

Effect of Planned Teaching on Knowledge and Attitude regarding Female Feticide among College Students at Selected Colleges in Bangalore

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Abstract: Background: The birth of female child is perceived as a curse with economic and social liability because of various traditional belief and misconceptions of the society. The evil practice of female feticide is common in the lower, middle and higher socio-economic households, more so in the north Indian states. As child sex ratio is considered as an important indicator of society's wellbeing, skewed sex ratio is an issue of major concern and has long-term social and demographic consequences. Aim: To assess the effect of planned teaching on knowledge and attitude regarding Female feticide among college students at selected colleges in Bangalore. Methodology: One group pretest posttest design was adopted for the study and a stratified random sampling technique was used to select 216 college students. A structured knowledge questionnaire, attitude scale and structured teaching module were used to assess the knowledge and attitude of students regarding Female feticide. Results: The pretest score showed 4.17% (9) had adequate knowledge, 76.85% (166) students had moderately adequate knowledge and 18.98% (41) students had inadequate knowledge. The post test score showed 98.61% (213) had adequate knowledge and 1.39% (3) had moderately adequate knowledge. 58.33% (126) of the subjects had highly favorable attitude against female feticide in the pretest and in the posttest, it was 100% (216) Among the 216 subjects 41.67% (90) of them had favorable attitude in the pretest, which was 0% in the post test. None of them had a non-favorable attitude both in pre and posttest. Conclusion: The study concludes that if the students are given awareness on female feticide, it improves their knowledge and attitude and they can be change agent in the society to stop female feticide.

Keywords: Female feticide, college students, knowledge, attitude, teaching program

1. Introduction

Contemporary Indian society professes a profound faith in every individual's "right to life and dignity." In India's ancient scriptures, Vedas, the Puranas and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, the female was well respected, was celebrated as the front of creation and as an equal half of her husband. But almost half of India does not consider it a blessing if that child happens to be a girl¹. The reaction of the family members is different towards the girl's rights right from the birth. Often, the girl is born and brought up in an atmosphere where the family would have rather preferred a boy in her place. The bias is rooted in a complex set of religious, economic, social and cultural factors. Abuse of advanced technology coupled with social factors such as dowry, concerns with family name and looking up to the son as a bread winner etc lead to female feticide in all economical sections.

Female feticide is the act of selectively aborting the female fetus after pre-natal sex determination, thus avoiding the birth of girls.

Female feticide has not only disturbed the sex-ratio of the country but has also created problems in the society such as female/women trafficking, increased rape and assault, population decline etc.² According to 2011 census there is a fall in child sex ratio in urban area, (906 in 2001 to 902 in 2011) which is four times higher in rural area (934 in 2001 to 919 in 2011) as compared to urban area.³ It was exciting to see that "THE HINDU" daily, January 6th 2013 stating that, the CBSE will include course on human rights and gender studies in next academic year. This is intended to make students aware of the ways in which "gender is taken for

granted," the implication of gender in our lives and the prospects for change⁴.

The preference for a male child and discrimination against the female child are causing the rapid disappearance of female children in India. As per the census of 2011, the child sex ratio in India has declined from 927 to 914 females per 1000 males which is the lowest since the country's independence⁵.

The various reasons for female feticide are patriarchal. Many families put pressure on the women to give birth to boy, so that he can take families name forward, light the funeral pyre and be the bread earner of the family. In Karnataka, the recent census revealed that the female ratio in 0-6-year age group had fallen to 929 females per 1000 males, the lowest in 15 years⁶.

As a result of declining sex ratio, human trafficking has become common in various states of India where teenage girls are sold for cheap money by poor families. The girls are treated as sex objects and more than half of such cases go unreported. Many women suffer from psychological trauma as a result of forcibly undergoing repeated feticide and the health risks of women who are undergoing illegal termination are much higher about which people are unaware of. More generally demographers warn that in the next twenty years there will be a shortage of brides in the marriage market mainly because of the adverse juvenile sex ratio. In rural areas as the number of marriageable women declines⁷.

Female feticide can be prevented to a large extent by educating the people and making them aware of its consequences, motivating them to think more logically and

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humanely and by implementing immediate and appropriate punishment to those violating the law. The Govt. can also initiate some programs to reduce the burden of parents with low socio - economic status for a better future of the girl child. Youth constitute an important segment of the society, who will be soon taking up various responsibilities in the family and society. Apart from being future parents they have also immense potential to initiate discussion and bring about necessary changes at home and in the community.

The experience of investigator working with the people in the rural areas of Maharashtra brought into light the strong preference for son and the prevalence of female feticide. This experience motivated the investigator to undertake the study on female feticide and motivate the youth to enhance their knowledge and attitude towards prevention of female feticide.

The Investigator in this study intended to assess the knowledge and attitude of college students regarding Female feticide and determine the effectiveness of structured teaching program in improving the knowledge and attitude regarding Female feticide.

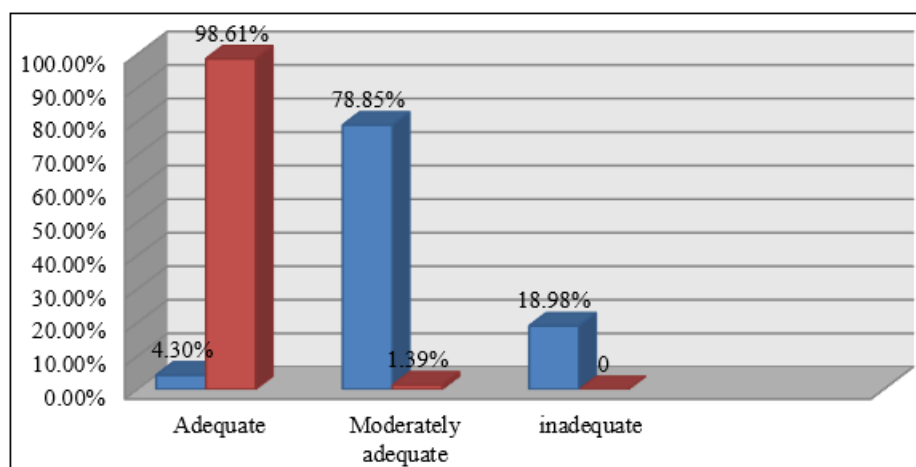
Objectives of the study

- 1) To assess the knowledge of college students regarding female feticide before and after planned teaching.
- 2) To assess the attitude of college students towards female feticide before and after planned teaching.
- 3) To find out the correlation between knowledge and attitude after planned teaching.
- 4) To find the association between (a) knowledge and selected variables. (b) Attitude and selected variables.

2. Materials and methods

An evaluative approach with one group pretest posttest design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 216 college students from selected degree colleges who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The population was first divided in to three strata (B. A, B. Com, B. Sc. /BBA) 18 students i. e boys and girls in equal number from each strata were selected using SPSS random table.

N = 216



A structured knowledge questionnaire and a Likert rating scale was used to assess the knowledge and attitude of the students followed by a structured teaching program using lecture method and LCD projector. The pretest and planned teaching together took about 2 hours. The post test was conducted after 6 days.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical committee of the Institute and permission from the Degree colleges to conduct the study as well. Informed consent was taken from all the participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained during and after data collection. The analysis and interpretation of the study is done by using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Results

The majority 85.64% (185) of students were in the age group of 18 - 21 year, and 14.36 % (31) were in the age group 22 - 25 years. 50% of the students were male and 50% were female. Among the students 61.11% (132) were Hindu, 33.80% (73) were Christians and 5.09% (11) belonged to other religion. 71.76% (155) of students were from the nuclear families, 23.61% (51) from joint families and only 4.63% (10) from extended family. Among the 216 students 70.83% (153) were from urban area, 17.59% (38) of them were from semiurban area and only 11.57% (25) of them were from rural area. 7.41% (16) of students had no sibling. A majority of the students 42.59% (92) had only one sibling, 30.09% (65) had two siblings and 19.91% (43) had more than two siblings. With regard to the female siblings 40.74% (88) of the students had one female sibling, 37.50% (81) had no female sibling, 14.35% (31) had two siblings and only 7.41% (16) of them had more than two female siblings in the family.

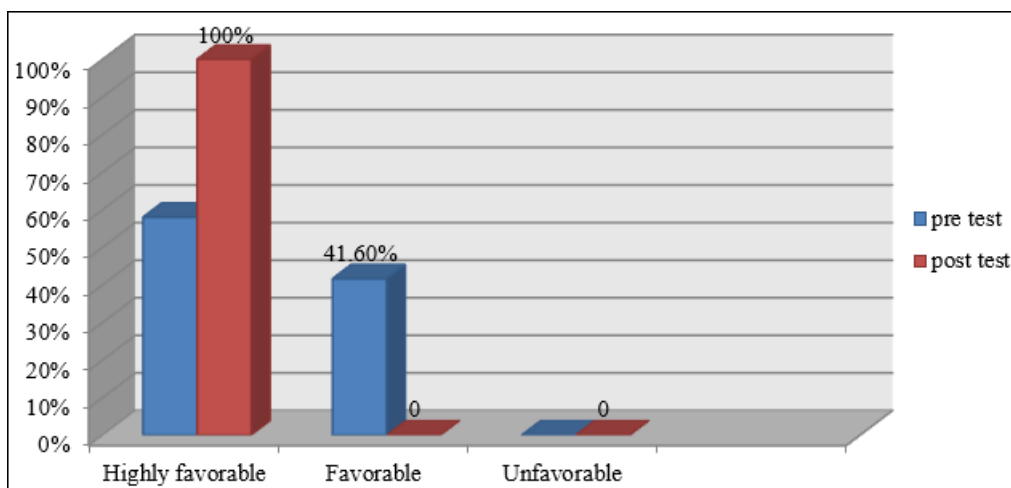
The overall posttest mean knowledge score is (21.11) and pretest (11.23). The mean difference is 9.88. The results show that the difference between the mean of the pretest and posttest is statistically highly significant at 0.001 level of significance. The overall posttest attitude mean score is (77.11) and pretest attitude mean score is (61.35). The mean difference was 15.75. The difference in the pretest and posttest attitude score is statistically highly significant at 0.001 level of significance.

Knowledge score of subjects regarding Female feticide before and after planned teaching.

There is an increase in the attitude score (mean % 96.39) as the knowledge score (mean % 84.44) increases. The r value of the correlation between knowledge and attitude is 0.542.

The correlation between knowledge and attitude is statistically highly significant at 0.001 level of significance.

Attitude score of subjects regarding Female feticide before and after planned teaching



This figure depicts that 58.33% (126) of the subjects had highly favorable attitude against female feticide in the pretest and the posttest it was 100% (216) 41.67% (90) of them had favorable attitude in the pretest which was 0% in the posttest. None of them had an unfavorable attitude both in pre and posttest.

In terms of association

No significant association was found between knowledge and baseline variables such as age, gender and religion. There is significant association between knowledge and type of families and knowledge and number of siblings at 0.05 level of significance. Subjects who belonged to extended families had better knowledge compared to others. Subjects who had only one sibling had better knowledge as compared to others.

There is significant association between attitude and religion and attitude and number of siblings at 0.05 level of significance. Subjects who belonged to Christian religion had better attitude (i. e. Against Female feticide) as compared to others. Subjects who had only one sibling had better attitude as compared to others and subjects who had more than two sisters in the family had less attitude score compared to others which was statistically significant. No significant association was found between attitude and age, gender, type of families, and area of residence.

4. Discussion

Female feticide is a social evil which can be prevented by conducting awareness programs for the public especially to the youth, young couples and other prominent people in the society, which will bring about a major change in the society.

The study samples in the present study consisted of 216 students studying 2nd or 3rd year degree courses from 4 selected colleges. Among the 216 students 85.64% (185)

belonged to the age group of 18 - 21 years and 14.36% (31) belonged to the age group of 22 - 25 years. A similar study was conducted among 150 college students of Mumbai which showed 67% of the students belonged to 18 - 21 years and 33% of the students were in the age group 22 - 25 years. In the present study the sample size 216 comprised equal no of male 50% (108) and female 50% (108). In the similar study which was conducted in Mumbai, showed that 50% (75) of the participants were males and 50% (75) were females⁸.

In the present study majority of the college students 61.11% (132) belonged to Hindu religion, 33.80% (73) were Christians and 5.09% (11) belonged to other religion which included Muslims and Buddhists. In the similar study done in Mumbai, 40% were Hindus, 13% were Christians, 20% were Muslims and 27% were Buddhists. Regarding the type of families, in the present study 71.76% (155) of the students were from nuclear families, 23.61% (51) from joint family and only 4.63% (10) were from extended families. The study done in Mumbai showed that 67% of the students were from nuclear families and 33% were from joint family.⁸

In the present study majority of the students 70.83% (153) were from the urban area, 17.59% (38) were from semiurban and 11.57% (25) of them were from the rural area. Regarding the number of siblings among the 216 students 7.41% (16) of them had no siblings, majority of the students 42.59% (92) had only one sibling, 30.09% (65) of them had two siblings and 19.91% (43) had more than two siblings. Only 7.41% (16) of the students had more than two female siblings in the family.

Regarding the source of information 32.87% (71) of the students received information from projected media, 23.61% (51) from printed media, 29.29% (46) of them from family and friends and 3.70% (8) from health professionals. 18.52% (40) of the students received information from more than one sources.

In the present study only 4.17% (9) of the students possessed adequate knowledge in pretest, Majority of the students 76.85% (166) had moderately adequate knowledge and 18.98% (41) of them had inadequate knowledge in pretest. In the posttest 98.61% (213) possessed adequate knowledge and 1.39% (3) had moderately adequate knowledge. No one possessed inadequate knowledge. The mean% of overall knowledge score in the pretest was 44.92% which increased to 84.44% in the post test. The findings of the study are consistent with a similar study conducted among 150 students in Mumbai which showed the knowledge score of 47% in the pretest and 84% in the post test⁸. The findings support that the planned teaching brought out improvement in knowledge.

In another study conducted in Allahabad, among 100 married couples to know the impact of a print media package on the attitude and knowledge regarding female feticide, the existing knowledge level about female feticide was low for almost all the couples⁹. The impact of the package was significant on knowledge.

In the present study 58.33% (126) of the students had highly favorable attitude against female feticide in the pretest and in the posttest it was 100% (216). Among the 216 students 41.67% (90) of them had favorable attitude in the pretest, which was 0% in the posttest. None of them had a non-favorable attitude both in pre and posttest. The overall posttest attitude score (96.39%) is higher than the overall pretest attitude score (76.69%) which shows a significant improvement in the attitude of college students. Thus, the planned teaching was effective in improving the attitude of college students regarding Female feticide.

The findings of the present study were consistent with a similar study conducted in Mumbai which showed, the pretest mean score of attitudes was 48.47 which increased to 59.72 after the planned teaching.⁸ The present study showed an increase in the attitude score as the knowledge score increased. The correlation between knowledge and attitude was statistically significant at 0.001 level of significance.

A statistically significant association was found between the type of family and knowledge. Students who belonged to extended family had significantly higher level of knowledge as compared to others. The findings of the study are supported by similar study conducted in Mumbai which showed a significant relationship between type of family and knowledge.⁸

A significant relationship was also observed between number of siblings and knowledge. Students who had only one sibling had higher level of knowledge as compared to others. This might be because the majority (42.59%) of the participants in the present study had only one sibling.

A significant association was found between the religion and attitude. Students who belonged to Christian religion had a highly favorable attitude against Female feticide as compared to other students. The findings are supported by the similar study conducted in Mumbai.

A significant relationship was also found between number of

siblings and attitude. Students who had only one sibling had a highly favorable attitude against Female Feticide as compared to other students. Students who had more than two female siblings showed less favorable attitude against female feticide which was statistically significant. In the present study there was no significant difference in the attitude of students with regard to the type of families. Another study on the effect of socio-cultural factors on gender preference done among 385 women in Ahmadabad shows that preference for son was higher among women from joint families (90.71%) and from schedule tribes (96.15%).¹⁰ To retrieve an in-depth perception of the students about Female feticide the Investigator had prepared pre-scheduled opinionnaire and it showed that when the students were asked who is promoting Female feticide, a majority 74.53% of them expressed that in-laws and relatives are promoting female feticide. Another 28.24% said it is the parents themselves. The above findings are supported by similar findings in a study done among the teachers in Hassan.¹¹ Another study done among couples in Surat city pointed out Female feticide is the shared responsibility of both the seeker and the doer.

Majority 72.22% of the students expressed socio-economic burden as the reason for Female feticide. 11% specified dowry as the reason. Similar findings were seen in a study done on socio-economic and cultural dimensions of female feticide among 240 respondents from Punjab¹². Regarding the opinion about finding out the sex of the baby before birth 86.57% of the students disagreed to finding out the sex of the baby before birth where as 9.72% of them said it is good to know the sex if the parents don't abort the baby, so that the parents can prepare themselves. Another study among 127 teachers in Hassan shows that 81% of the teachers said, practicing sex determination before birth was acceptable. When the students were asked whether Female feticide is justifiable, 83.33% of the students said that it is not justifiable and 6.02% said, it is justifiable if the mother or baby has any complication. The rest of the students did not respond to it. Regarding the preventive measures for Female feticide, 64.81% of the students expressed that creating awareness among the people about consequences of female feticide and motivating them to treat both boys and girls equally is the best method to prevent female feticide.

Over all the students had moderate knowledge and attitude in the pretest which increased significantly in the post test. This support that the planned teaching was effective in improving the knowledge and attitude of college students regarding female feticide.

Though there are different types of awareness programs conducted in different parts of the country, still a major part remains unaware of the consequences of female feticide and the immorality which accompanies it. Large scale multimedia campaigns are necessary, with the involvement of different categories of people in the community like teachers, college students and other prominent people in the community to reach out to the grassroot level in order to stop female feticide.

5. Conclusion

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The planned teaching was found to be effective in improving the knowledge and attitude of college students. The study revealed that if the students are given additional information regarding female feticide and its prevention, it would enhance the awareness of the students and they could disseminate this information in the society which will help to stop female feticide and maintain gender equalities.

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