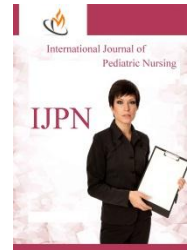




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A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF MOTHERS REGARDING SEX EDUCATION TO THEIR SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children in a selected area, Muvattupuzha. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of knowledge of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children; to assess the attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children; to determine the correlation between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children. A pilot study was conducted to assess the feasibility. The main study was done with 40 samples; the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The knowledge of mothers were assessed by structured questionnaire and revealed that about 47.5% of mothers have adequate knowledge and 60% of mothers have good attitude regarding sex education. The correlation between knowledge and attitude were assessed using spearman rank correlation and the result showed that positive correlation ($r=0.503$) exists between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

INTRODUCTION

“REGARDING SEX EDUCATION: NO SECRETS”

ALBERT EINSTEEN

“CHILDREN ARE THE WEALTH OF TOMORROW, TAKE CARE OF THEM, IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A STRONG NATION”

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Children are the blooming flowers of the garden and the bugs are trying to destroy them. It is always wise

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to construct a wall around the garden, which is the sex education.

Human sexuality is difficult to define. Sexuality is an individually expressed and highly personal phenomenon whose meaning evolves from life experiences. Physiological psychological and cultural factors influences a person's sexuality and lead to wide range of attitude and behaviours seen in humans [1].

Sexuality in human being does not emerge suddenly when children reach puberty. They are prepared for their sexual roles from birth, through their psychological and biological development [2].

Children are keen observers but are still not able



to interpret all that they see correctly. The child may recognize, but not understand sexual activities. The children are very inquisitive and want to learn about every thing around them. Therefore, they are very likely to ask questions about sex and where from the babies come [3].

Child hood sexuality reaches peak during 8-11 years when they begin to perceive sex roles in an adult fashion. During this period, school age children associate with same sex peers and tend to ignore members of opposite sex [2].

Sexuality education is defined as teaching about human sexuality including intimate relationship, human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, gender identity and reproductive responsibility. Sex health education focus on total personality development of the individual. It includes, physical, social and psychological aspects of sex and sexuality. It will also create the power to make valuable judgements [4].

The extent and method of sex education is based on child's needs and level of understanding. Simple questions about sex are often asked by children & should be answered with honesty [2].

"How the parents react when their teenage child asks a doubt on sex?". Most of them ignore, others may become angry as the child had asked something wrong. Sometimes the teenage mind will long for seeking answers to his/her apprehension.

There are several studies conducted across the world regarding sex education. A study conducted on parents' experience with the sex education of their children, revealed that there is a need for continuing support & education of parents regarding sex education of their children, since this is a complex issue to children⁶. Another study was conducted on parents perception ; students & teachers attitudes towards school sex education which concluded that all study participants have a need to start sex education at schools. School sex education should be under considering the need of students, teachers & parents [7].

A study on knowledge, attitude & perception of sex education among school going children in Haryana, India, showed that there were substantial lacunae in the knowledge about reproduction & sexual health. Students felt that sex education is necessary & should be introduced in school curriculum [8].

School faculty, parents and health care professionals are important to help children and adolescents, make informed regarding this sensitive topic. Teaching sex education is finally never means to encourage sex, but concerned parents should be responsible to give their children, the values they believe they should have [5].

In this new era of technological explosion, children live in a world of temptation, where there is less

opportunity for securing proper knowledge and guidance regarding sexuality. Obviously they seek various faulty means to get this knowledge. Finally, they may reach the world of coloured stories and sensational porn clippings. If they lack a proper guidance they may perceive wrong as right. These wicked knowledge about sex may later turn a villain in their future life. Even to respect the identity and individuality of his or her fellow being becomes a tedious task. Significance of proper sex education relies on changing this hopeless situation.

Sex education helps children in recognizing the wrong and right. It helps in enhancing strength and confidence in relations. Sex education is not mere information about sex organs, but they involve proper information about sexuality, the proper approach to sex as well as the dignity and strength of such relations [5].

Therefore, sex education helps children in recognizing sexual abuse, and for not getting addicted to sexual offences in very early ages [6]. Definitely one of the most controversial issues surrounding the topic is whether or not sex education should be taught in school and to what extreme the content can be discussed.

Approximately 10% of school children report they have been sexually abused ; over 80% are by immediate family members, other relatives, friends and neighbours. 219 cases of sexual abuse against children were recorded in Kerala till July 2016. Almost 57% cases are registered under POSCO act between 2013 and 2015. Child abuses shows a rise in 2013, as many as 1002 cases of sexual assault were reported ,while it increased to 1569 in 2015. The data reveals that 219 rape cases were reported in state until July 2016. This year till July ,115⁶ cases were registered under POSCO. Malappuram district leads the list with highest number of cases of violence against children registered till 2008.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse[7]. In the world about 70% of the reported cases of sexual assaults were against the children ,below 15 years.

In India, more than 53% of children are facing one or more form of sexual abuse. Almost 22% had undergone severe sexual abuse, and most of the sexual offenders were known to the victim or were the person in trust. Boys are also sexually abused in a higher number; similar to that of girls but they often remains unreported .The number of cases raised from 8904 in 2014 to 14913 in the year 2015 under POSCO; and there are still many unregistered cases. The highest number of cases were reported in Uttar Pradesh that is about 3078 and of Madhya Pradesh 1687, Tamil Nadu 1544, Karnataka 1486 and Gujarat 1416[7].

A total of 16960 cases of crime against women and children including 2568 rapes have been reported in last year in Kerala [8]. Highest number of cases were



reported from Trivandrum 767 and least of Pathanamthitta 31 and in Kollam 100 cases Palakkad 69 were reported. All over the state about, 2963 molestation cases were registered during the year 2008[9].

In Ernakulum 241 cases were registered under POSCO. The number of child sexual abuse has shown a rise in the last couple of years in Kochi According to child line Kochi, NGO made intervention in over 40 child sexual abuse cases during April 2016 to February 2017 as against 81 cases during the corresponding period the last year [10].

Despite the fact that proper sex education will safeguard our children from sex abuses as well as sex offences, the responsible persons especially the parents are not taking proper initiative in this regard⁵. In the current scenario, this topic must not be considered as a banned or wicked topic, rather opportunities must be provided to discuss and clarify it in the family atmosphere. It is high time our mothers rise up for providing proper quality, timely sex education to their children with a positive attitude.⁵

Statement of the problem : A study to assess the knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children in a selected area, Muvattupuzha

Objectives of the study :

- ❖ Assess the level of knowledge of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children
- ❖ Assess the attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children
- ❖ Determine the correlation between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children
- ❖ Prepare a booklet on tips for mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between level of knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research approach used was quantitative with descriptive correlation design. The study was conducted among 40 mothers who have a child of age between 10-12 years residing in Pandapilly area using convenient sampling technique. After obtaining permission from the concerned authority a pilot study was conducted among six mothers of children aged between 10-12 years selected by non probability convenient sampling technique at Nirmala Medical Centre, Muvattupuzha.

Tools and techniques

The tool for the study consists of 3 parts

Tool 1: Demographic data consist of age of mother, age of child, gender of child, educational qualification of mother, occupation of mother, order of child and religion.

Tool 2. Structured questionnaire was prepared which consists of 20 questions to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children. There were 4 choices for each question and each correct response carried one mark. The maximum score was 20. The total score were categorized as below

1. Adequate knowledge - 15-20
2. Moderate knowledge - 10-14
3. Inadequate knowledge - ≤ 9

Tool 3: Attitude Scale: A 5 point likert scale was used to assess the attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children. It consists of 9 statements related to sex education, which was scored from 5 to 1. The scale included 4 positive and 5 negative statement and the total score on attitude was 45.

	Strongly agree	agree	Un decided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Positive Statement	5	4	3	2	1
Negative Statement	1	2	3	4	5

Interpretation of score;

Good - 34-45

Average - 23-33

Poor - 9-22

A booklet on tips for mothers in providing sex education to their school going children based on review of literature and expert opinion was developed.

Content validity of tool was established by submitting the tool to 3 experts. They were given their comments on the adequacy of content, relevance, appropriateness and clarity of items. Based on their recommendations few items were modified. Reliability of tool was tested by using split half method. The reliability values for knowledge questionnaire was 0.94 and attitude scale was 0.77.

Data collection process

Formal permission from chief medical officer, CHC, Pandapilly was obtained to conduct study among mothers in pandapilly rural area. Investigators introduced themselves and explained the purpose of the study and informed consent was obtained from the



mothers and assured the confidentiality of the information provided by them. Questionnaire and attitude scale were distributed to the mothers and collected after completion. An information booklet was given about tips for mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

Analysis and interpretation

The analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

The relationship between knowledge and attitude was assessed by Spearman rank correlation.

Results

Section I :- Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables

Table 1 a shows that 45% of the samples belongs to the age group of 41-45 years ie and about 52.5% of mothers have their children at age 12 years and approximately 57.5% of mothers out of 40 samples have female child and about 52.5% of mothers have higher secondary education.

Table 1 b shows that majority 60% of mothers were house wives and 52.5% of mothers have their second child belonging to the age group 10-12 years ;and 55% of parents belonged to Christian community.

Section III

Frequency and percentage distribution of

Table 1 a :- Distribution of subjects based on age of mother ,childs age ,gender of child and educational qualification of mother

N=40

Sl no	Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age of mother in year		
	<30 yrs	0	0%
	31-35 yrs	4	10%
	36-40 yrs	13	32.5%
	41-45 yrs	18	45%
2.	>45 yrs	5	12.5%
	Child's age		
	10 yrs	7	17.5%
	11 yrs	12	30%
3.	12 yrs	21	52.5%
	Gender of child		
	Male	17	42.5%
4.	Female	23	57.5%
	Educational qualification		
	Primary	4	10%
	Secondary	7	17.5%
	Higher secondary	21	52.5%
	Degree or above	8	20%

mothers based on knowledge regarding sex education

Pie diagram shows that 47.5% have adequate knowledge, 40% have moderate knowledge, and 12.5% were with inadequate knowledge.

Section III Frequency and percentage distribution of mothers based on attitude regarding sex education

Bar diagram shows that 60% of mothers have good attitude and 40% have average attitude and none with poor attitude.

SECTION IV

Correlation between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

In order to find out the relationship between knowledge and attitude, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H₁. There will be a significant relationship between level of knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

Correlation between knowledge and attitude is measured by computing Spearman correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows that there is a significant positive correlation exists between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children as the spearman correlation is 0.503, and table value 0.418 at 0.01 level of significance.



Table 1 b:- Distribution of subject based on occupation of mother,order of child and religion

N=40

Sl no	Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Occupation of mother:-		
	Self employed	5	12.5%
	Private sector	8	20%
	Govt.job	3	7.5%
	House wife	24	60%
	Order of child		
	1	14	35%
	2	21	52.5%
	3	3	7.5%
	≤4	2	5%
	Religion		
Christian	22	55%	
Hindu	18	45%	
Muslim	0	0%	

Table 2:- Relationship between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children.

N=40

variables	Mean value	r	p value
Knowledge	14.125	0.503*	0.418
Attitude	33.875		

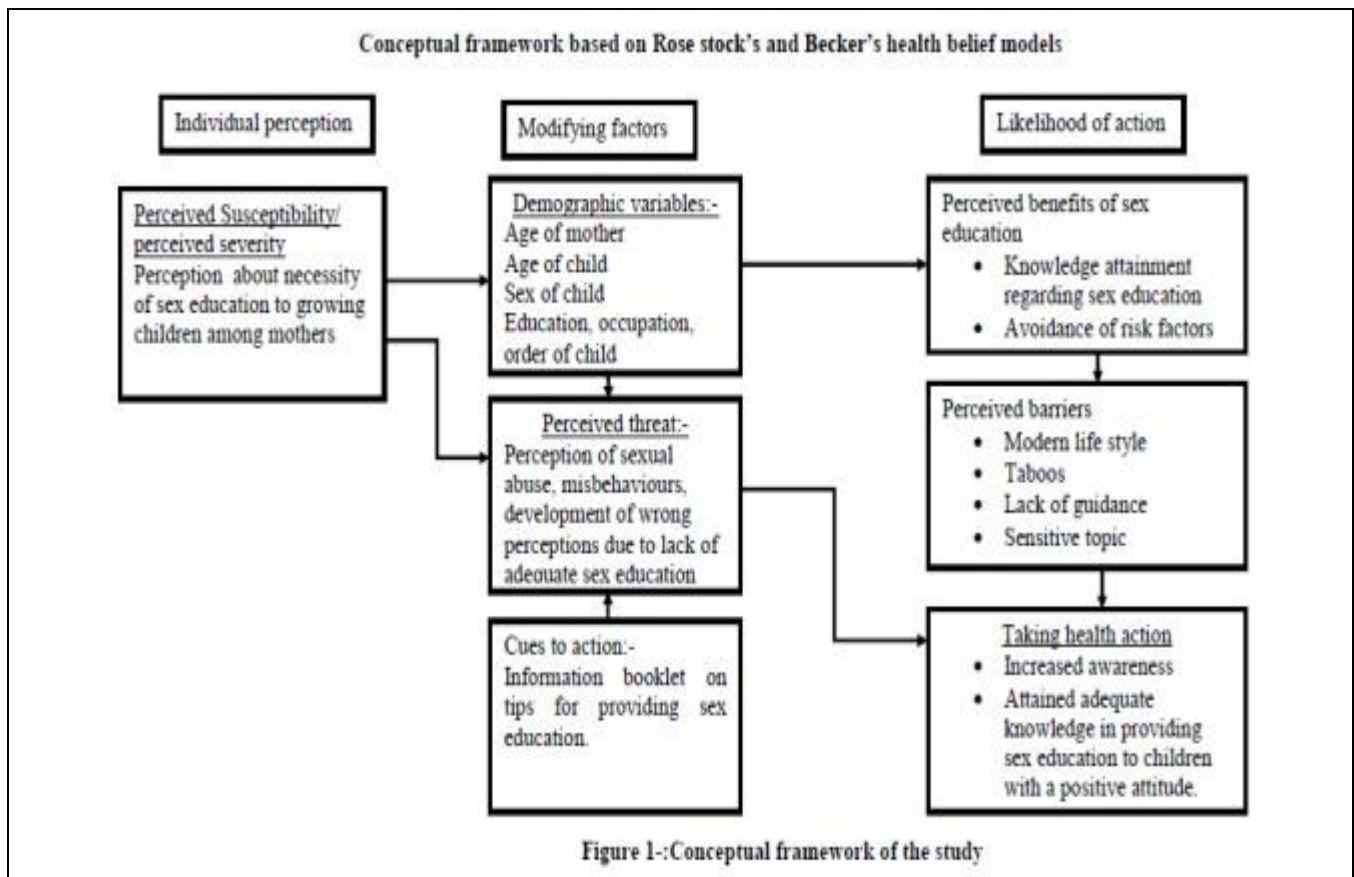
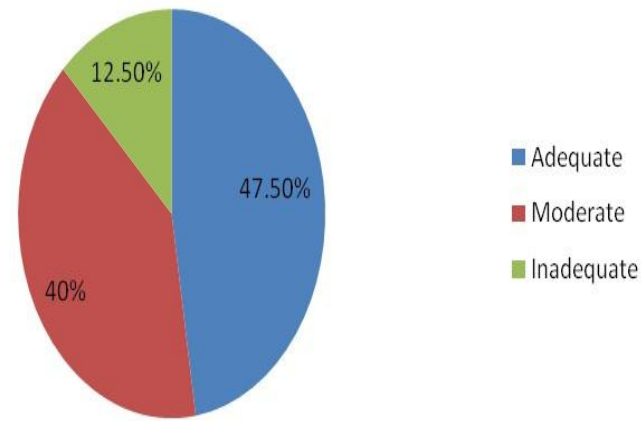
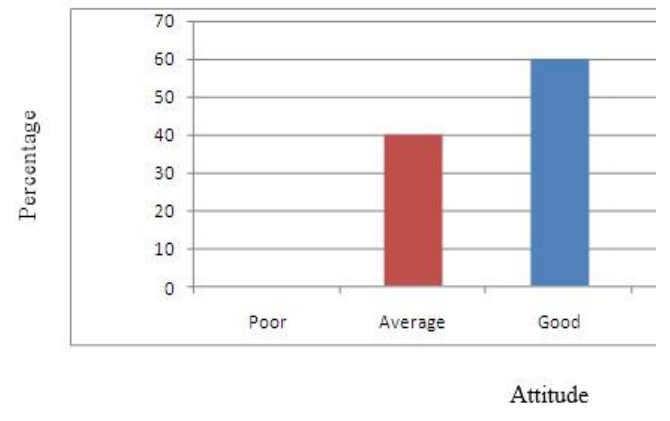
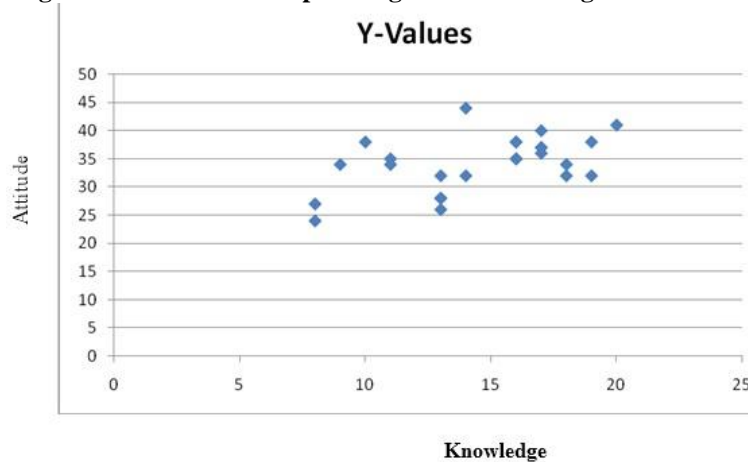


Figure 3:- Distribution of subjects based on knowledge**Figure 4: Distribution of subject based on attitude****Figure 5 shows scattered plot diagram of knowledge and attitude**

DISCUSSION

The study results showed that only less than half of the mothers (47.5%) have good knowledge regarding sex education to their school going children. These findings are consistent with the findings by Varghese J (2015) where it showed that rural mothers have moderate knowledge on child abuse and need more education[11]. The interaction with the mothers found out that many of them were unaware about the specific terminologies which can be helpful in providing sex education to their children. The study findings by Mahajan P, Sharma N (2005) showed that parents themselves lack scientific knowledge about sex education[12].

This study revealed that 60% of mothers have good attitude and 40% have moderate attitude regarding sex education to their school going children. This is in accordance with the findings of Anita, Dehata P, Meena K R and Mehta R (2014) which showed that majority of the parents opted that sex education should be made compulsory in schools from 8th standard onwards[13]. Also The findings of this study goes on par with the results of the study by Bordhan S (2014) which showed

62% of mothers have favourable attitude and highly educated parents have significantly more positive attitude¹⁴. In the present study, 72.5% of mothers have education of higher secondary level and above.

The present study showed that there is a significant positive correlation ($r=0.503$) exists between knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children. There is literally a paucity of correlational studies on knowledge and attitude of sex education.

Eventhough there is a positive correlation between knowledge and attitude on sex education, the interaction with mothers gave informations about their difficulties on this sensitive topic. A few mothers were not aware regarding the importance of this topic and also not sure about how to provide it. The previous studies showed that the major barriers of sex education by mothers were embarrassment, lack of skill for effective communication[15]; considering sex as taboo[12]; sociocultural and religious inhibitions[16].



CONCLUSION

The present study assesses the knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding sex education to their school going children. The findings of present study highlights that majority of the mothers (47.5%) have adequate knowledge and good attitude (60%) regarding sex education. The result of study revealed a significant positive correlation exists between knowledge and attitude regarding sex education.

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

Several implications can be drawn from the present study for nursing practice. The nurses should identify high risk cases among children and educate the

parents to provide sex education. Nursing curriculum should emphasize importance of sex education in children. The nurses should prepare modules and materials for promoting sex education. The nurse researches should undertake research studies to improve practice of sex education among mothers. The nurse administrators should plan and organize continuing education in promoting practice of sex education.

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