



Research Paper

A Study to Assess the Prevalence Rate towards Child Abuse among Parents of School Age Child at Sanniyasikuppam, Puducherry

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ABSTRACT:

Child abuse or child maltreatment is physical, sexual, or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or other caregiver. The main objective of the study to assess the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child. The research approach used for this study was quantitative research approach. A descriptive design was adopted for this present study. By using convenient sampling technique, 60 parents of school age child were selected for the present study. The present study reveals that majority 39 (65%) of them had moderate prevalence, 19 (31.7%) of them had mild prevalence and 2 (3.3%) of them had high prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child. The study findings concluded that there is a moderate prevalence rate toward child abuse among parents of school age child. There is significance association between age and education with prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child where $p < 0.05$.

Keywords: Prevalence, School age child, child abuse

I. INTRODUCTION:

Childhood and adolescence are critical phases of human life, during which personality features are developed. Health status including mental and physical health largely depends on the quality of education and life in this period. Therefore, a silent and safe transition requires the support of family and community.

Child abuse or child maltreatment is physical, sexual, or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or other caregiver. Child abuse may include any act or failure to act by a parent or other caregiver that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and can occur in a child's home or in the organizations, schools, or communities the child interacts with.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse and child maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power." Child abuse includes many harmful activities and procrastination in performing parental tasks and responsibilities, leading to physical or mental harm, physical abuse, sexual abuse, misbehaving or neglecting the child, and death of the child.

The etiological factors of child abuse are complex. For physical abuse there are child factors, maternal factors and social factors. Child factors like male child, unwanted child and parental factors like young maternal age, single parent status, history of substance abuse and social factors such as lack of social support, low socioeconomic status, unemployment, loss of job, and large family size.

The long-term impact child abuse and neglect are physical disability, psychological disturbances, behavioural and social consequences. Physical consequences such as shaken baby syndrome, impaired brain development, poor physical health. Psychological consequences are poor mental and emotional health, difficulties during infancy, cognitive difficulties during adolescents, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminality, alcohol and drug abuse, abusive behaviour. Social consequence is direct costs and indirect costs.

Different countries have different norms regarding what is considered acceptable child parenting practice. The National Health Committee for Prevention of Violence and Maltreatment defined physical

maltreatment as “Infliction of an injury on a child (by beating, shaking, kicking, burning, biting, suffocating, or poisoning) regardless of the perpetrator's intention.” Another definition provided for neglect is “failure to provide the child's affordable basic needs (including food, clothes, vaccination, healthcare, education, and safety) by his/her parents or any other caregiver.”

Evidence suggests that severity of child abuse tends to propagate, so early detection and intervention is now crucial in preventing victims from suffering severe abuses. Child abuse may cause stress, leading to changes in the nervous, cardiovascular, and immune systems, and metabolism. Child abuse would form inappropriate personality features and increase risk behaviours among children. Doctors have moral and legal responsibilities to report these cases to relevant governmental authorities or social welfare organizations to provide early interventions for victims and perpetrators and prevent further abuse.

Lack of diagnosis and reporting of child maltreatment were considered the main problems in stopping the maltreatment in up to 75% of cases. Reporting all cases of child maltreatment is vital in order to prevent further exposure, protect children and enhance coordination between legal, medical and social services. However, physicians need preparation for the ethical and legal challenges in cases of child maltreatment. This is considered necessary because evidence suggests that, on their own, physicians are not able to deal with these challenges when confronted with them.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Approximately 50,500 children in the UK are known to be at risk of abuse right now. One in four young adults (25.3%) were severely maltreated during childhood. Between 1 to 4 children die every 10 days in the UK due to child abuse. Latest available figures show that there were 50,552 children on child protection registers or the subject of child protection plans in the UK.

Corry Azzopardi et al. (2019) made a study on prevalence of child abuse. 16 full-text articles were reviewed, and 45 samples (with 31,225 participants) provided estimates of effect sizes. The mean prevalence of child abuse was 64.1% (95% CI: 60.0–68.1). Between-study variability was explained by child age and gender, with higher prevalence in older children and females; prior disclosure, with higher prevalence when present; and study year, with higher prevalence in more recent studies.

India accommodates 19% of the world's child population and 42% of the Indian population is below the age of 18 years. A national study from India in 2007 found that more than half (53%) of children were physically and/or sexually abused. Although India is a signatory to various international instruments and declarations concerning with the rights of children to protection, security, and dignity, the prevalence of all manifestations of child abuse is extremely high (physical abuse (66%), sexual abuse (50%), and emotional abuse (50%).

A total of 1,28,531 cases of crime against children were registered during 2020, showing a decrease of 13.2% over 2019 (1,48,090 cases). In percentage terms, major crime heads under ‘Crime Against Children’ during 2020 were Kidnapping & Abduction (42.6%) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (38.8%) including child rape. The crime rate registered per lakh children population is 28.9 in 2020 in comparison with 33.2 in 2019. India is said to have reported over 24 lakh instances of online child sexual abuse during three year period between 2017-20 with 80 per cent of the victims being girls below the age of 14 years.

A study on Child Abuse: India 2007, conducted by Ministry of Women and Child development revealed that across different kinds of abuse, it is young children in the 5-12 year group are most at risk of abuse and exploitation. This involves physical, sexual as well as emotional abuse.

Neethu Ann Preethy et al. (2020) conducted a study on Awareness of child abuse and neglect among working parents in Chennai. Questionnaire consisting of 14 questions was distributed to 212 randomly selected working parents in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Completed questionnaires were collected and subjected to data analysis. Majority of the working parents were aware of the various parental and environmental factors that could result in child maltreatment and just nearly half of them had taken proper steps to prevent such untoward occurrence in their families. Proper steps have to be taken by the parents and each member of the society as a whole to prevent and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Today, preventing child abuse is proposed as a health priority in different countries owing to its widespread risk factors and profound effects it exerts on the growth and development of children, families and society. Different factors are associated with this phenomenon, including drug use, the psychological status and the education level of parents, family conflicts, residential area (rural and suburban versus urban settlement), knowledge deficits associated with child growth and development, as well as attitudes towards education.

Parents normally tend to be perfect and are concerned about their child development; however, they sometimes give themselves the right to punish their children in whatever manner they prefer and cause the most common type of domestic violence like child abuse. Hence researcher planned to assess the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child at selected community area, Puducherry

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child at Sanniyasikuppam, Puducherry

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child.
- To associate the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child with their demographic variables.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A quantitative research approach and descriptive design was selected for the present study. The present study was on 60 parents of school age child at Sanniyasikuppam, Puducherry who meet the inclusion criteria. Using a convenient sampling technique the samples were selected for the present study. The tool consists of demographic variables and structured questionnaires. The data of the study was evaluated by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

MAJOR FINDING

Regarding the age in years, the majority 19 (31.7%) were in the age group of 30-35 years, 17(28.3%) were in the age group of 26-30 years. In the aspect of religion majority, 54 (90%) were Hindu, 2 (3.3%) were Muslim and 4 (6.7%) were Christian. In the aspect of education status, the data shows majority 25 (41.7%) were graduate and 16 (26.7%) were completed Primary school. Regarding the type of family majority 32 (53.3%) in joint family and 28 (46.7%) were om nuclear family. In the aspect of occupation status majority, 30 (50%) were housewife, 16 (26.7%) were private-employed and 11 (18.3%) were daily wages. Regarding family income, the data shows that the majority 30 (50%) had income above Rs.4000 and 14(23.3%) had income between Rs. 2001/- to Rs.3000/-. With regards to number of children majority, 25 (41.7%) had one child and 23 (38.3%) had two children. With regards to witnessed a child with abuse majority 44 (73.3%) witnessed emotional abuse and 15 (25%) witnessed physical abuse.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of demographic variables of parents of school age N = 60

S.No	Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age in years		
	a) Below 25 years	15	25%
	b) 26-30 years	17	28.3%
	c) 30-35 year	19	31.7%
	d) Above 35 years	9	15%
2.	Religion		
	a) Hindu	54	90%
	b) Muslim	2	3.3%
	c) Christian	4	6.7%
3.	Education		
	a) Illiterate	5	8.3%
	b) Primary school	16	26.7%
	c) High school	14	23.3%
	d) Graduate	25	41.7%
4.	Type of family		
	a) Nuclear family	28	46.7%
	b) Joint family	32	53.3%

Table 1: The above table shows frequency and percentage-wise distribution of demographic variable of parents of school age. Regarding the age in years, the majority 19 (31.7%) were in the age group of 30-35 years, 17(28.3%) were in the age group of 26-30 years. In the aspect of religion majority, 54 (90%) were Hindu, 2 (3.3%) were Muslim and 4 (6.7%) were Christian. In the aspect of education status, the data shows majority 25 (41.7%) were graduate and 16 (26.7%) were completed Primary school.

**Table 1.1: Distribution of demographic variables of parents of school age
N = 60**

S.No	Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
5.	Occupation		
	a) Housewife	30	50%
	b) Daily wages	11	18.3%
	c) Private employee	16	26.7%
	d) Government employee	3	5%
6.	Family income		
	a) Below Rs. 2000	8	13.3%
	b) Between Rs. 2001-3000	14	23.3%
	c) Between Rs. 3001-40000	8	13.3%
	d) Above Rs. 4000	30	50%
7.	Number of children in the family		
	a) one	25	41.7%
	b) two	23	38.3%
	c) three	9	15%
	d) above three	3	5%

Table 1.2: The above table shows frequency and percentage-wise distribution of demographic variable of parents of school age. In the aspect of occupation status majority, 30 (50%) were housewife, 16 (26.7%) were private-employed and 11 (18.3%) were daily wages. Regarding family income, the data shows that the majority 30 (50%) had income above Rs.4000 and 14(23.3%) had income between Rs. 2001/- to Rs.3000/-. With regards to number of children majority, 25 (41.7%) had one child and 23 (38.3%) had two children.

Table 1.2: Distribution of demographic variables of parents of school age

N = 60

S.No	Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
8.	Have you heard about child abuse		
	a) yes	51	85%
	b) No	9	15%
9.	Have you ever witnessed a child with abuse		
	a) Physical abuse	15	25%
	b) Emotional abuse	44	73.3%
	c) Sexual abuse	1	1.7%
	d) Neglect	0	0
10.	Have you ever caused physical abuse to your child?		
	a) yes	31	51.7%
	b) No	29	48.3%

Table 1.3: The above table shows frequency and percentage-wise distribution of demographic variable of parents of school age. With regards to witnessed a child with abuse majority 44 (73.3%) witnessed emotional abuse and 15 (25%) witnessed physical abuse. In the aspect of have you heard about child abuse majority 51 (85%) were said yes and remaining 9 (15%) not heard about child abuse.

Table 2: Distribution of the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child N=60

S.NO	PREVALENCE RATE	FREQUENCY (n)	PERCENTAGE %
1.	High prevalence	2	3.3%
2.	Moderate prevalence	39	65%
3.	Mild prevalence	19	31.7%

The table 2 reveals the frequency and percentage-wise distribution of the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child. The finding shows that, majority 39 (65%) of them had moderate prevalence, 19 (31.7%) of them had mild prevalence and 2 (3.3%) of them had high prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child.

Figure 1: Percentage wise distribution of level of knowledge on prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child.

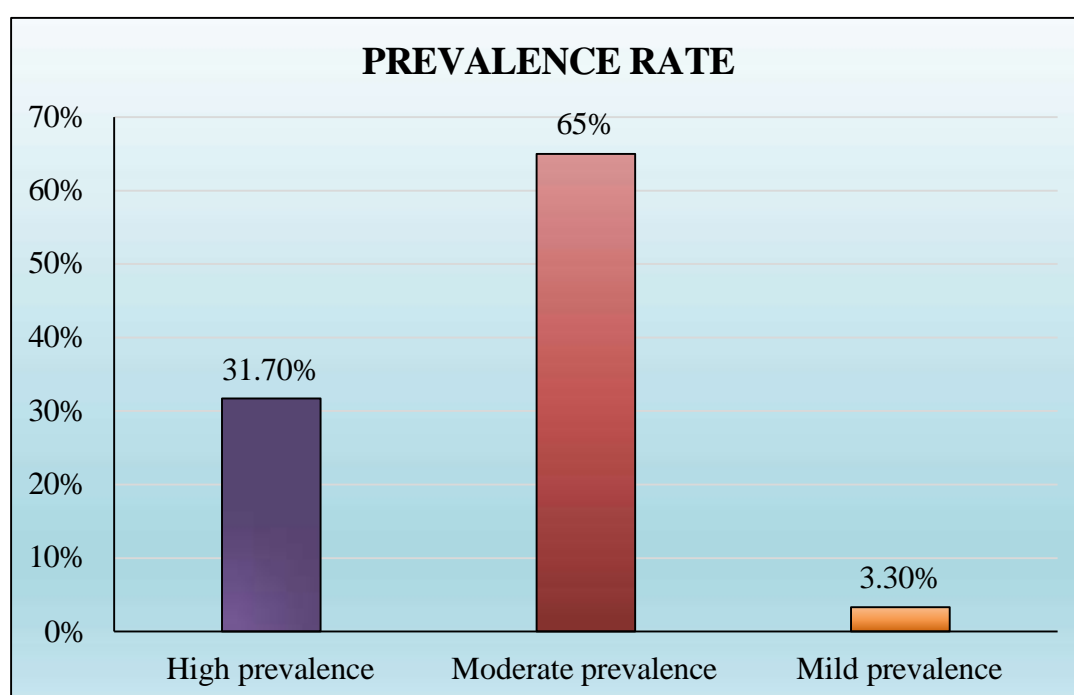


Table 3: Association of the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child with their selected demographic variables

N = 50

S.No	Demographic variables	LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE						X ² value
		Adequate		Inadequate		Moderate		
1	Age in years	N	%	N	%	N	%	X ² = 7.954 P= 0.041 (S)*
	a) Below 25 years	5	10%	0	0%	10	20%	
	b) 26-30 years	8	16%	1	2%	8	16%	
	c) 30-35 year	3	6%	0	0%	16	32%	
	d) Above 35 years	3	6%	1	2%	5	10%	
2.	Religion							X = 2.606 P= 0.626
	a) Hindu	18	36%	2	4%	34	68%	
	b) Muslim	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%	

	c) Christian	0	0%	0	0%	4	8%	$X^2 = 10.011$ $p = 0.031$ (S)*
3.	Education							
	a) Illiterate	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	
	b) Primary school	2	4%	1	2%	13	26%	
	c) High school	5	10%	1	2%	8	16%	
	d) Graduate	12	24%	0	0%	13	26%	

***p<0.05 - Significant; p<0.01 - Highly Significant**

Table 3: The above table shows that there is significance association between age and education with prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child where p<0.05.

Table 3.1: Association of the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child with their selected demographic variables

N = 50

S.No	Demographic variables	LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE						X ² value
		Adequate		Inadequate		Moderate		
4.	Type of family							$X^2 = 1.820$ $p = 0.403$ (NS)
	a) Nuclear family	9	18%	0	0%	19	38%	
	b) Joint family	10	20%	2	4%	20	40%	
5.	Occupation							$X^2 = 12.509$ $p = 0.52$ (NS)
	a) Housewife	8	16%	1	2%	21	42%	
	b) Daily wages	1	2%	1	2%	9	18%	
	c) Private employee	10	20%	0	0%	6	12%	
	d) Government employee	0	0%	0	0%	3	6%	
6.	Family income							$X^2 = 3.746$ $p = 0.711$ (NS)
	a) Below Rs. 2000	2	4%	0	0%	6	12%	
	b) Between Rs. 2001-3000	3	6%	0	0%	11	22%	
	c) Between Rs. 3001-40000	3	6%	0	0%	5	10%	
	d) Above Rs. 4000	11	22%	2	4%	17	34%	

***p<0.05 - Significant; p<0.01 - Highly Significant**

Table 3.1: The above table shows that there is no significance association between type of family, occupation, family income with prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child.

Table 3.2: Association of the prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child with their selected demographic variables

N = 50

S.No	Demographic variables	LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE						X ² value
		Adequate		Inadequate		Moderate		
7.	Number of children in the family							$X^2 = 11.430$ $p = 0.76$ (NS)
	a) one	8	16%	0	0.0	17	34.0	
	b) two	9	18%	1	2%	13	26.0	
	c) three	2	4%	0	0.0	7	14.0	
	d) above three	0	0%	1	2%	2	4.0	
8.	Have you heard about child abuse							$X^2 = 5.701$ $p = 0.072$ (NS)
	a) yes	19	38%	2	4%	30	60%	
	b) No	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	18%	
9.	Have you ever witnessed a child with abuse?							$X^2 = 1.682$ $p = 0.794$ (NS)

	a) Physical abuse	4	8%	0	0	11	22%	
	b) Emotional abuse	15	30%	2	4%	27	54%	
	c) Sexual abuse	0	0.0	0	0	1	2%	
	d) Neglect	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	
10.	Have you ever caused physical abuse to your child?							$\chi^2 = 0.012$ $p = 0.994$ (NS)
	a) yes	10	20%	1	2%	20	40%	
	b) No	9	18%	1	2%	19	38%	

***p<0.05 - Significant; p<0.01 - Highly Significant**

Table 3.2: The above table shows that there is no significance association between number of children in the family, have you heard about child abuse, witnessed a child with abuse, have you ever caused physical abuse to your child with prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child.

IV. CONCLUSION:

The study findings concluded that there is a moderate prevalence rate toward child abuse among parents of school age child. There is significance association between age and education with prevalence rate towards child abuse among parents of school age child where $p < 0.05$.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Similar study can be conducted among school teachers.
- Same study can be conducted with large samples to generalize the results of the study.

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