years 23(46%) and 17 (34%) having children between the age group of 3-8 years and 10(20%) having 14-18 years.

Socio demographic variables of Rural Mothers

Majority 20 (40%) of the mothers belonged to the age group between 26-30 years and 18(36%) of them belonged to the age group between 18-25 years and 7(14%) of mothers were between the age group of 31-35 years and 4 (8 %) of them were in the age group 36-40 and 1(2%) were in the age group of 41 to 45 years. Majority 24(48 %) of subjects were having no formal education 22(44%) having primary education and 4(8%) were have secondary education and none of the subjects have educational qualification of graduation or above. Most 25(50%) of the mothers are homemakers 15(30%) were laborers and 10(20%) are private employees.41 (82%) were in to nuclear family and 9(18%) belongs to joint family. Most 21(42%) of the urban mothers reported that other family members having history of substance abuse and 20(40%) reported about substance abuse in spouse have the habit of substance abuse and 7(14%) subjects reported the issues among siblings and 2 (4) reported self-habit of substance abuse. Majority 33(66%) of the mothers having male children and 17(34%) having female children. Majority of the mothers having children between the age group of 9-13 years 22(44%) and 16 (32%) having children between the age group of 3-8 years and 12(24%) having 14-18 years.

Level of awareness of mothers regarding child abuse

N1=50, N2=50

Level of awareness	Scoring	Rural mothers		Urban mothers	
		f	%	f	%
Poor	0-20	11	22.0	2	4.0
Moderate	21-40	34	68.0	22	44.0
Good	41-60	5	10.0	26	52.0

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to level of awareness

It is evident from Table: 1 that 22 % of the mothers residing in rural areas had poor level of awareness whereas it is 4 % only among mothers residing in urban area. There was a moderate level of knowledge 68% in rural mothers where as it is only 44% in urban mothers. However, 52% of mothers residing in urban areas have good awareness regarding child abuse and it was only 10% of rural mothers had good awareness.

Comparison of awareness of mothers regarding child abuse in rural and urban areas

N1=50, N2=50

Areas	Mothers	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t test	p value
General abuse	Rural	11.62	4.49	3.86	4.179	<0.001**
	Urban	15.48	4.74			
Physical abuse	Rural	5.68	1.93	1.64	4.122	<0.001**



Cover Page



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	Urban	7.32	2.04			
Sexual abuse	Rural	11.00	4.16	4.38	5.370	<0.001**
	Urban	15.38	3.99			
Total	Rural	28.30	9.90	9.88	5.031	<0.001**
	Urban	38.18	9.73			

t=1.984 when df= 98 at 0.05 level of significance

NS= Not significant

Table 2: Comparison of awareness of mothers regarding child abuse in rural and urban areas

Data presented in table 2 revealed that the mean awareness score among mothers in urban areas (38.18 ± 9.73) was higher than that of mothers in rural areas (28.30 ± 9.90). The mean awareness score in the area of ‘general abuse’ among mothers in urban areas (15.48 ± 4.74) was higher than that of mothers in rural areas (11.62 ± 4.49). The mean awareness score in the area of ‘physical abuse’ among mothers in urban areas (7.32 ± 2.04) was higher than that of mothers in rural areas (5.68 ± 1.93). The mean awareness score in the area of ‘sexual abuse’ among mothers in urban areas (15.38 ± 3.99) was higher than that of mothers in rural areas (11.00 ± 4.16).

The ‘t’ value obtained by comparing the mean awareness score of mothers in rural and urban areas was 5.031 and ‘t’ value obtained by comparing the area wise mean awareness score of mothers in rural and urban areas were 4.179 for ‘general abuse’, 4.122 for ‘physical abuse’ and 5.370 for ‘sexual abuse’. The ‘t’ values obtained were higher than table value indicating that there was a significant difference in the mean awareness score at 0.05 level of significance.

Association between awareness on child abuse their selected socio demographic variables among mothers residing at rural area.

Significant association was found between awareness of mothers regarding child abuse among mothers in rural areas with age (χ²= 9.554, p<0.05), education (χ²= 7.440, p<0.05), occupation (χ²= 11.347, p<0.05), type of family (χ²= 6.603, p<0.05) and history of substance abuse (χ²= 8.200, p<0.05) However no significant association was found between awareness on child abuse with gender of child and age of child.

Association between awareness on child abuse their selected socio demographic variables among mothers residing at urban area.

Significant association was found between awareness on child abuse among mothers in urban areas with age (χ²= 11.640, p<0.05), education (χ²= 9.851, p<0.05) and history of substance abuse (χ²= 8.865, p<0.05) However no significant association was found between awareness on child abuse with occupation, type of family, gender of child and age of child.

Discussion

The present study was under taken to assess the awareness of mothers regarding child abuse residing at selected urban and rural areas of Bardoli Gujarat. The objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge of urban and rural the mothers regarding child abuse and to compare the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and to find the association between knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse with their selected demographic variables. The descriptive survey has conducted using structure knowledge questionnaire which is divided into three domains i.e., General concepts on child abuse Physical abuse and Sexual abuse.

The present study results showed that, there was a significant association found between awareness of mothers in their age, education and history of substance abuse irrespective of their area of residence.

Similar findings were observed in a study Assess the level of knowledge regarding child abuse among mother in selected rural areas, Vadodara in a view to develop information Booklet by Mr. Suresh V. Where in there was association between knowledge score and the demographic variables like age education level and history of substance abuse among family members. From the above findings, it is evident that awareness of mother regarding child abuse has a strong association between their age, education and history of substance in family in different setting and population. The study results showed that, there was no significant association found between awareness of mothers regarding child abuse with the age and gender of child⁴.

In the present study there was a low positive but significant co-relation between awareness level of urban mothers regarding child abuse is higher than rural mothers’ similar findings were observed in a study on the effectiveness of planned teaching program on knowledge and attitude regarding child sex abuse among urban and rural mothers by Priscilla.PA reported moderately positive correlation knowledge and attitude (r = 0.471) at 0.00 level of significance⁵.



Cover Page



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Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that there is a need for sensitization and improved awareness will empower the mothers to identify child abuse. Adopt preventive measures and take appropriate alertness against child abuse in rural community is the need of the hour. The incidence rate of child abuse is increasing year by year. Where as only a few incidents were reported to the authorities. The awareness level of mothers are not adequate to prevent or identify child abuse.

Recommendations

- A similar study on a large sample using an interview schedule may help to draw more definite conclusions and make generalizations.
- A study can be conducted to find out awareness of child abuse among larger number of samples.
- Knowledge and attitude regarding the child abuse among father and mother can be compared.

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