A Comparative Study to Assess the Level of Knowledge Regarding Child Abuse among Working and Non - Working Parents in Selected Geographical Areas of Bangalore with a View to Develop an Information Booklet

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Abstract: *Children are physically small, vulnerable and dependent on parents. There has been a substantial increase in the incidence of child abuse. India is home to almost 19 percent of the world's children. Over one - third of the country's population, around 440 million, is below 18 years old. According to the national statistics, 40 percent of these children require care and protection, which indicates the extent of the abuse. The study aimed to compare the knowledge regarding child abuse among working and non - working parents. A descriptive research approach with comparative design was used in this study. The Stratified random sampling technique selected 60 working and 60 non - working parents who met the inclusion criteria. The findings revealed that among the working parents, 50% of them had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 28.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 21.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse; among the non - working parents, 68.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 30% of them had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 1.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse. The result of this study showed that the mean percentage knowledge score of working parents (49.8%) was higher than the mean percentage knowledge score of non - working parents (36.33%) regarding child abuse.*

Keywords: Child abuse, working parents, non - working parents, knowledge

1. Introduction

Children are the inheritance from God. Healthy children are the greatest resource and pride of a nation. Child abuse is a common problem disturbing our society today. Child abuse is harm to, or neglect of a child by another person, whether an adult or child. Child abuse occurs in all cultural, ethnic and income groups. Abuse may cause serious injury to the child and may even cause death. Child abuse or maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, child neglect and psychological maltreatment. The term ''battered child syndrome'' was coined to characterize the clinical manifestations of serious physical abuse in young children. Shaking is a prevalent form of abuse seen in very young children. The majority of shaken infants are less than 9 months old. Corporal punishment of children in the form of hitting, punching, kicking or beating is also considered dangerous for children. In the short term, it kills thousands of children each year and injures and handicaps many more.

Children are suffering from a hidden epidemic of child abuse and neglect. According to Gilbert, most experts agree that most cases go unreported. As suggested by Janssen, "only the tip of the iceberg has been touched concerning the incidence of child sexual abuse".

According to the National Children's Alliance, in 2021, an estimated 1, 820 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States. Boys have a higher child fatality rate at 3.01 per 100, 000 compared to girls at 2.15.

In 2022, India witnessed a staggering 8.7% increase in child abuse cases, reaching a total of 162, 000 incidents, as reported by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Child maltreatment in families can be determined by the educational status, working status and parenting styles of the parents. The involvement of both parents is essential for successful child - rearing. Education for parenthood begins with the general education of the child for responsibilities in family living. Effective parenting fosters the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development.

Objectives
1) To assess the knowledge of working parents regarding child abuse.
2) To assess the knowledge of non - working parents regarding child abuse.
3) To compare the knowledge regarding child abuse among working and non - working parents.
4) To find out the association between knowledge of working and non - working parents regarding child abuse and selected socio - demographic variables.

Hypothesis
H1: There will be significantly less knowledge regarding child abuse in non - working parents than the working parents.
H2: There will be a significant association between the knowledge of working and non - working parents regarding child abuse and the socio - demographic variables.

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2. Methodology

A descriptive research approach with comparative design was used in this study. The samples are 60 working and 60 non - working parents selected by stratified random sampling method. The setting of this study will be the chosen work environment and the residing areas of Bangalore. The tool developed for this study consists of demographic characteristics and a structured interview schedule regarding child abuse.

Part 1: Demographic characteristics
The first part of the tool consists of 9 items for obtaining information about the selection background factors such as age, sex, educational status, working status, type of family, family income, number of children, place of residence and previous experience.

Part 2: Structured Interview Schedule
The blueprint of items in the structured interview questionnaire regarding child abuse consists of 30 items which were divided into four areas.
Area 1: Child abuse in general
Area 2: Incidence of Child Abuse
Area 3: Clinical Manifestation of Child Abuse
Area 4: Prevention and Management of Child Abuse

The total knowledge score was 30. An arbitrary classification of knowledge score was done which was classified as,

1 – 12 <40% poor
13 – 18 41 - 60% Average
19 – 24 61 - 80% Good
25 – 30 81 - 100% Very Good

The content validity of the tool was obtained from five experts and their suggestions were integrated to modify the interview questionnaire. The reliability was found using Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient formula (r = 0.744). The tool was found reliable.

After obtaining the consent, the pilot study was conducted on 6 working parents and 6 non - working parents to find the feasibility of the study.

A formal written permission was obtained from the concerned authorities before the data collection. The data was collected from 60 working and 60 non - working parents who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The investigator filled in the subjects' responses and assured confidentiality of their responses. Each sample took a time limit of 15 - 20 minutes for the interview. After obtaining the completed questionnaire through the interview, the correct answers were discussed. The parents who lacked knowledge regarding child abuse were provided with an information booklet.

3. Findings

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic characteristics of the subjects, N = 60+60

Sl. no	Variables	Working parents		Nonworking parents	
		f	%	f	%
1	**Age**				
	a) 21 - 30 years	14	23.4	21	35
	b) 31 - 40 years	34	56.6	29	48.4
	c) 41 - 50 years	12	20	10	16.6
2	**Sex:**				
	a) Male	30	50	30	50
	b) Female	30	50	30	50
3	**Educational Status:**				
	a) Uneducated	0	0	0	0
	b) Upto PUC level	30	50	30	50
	c) Above PUC level	30	50	30	50
4	**Occupational Status:**				
	a) Unemployed	0	0	60	100
	b) Employed	60	100	0	0
5	**Monthly Income:**				
	a) Below 5000	0	0	9	15
	b) 5001 to 10000	23	38.4	31	51.6
	c) 10001 to 15000	27	45	20	33.4
	d) Above 15000	10	16.6	0	0
6	**Type of Family:**				
	a) Joint family	11	18.4	33	55
	b) Nuclear family	44	73.4	24	40
	c) Single parent	5	08.2	3	5
7	**Number of Children in Family:**				
	a) One	19	31.6	14	23.3
	b) Two	33	55	26	43.4
	c) Three	8	13.4	14	23.3
	d) More than three	0	0	6	10
8	**Place of Residence:**				
	a) Urban	42	70	14	23.4
	b) Rural	18	30	46	76.6
9	**Previous Knowledge:**				

a)	Yes	49	81.6	19	31.6
b)	No	11	18.4	41	68.4

Table 1 shows that regarding age, 23.4% of working parents and 35% of non - working parents were between age group of 21 - 30 years; 56.6% of working parents and 48.4% of non - working parents were between age group of 31 - 40 years; 20% of working parents and 16.6% of non - working parents were between age group of 41 - 50 years. With regard to sex, it is evident that both the working parents and non - working parents were equally distributed (50%). Analysing the educational status, both the working parents and non - working parents were equally distributed (50%) in below PUC and above PUC level. Related to monthly income, only 9% of non - working parents and no working parents monthly income was below Rs 5000; 38.4% of working parents and 51.6% of non - working parents monthly income was between Rs 5001 to Rs 10, 000; 45% of working parents and 33.4% of non - working parents monthly income was between Rs 10, 001 to Rs 15, 000; 16.6% of working parents and none of non - working parents monthly income was above Rs 15, 000. Concerning the type of family, 18.4% of working parents and 55% of non - working parents belong to joint family; 73.4% of working parents and 40% of non - working parents belong to nuclear family; 8.2% of working parents and 5% of non - working parents were single parents. According to number of children in families, 31.6% of working parents and 23.3% of non - working parents have one child; 55% of working parents and 43.4% of non - working parents have two children; 13.4% of working parents and 23.3% of non - working parents have three children; No working parents and 10% of non - working parents have more than three children. It was evident that 70% of working parents and 23.4% of non - working parents belong to urban areas; 30% of working parents and 76.6% of non - working parents belong to rural areas. Also, it was evident that 81.6% of working parents and 31.6% of non - working parents has previous experience regarding child abuse; 18.4% of working parents and 68.4% of non - working parents did not have previous experience regarding child abuse.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to the grading of their knowledge score, N = 60+60

Score Range	% of Knowledge Score	Grading	Working		Nonworking	
			N	%	N	%
1 - 12	<40%	POOR	17	28.3%	41	68.3%
13 - 18	41 - 60%	AVERAGE	30	50%	18	30%
19 - 24	61 - 80%	GOOD	13	21.7%	1	1.7%
25 - 30	81 - 100%	V. GOOD	-	-	-	-

Max. Score = 30

Table 2 reveals that among the working parents, 50% of them had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 28.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 21.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse; Among the non - working parents, 68.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 30% of them had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 1.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse.

Table 3: Mean, mean difference, standard deviation, and 't' value of mean knowledge score of working and non - working parents regarding child abuse, N=60+60

Area	Mean knowledge score		Mean difference	Standard deviation		't' value
	working	Non - working		working	Nonworking	
Child abuse in general	5.08	3.26	1.82	1.561	1.66	6.523*
Incidence of child abuse	1.71	0.95	0.76	0.857	0.71	5.58*
Clinical manifestations	4.11	2.73	1.38	1.420	1.55	5.52*
Management & prevention	4.05	2.65	1.40	1.476	1.67	5.14*
Total	14.95	9.59	5.36	5.314	5.59	5.677*

t_{118} = 1.98, p<0.05 * SIGNIFICANT

Data in Table 3 reveals that the computed 't' values in all areas were higher than the table value, being highest in the area 'child abuse in general' (t_{118}=6.523, P < 0.05). The overall 't' value was 5.677 at P < 0.05 suggesting that there was significant difference between the mean knowledge score being working parents possessing more knowledge than non - working parents regarding child abuse and the research hypothesis is accepted.

4. Discussion

Majority of both working (56.6%) and non - working parents (48.4%) were in age group of 31 - 40 years. The subjects under study were equally distributed (50%) with regard to sex. Both the working parents and non - working parents were equally distributed (50%) in up to PUC and above PUC level.

Among working parents, all the respondents (100%) were employed and among non - working parents, all the respondents (100%) were unemployed. Majority of working parent's (45%) monthly income was between Rs 10, 001 to Rs 15, 000 and majority of non - working parent's (51.6%) monthly income was between Rs 5001 to Rs 10, 000. Most of the working parents (73.4%) belong to nuclear family and most of non - working parents (55%) belong to joint family. Highest percentage of both working (55%) and non - working parents (43.4%) has two children. Majority of working parent's (70%) place of residence was urban areas and majority of non - working parent's (76.6%) place of residence was rural areas. Majority of working parents (81.6%) has previous experience regarding child abuse while majority of non - working parents (68.4%) did not have previous experience regarding child abuse. However, 18.4% of

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working parents and 68.4% of non - working parents did not have any previous experience regarding child abuse.

The findings of the study showed that the knowledge score of the working parents was higher than that of the non - working parents, half of the working parents (50%) had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 28.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 21.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse; among the non - working parents, 68.3% of them had poor knowledge (<40%) and 30% of them had average knowledge (41 - 60%) and 1.7% of them had good knowledge (61 - 80%) regarding child abuse. The unpaired 't' test was used to compare the knowledge of working and non - working parents regarding child abuse. The computed values in all areas were higher than the table value and so it was concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean knowledge score being working parents possessing more knowledge than non - working parents regarding child abuse.

The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant association between the knowledge of working parents regarding child abuse and the socio - demographic variables like age (χ^2 value - 6.225), educational status (χ^2 value - 9.64), monthly income of the family (χ^2 value - 19.42), number of children in family (χ^2 value - 4.358) and place of residence (χ^2 value - 13.69) at 0.05 level of significance; and there is significant association between knowledge of non - working parents regarding child abuse and the socio - demographic variables like age (χ^2 value - 9.653) and educational status (χ^2 value - 7.68) at 0.05 level of significance.

Nursing Implications
The findings of this study have implications for nursing practice, nursing education, nursing administration, and nursing research.

Nursing Practice
- Education programs conducted by nursing personnel help prevent child abuse by parents, which in turn reduces emotional and behavioral problems in children.
- Education programs with effective teaching strategies, and audio - visual aids foster parents to rear their children in an effective way which helps them to follow healthy practices in day - to - day life, involving changes in the study habits and methods of their children.
- The community health nurse can establish links with community support systems and provide settings where parents and children can gather, interact, support and learn from each other.

Nursing Education
- Nursing students can be made aware of their role in the prevention of behavioral and emotional problems of children due to abuse and neglect, which will help in the prevention of childhood psychiatric disorders.
- Nurses at the post - graduate level can develop their skills in preparing health teaching material according to the parent's and caregiver's level of understanding and improved newer techniques can be used for motivating participation in understanding and preventing child abuse.
- Mental health nurses can educate the community concerning the importance of a child's early years and the need for a child to have a safe and secure home environment.
- Health professionals can accomplish seminars, workshops, and training programs on the management and prevention of child abuse. The subject of child abuse can be integrated into the nursing curriculum.

Nursing Administration
- The nurse administrator should take an interest in providing information on programs related to the prevention of child abuse.
- She should also encourage and depute nurses to participate in such programs conducted by any other voluntary organizations.
- Nurse administrators should take part in child health Policymaking and developing protocols related to designing the health education program and strategies for the identification, prevention, and management of child abuse.

Nursing Research
- As there are only a few studies done in this area, there is a need for extensive and intensive research, so that strategies for educating nurses in identifying and managing children with the consequences of child abuse should be carried out.
- The nurses should research various aspects of child abuse and its management, which provides more scientific data and adds a more scientific body of information to the nursing profession.
- Limited research on neglect, which is considered the most common form of maltreatment must be identified and educated to the general public.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study concluded that the knowledge scores of the working parents were higher than that of the non - working parents. The study identified significant associations between knowledge scores with the selected demographic variables, emphasizing the importance of educational interventions for specific groups within the population. Since a very high significant difference was found between the knowledge scores of working and non - working parents, it was concluded that the teaching program must be implemented to increase the knowledge among working and non - working parents regarding child abuse.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:
- A similar study can be conducted on larger samples to generalize the findings.
- A qualitative phenomenological study can be carried out to identify the actual experiences of the abused children.
- A comparative study may be undertaken on parents and school teachers to compare their knowledge and attitudes towards child abuse.
- An evaluative study can be conducted to investigate the effect of educational programs on knowledge regarding child abuse among parents.

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- A study on the knowledge of the general public regarding child abuse can be conducted.

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