A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Evaluate the Efficacy of Multi Spectral Intervention on Prevention of Child Maltreatment among School Children in Selected Schools at Karaikal

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Child maltreatment is a global problem with serious lifelong consequences. Child maltreatment includes all forms of physical ill-treatment, emotional, sexual maltreatment, neglect or negligent treatment for commercial or other exploitation which causes potential harm. to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility and trust or power. Aim: To assess the knowledge and evaluate the efficacy of

multi spectral intervention on prevention of child maltreatment among school children in selected schools at Karaikal. MATERIAL AND METHODS: Quantitative, Quasi experimental pre test and post test research design was adopted for this present study. The cluster random sampling method was used to select the schools. 1071 children studying from 1st standard to 8th standard, were chosen by convenience sampling technique. The data were collected by using demographic proforma and self structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge on

prevention of child maltreatment.

RESULTS: Among the 1071 school children, in the pretest, a majority of 889(83.0%) of children had inadequate knowledge, posttest I, 437(40.8%) of children had moderate knowledge

and posttest II, 863(80.6%) of children had adequate knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment. The calculated 'p' value showed statistically significant association between the age of the child, studying class, gender, educational status of fathers and mothers, occupation of the fathers and mothers, religion, type of family, living pattern, number of sisters, sources of information on prevention of child maltreatment, attended session regarding prevention of child maltreatment among the selected school children the level of significant at p <0.05. It proved that the multi spectral intervention on prevention of child maltreatment among school children was highly effective to improve the their knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Children are the world's most valuable resources, assets and future citizens, but their rights, throughout the world, largely ignored often resulted in tragic outcomes. In human life, childhood period is very important. It is the best time to develop the spiritual, intellectual and emotional aspects among children. They are like the flower buds and their parents are expected to properly

nourish, nurse and extend care to the children in order to bloom their life to contribute for the development of the society.

A child period is defined biologically, a human being from the developmental stages of birth to puberty may be referred as a child. Legally, the child is usually called a minor or a person who has not reached the age of majority. Child sexual abuse is a peculiarly ominous kind of trauma as it creates horrific shame in the victim. Victims of sexual abuse during this stage generally are too immature and cannot express what is happening and don't seek out help.

The highest number of sexually abused children is in India. A child under 16 years of age is raped every 155th minute, a child below 10 every 13th hour and one in every 10 children is sexually abused at any point in life. Children are not yet aware of what is sexual abuse. They are not even aware that they are being abused by somebody. Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a serious and widespread problem in India as it is in many parts of the world today.1

Child maltreatment is a significant global problem with a serious impact on the victims" physical and mental health, well-being and development throughout their lives – and, by extension, on society in general. The WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention distinguishes four types of child maltreatment which are physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional and psychological abuse and child neglect. India the home for the largest number of minors in any country in the world house for more than forty percent of country's population. Abuse is a disquieting everyday reality for as many as half of the country's children.2

Physical maltreatment includes various kinds of ill-treatment such as striking, kicking, burning, biting, hair pulling, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping or any other action that injures a child physically. parent or caretaker harms a child mentally and socially it will cause severe emotional repercussions on the affected child it is considered as an emotional maltreatment. Sexual maltreatment, also referred as molestation, is forcing a child to have undesired sexual behavior, an adult uses a child for his sexual purposes and involves a child to undergo sexual acts. This may include an adult or an older person having sexual excitement. The offender is referred to as the molester when the victim is aged younger than the offender.

World Health Organization (2020) highlighted the fact that about 3 in 4 children or 300 million children, aged between 2 and 4 years, suffer from physical punishment or psychological violence at the hands of parents and care givers. One in 5 women and 1 in 12 men reported that children aged under 20 suffer from some form of sexual maltreatment and this number is almost certainly under estimated. Since significant proportion of death occurring 7 due to maltreatment of children one incorrectly attributed to false, burns, doming and other causes.3

Nandinipriya (2019), based on Child Sexual Maltreatment Gender Based Violence Society, reported that 24,212 child maltreatment cases have been registered in India between 1st January, 2019 to 30th June, 2019, which means 4,000 children in a month, 130 children in a day and one child for every 5 minutes have been maltreated.4

National Children Alliance (2018) stated that the total numbers of maltreatments cases reported totaling 244,726. The sexual maltreatment cases have been increasing every year. Of the sexual maltreatment cases totaling 75,180, physical maltreatment cases totaled 26,332, neglected children totaled 27,268 witness to violence totaled 12,030, drug endangerment totaled 22,096 and the remaining would be other maltreatments happened in India.5

Ministry of Women and Child Development (2017), in India, conducted a study among 13 states to identify the sexual maltreatment. The results revealed 21% of the participants face extreme forms of sexual maltreatment. Among these, 57.3% are boys, 42.7% are as girls and 40% are aged between 5 – 12 years.6

American Psychiatric Association (2017) stated about the children who cannot consent to sexual activity with adults and condemns any such action by an adult. An adult engages in sexual activity with a child will be considered as criminal and the act as immoral one and can never be assumed as normal or socially acceptable behavior. Sexual maltreatment happens much in the poor family environment.7

National Crime Record Bureau (2017) reported the January – June period maltreatments cases of male children as 62,064 and female children as 1,09,686. Different types of maltreatments have been reported,

such as sexual maltreatment cases totaling, 34,712, physical maltreatment totaling 12,624, neglect is about 12,501 and witness violence totaling 5,761 children. From July to December, the statistical report puts the total of maltreated children as 58,833 and female children as 10,33,19. The sexually maltreated children totaled 32,784, physically maltreated children totaled 11,850, neglect totaled 11,561 and victim to violence totaled 5,467 children.8

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a global public problem (WHO, 2003). It is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he/she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared (WHO, 2014).Other recent definitions of CSA have included the array of sexual activities such as fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, involving a child in prostitution or pornography.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Priti (2018) said about, the sexual harassment happened in their home against children which has increased about 30% from 544 cases which were recorded in the year 2017 and increased to 107 cases in the year 2018. Totally, 781 cases of pornography using the girls were reported in the year 2018, whereas in the year 2017 about 331 cases were recorded.[16]

Mutavi and Mathai (2018) conducted a longitudinal study to identify the incidence of depressive symptoms among 191 sexually abused children in Kenya. The study found the children, below 16 years, totaling 14.6% had minimal mild depressive symptoms and 85.4% had moderate and severe depressive symptoms. The children were above 16 years, 93.6% had moderate severe depressive symptoms and 6.4% had minimal or mild depressive symptoms.[17]

Mutavi, Mathai and Obondo (2017) conducted a longitudinal study to identify the post-traumatic stress disorder and their educational status among sexually abused children at Kenyatta National Teaching and Referral Hospital and Nairobi women's Hospital in Kenya. The study results indicated that the children continued to suffer from PTSD after the incidence of sexual abuse. The PTSD was associated with the length of time taken to receive medical attention (p<0.005). The authors concluded that these outcomes will be affecting the moral development, and educational status of the children.[18]

Wafaa and Wejdan (2017) conducted a study to investigate the effect of physical abuse on academic achievement among 200 female students in secondary school in Jeddah by using convenience sampling techniques. The study results showed that 29% of students were reported physically abused. Majority of the participants had (94.5%) lack of concentration in the class, (86.5%) problem in learning and (81%) homework and (92%) increase absenteeism.[19]

Lakhdiv and Farooq (2017) conducted a cross sectional survey on factors associated with child maltreatment among children aged between 11 to 17 years with their parents in Karachi and Pakistan by using multistage cluster sampling. The study results revealed that children, who

always get bullied and mistreated by their sibling were at high risk of getting maltreatment by parents. The mean score was 9.86 for the children who were exposure of verbal abuse and quarrel within family members. The authors provided evidence to raise an awareness regarding child maltreatment.[20]

Shailaja, Anita and Shishir (2016) evaluated the prevalence and the determinants of child maltreatment among 1060 adolescent girls of 7th to 12th classes of Government girls schools in semi-urban area of Delhi, India. The study results indicated 70% of girls as facing at least one form of maltreatment. Totally, 42.6% of adolescent girls suffered from physical abuse, 40.1% suffered from neglect, 37.9% suffered from emotional abuse and 26.6% of girls suffered from sexual abuse. The authors concluded that physical and emotional abuse was done by mother and sexual abuse was done by friends, relatives and neighbors.[21]

Ada Peter and Anake (2015) conducted a study on child abuse and students' academic performance in Boki local government area of Cross River state among 200 children of junior secondary school. The findings of this study revealed the child physical abuse and sexual abuse as statistically related to affects the students academic performance.[22]

The lack of adequate age-appropriate education on prevention of abuses may contribute to a lack of knowledge regarding self-protection among young children The problem of abuses depends in part on children's knowledge. Children who have this

knowledge also have increased awareness that enables them to take action to protect themselves from sexual crimes. The research by showed evidence of improvements in protective behavior and knowledge among children exposed to school-based awareness programs.

The Good Touch, Bad touch activities aim to teach child about appropriate sexual behaviour. ' A Good touch is that cares for them, is necessary for their health or safety makes them feel safe or is fun and Bad touch is touch that makes them feel scared, any secrete touch or touch on their private parts. The statistics indicate that sexual and physical abuse of children and adolescent girls is alarmingly high. Below 16 years raped every 155th minute, and one in every 10 children are sexually abused at any point in time.[23]

Government of India study on child abuse (UNICEF) the findings of the Study on Child Abuse indicate that a very large number of children in India are not even safe in their homes. Research reveals that the prevalence of child abuse is very lower among school-going children in contrast to those who do not go to school. Therefore to decrease the rate of abuse all pain must be taken to make sure that everyone should go to the school and that the school's environment must be protective, safe, violence-free, and stress must be put on to eradicate the physical punishment. So all nursing professionals must be responsible to recognize and report the cases and in the meantime, every parent has a major role to identify maltreatment of the child, try to understand their Psychological and behavioral condition also in the home the family members especially mothers must pay attention towards the child.[24]

Child abuse is a severe problem in India. Adequate knowledge in children about abuse prevention is essential so that children do not become victims. Lack of adequate children's knowledge of the prevention of abuse may put them at risk for experiencing abuse. So the researcher interested to take this study to educate the school children on prevention of abuses and believe that it will help to protect their life from the strangers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the knowledge and evaluate the efficacy of multi spectral intervention on prevention of child maltreatment among school children in selected schools at Karaikal.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A quantitative, quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test research design was adopted for this present study to assess the knowledge and effectiveness of a multi-spectral intervention on preventing child abuse among school children in selected schools at Karaikal. Study Setting Government and private schools were selected in Karaikal. Cluster random sampling method was used for selection of schools. 1071 children studying from 1st to 8th standard were selected through convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using demographic proforma and self-structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the information.

A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher to assess knowledge about child abuse prevention. It is a multiple choice question consisting of 18 items with four options with one correct answer for each question. The tool was used three times to collect data, before (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest-I and posttest-II).

Each correct answer carries one mark and each wrong answer carries zero marks. A score of 76% was considered adequate knowledge, 51 to 75% was considered moderately adequate knowledge, and 50% or below was considered inadequate knowledge. The reliability of the tool was tested by split half method and the score was $r=0.80$. Informed consent, assent was obtained from parents, children respectively.

Data analysis was performed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis is used to find mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics such as association, paired t test, ANOVA is used to reveal the effectiveness of multispectral intervention.

RESULTS:

Table: 1. Comparison of pre test and post test -I, post test -II level of knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment among school children

n=1071

Level of knowledge	Pre test		Post test –I		Post test –II	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate (≥76%)	889	83%	198	18.5%	37	3.5%
Moderate (51-75%)	110	10.3%	437	40.8%	171	16%
Inadequate (<50%)	72	6.7%	436	40.7%	863	80.6%

The result of the study shows that the overall level of knowledge about prevention of child abuse among selected school children. Out of 1071 school children majority 889 (83.0%) children had insufficient knowledge, 110 (10.3%) children had moderate knowledge and 72 (6.7%) children had adequate knowledge.

During posttest I, 437 (40.8%) children had moderate knowledge, 436 (40.7%) children had adequate knowledge, and 198 (18.5%) children had inadequate knowledge. In posttest II, 863 (80.6%) children had adequate knowledge, 171 (16.0%) children had moderate knowledge, and 37 (3.5%) children had inadequate knowledge

Table.2. Comparison of Mean, SD, and mean percentage of pre test and post test -I, post test -II level of knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment among school children

Area	Max score	Pre test		Post test-I		Post test-II	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Knowledge on Prevention of Child Maltreatment	18	3.98	3.9	12.35	3.13	14.58	2.02

The pretest knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment mean value was 3.98 with the standard deviation of 3.9 where as in the posttest I knowledge on

prevention of child maltreatment mean value was 12.35 with standard deviation of 3.13 and posttest II mean value was 14.58 with the standard deviation 2.02
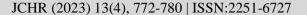
Table.3. Effectiveness of Pretest, Posttest I and Posttest II Knowledge on Prevention of Child Maltreatment among Selected School Children   **(N = 1071)**

Knowledge	Differences			't' value	P value
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**Std. Error**		
Pretest and Posttest - I	-8.377	5.533	0.169	49.530	0.001*** (S)
Pretest and Posttest - II	-10.602	4.958	**0.151**	69.982	0.001*** (S)

***S - Very Highly Significant at p<0.001

The result proved that educational intervention program on prevention of child maltreatment, helped the school children to gain knowledge to protect themselves against child maltreatment.

Table.4. Comparison of Mean and Standard Deviation of Overall Level of Knowledge, Attitude, Knowledge on Practice on Prevention of Child Maltreatment with Pretest – Posttest I and Pretest – Posttest II among Selected School Children**.** (N = 1071)

Variables			Mean ± Standard Deviation	Mean Rank	Z value Wilcoxon Test	P value
Overall knowledge	Pretest - Posttest I	Negative rank	3.98±3.92	135.29	-26.65	0.001*** (S)
	Pretest - Posttest II	Positive rank	12.35±3.13	587.39	-27.92	0.001*** (S)

***S - Very Highly Significant at p<0.001

Thus, the result revealed that there was a significant improvement in the level of knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment among selected school children after implementation of educational intervention.

One way ANOVA Analysis of Pretest, Posttest I and Posttest II Level of Knowledge with Gender on Prevention of Child Maltreatment among Selected School Children.

The result of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest gender groups with the level of knowledge determined by one way ANOVA F = 67.355 and p = 0.001. There is a statistically significant difference between experimental levels of knowledge with gender on child abuse prevention among selected school children. There was a statistically significant difference between gender groups with knowledge level determined by one-way ANOVA F = 7.423 and p = 0.007 and posttest II one-way ANOVA F = 33.63 and p = 0.001 after implementation of the multi-spectral intervention posttest I implementation. Thus the result shows that there was a significant difference between the level of knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse among selected school children with gender. The calculated p value showed that there was a difference between the level of knowledge of school

children with gender before and after multispectral intervention to prevent child abuse.

Association between pre test and post test -I, post test -II level of knowledge on prevention of child maltreatment among school children with their selected demographic variables

The current study highlighted the association of empirical levels of knowledge about child maltreatment prevention with selected demographic variables. The calculated 'p' value shows that there was a statistically significant association between child's age, study class, gender, father's and mother's educational status, father's and mother's occupation, religion, family type, lifestyle, number. Sisters, sources of information on child abuse prevention, attended the session on child abuse prevention among selected school children which was significant at p < 0.05 level.

DISCUSSION:

The present study result showed that in pretest majority of the children had inadequate knowledge and after the intervention the knowledge was improved among children on prevention of maltreatment. The findings of the present was supported by Jagdish GS et al. showed that out of 180 children, 90.6% had moderately adequate knowledge regarding sexual abuse, whereas, in the current study 83% had good knowledge and 17% had average knowledge.24 A similar type of study in China investigated the level of prevention knowledge of child sexual abuse among school-aged children and discovered an accurate knowledge level between 44% and 80%. It was concluded that Chinese school-aged children need knowledge and skills related to child sexual abuse prevention (Jin et al., 2016)25

Hiltrec (2015) opined that learning about sexual abuse prevention is necessary and thus the first step towards ensuring the safety of children. It is therefore necessary to assess the
knowledge and perceived effect of sexual abuse among adolescents.26 one more study result concluded that majority 62% of adolescent girls had average knowledge, 27% had good knowledge and 11% had poor knowledge regarding sexual abuse. This emphasizes the investigator to implement measures for the prevention of sexual abuse in future.27

Sumanpreet Kaur. Stated that Sexual abuse, referred to as molestation, is forcing undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another. When that force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, it is called sexual assault. The offender is referred to as a sexual abuser or (often pejoratively) molester. There will be a significant difference between pretest and post-test knowledge of adolescents regarding awareness about sexual abuse was accepted at p<0.05.28

One more study concluded that, mothers are having some knowledge towards the prevention of child sexual abuse but also possessing some degree of negative attitude towards the same which can be enhanced through information booklets and different awareness programs. Perception and knowledge of mothers in preventing child sexual abuse has an important role.29
So this study proved that significant difference was found between pre test, post tests level of knowledge and also found that multi spectral intervention was effective in improving the knowledge on prevention of maltreatment among school children.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that school children face different types of child abuse and the level of knowledge was insufficient during the pre-test. School children have acquired knowledge about the prevention of child abuse and can protect themselves using a multispectral intervention. An educational intervention was found to be effective among school children that imparted knowledge on child maltreatment prevention as well as education. Thus, the intervention proved to be an effective and suitable method for school children.

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