

# “Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Programme on Child Neglect and Abuse Among Mothers of Under Five Children in a Selected Hospitals at Kollam District.”

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Child neglect and abuse are major public health and social problems that affect the physical, emotional, and psychological development of children. According to the World Health Organization, child abuse includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation that may harm a child's health, development, or dignity. Children under the age of five are particularly vulnerable because they depend entirely on caregivers, especially mothers, for protection, care, and emotional support.

**Methods:** A quantitative study was conducted to assess the effect of structured teaching program on level of knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under-five children in a selected hospital at Kollam district. The objective of study were to assess the level of knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children, to evaluate the effect of structured teaching program on knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children, to find out the association between the pre-test knowledge on child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children with selected socio demographic variable. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 mothers of under five children for the study. The tools used were demographic profile and structured knowledge questionnaire.

**Result and discussion:** The findings of the study shows that the mean pre-test score is 12.033 and mean post test score is 14.87 the paired t test value for the pre-test and post-test knowledge scores is 5.22 which is greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance and there is significant difference in the mean post-test knowledge score, thus there was a significant improvement in the knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children and statistically significant at 0.001 level.

**Conclusion:** Hence the study concluded that structured teaching programme on child abuse and neglect was effective in improving the knowledge of mothers of under five children.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Mothers, Under-five children.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Child abuse and neglect, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation. These forms of maltreatment jeopardize a child's health, development, and dignity within a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Physical abuse involves intentional harm committed against a child, which often presents with injuries such as rib fractures, head trauma, or unexplained injuries. Neglect is the most common and lethal form of maltreatment, which results from the failure to provide essential care. Due to its profound physical and psychological effects, child maltreatment is a

serious public health concern, with significant short- and long-term consequence.<sup>1</sup> In many communities, lack of awareness and inadequate knowledge among mothers about the signs, causes, and consequences of child neglect and abuse can contribute to unintentional harmful practices. Some mothers may not recognize certain behaviors, such as ignoring a child's emotional needs, harsh punishment, or inadequate supervision, as forms of neglect or abuse. Studies have shown that improving parental knowledge through health education can play an important role in preventing child maltreatment and promoting healthy child development. From 2011 to 2017, there were 1285 reported cases of child abuse in Kashmir, according to a report by the Jammu and Kashmir State Commission for Protection of Child Rights in 2018. A study by the organization Child Rights in 2019 revealed that three out of every five children in Kashmir had undergone some kind of violence, which included physical, sexual or emotional abuse.<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the Jammu and Kashmir Police launched a campaign to raise awareness about child abuse, stating that they had received over 200 complaints of child abuse in the first 6 months of the large number of child abuse cases are quite often overlooked by healthcare professionals.<sup>3</sup>

A National Study on Child Abuse, a programme was conducted "Save the Children and Prayas" by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in India with the support of UNICEF. The study, which covers 13 states in India and a sample size of 12,447 children, looks at the extent and characteristics of child abuse and girl neglect in India. The study has provided revealing statistics on the extent and magnitude of various forms of child abuse and has generated data on variations among different age groups, gender variations, state variations and variations within evidence groups. According to findings, children who have experienced child abuse are at an increased risk of numerous problematics, developmental, health, and mental health outcomes. These include, Learning difficulties such as inattention and shortfalls in executive functions. Difficulty bonding with peers due to fear of rejection, internalizing their fears, leading to related issues like anxiety and depression, externalizing their symptoms in the form of aggression, defiance, and poor conduct.<sup>4</sup>

A non-experimental descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge of mothers with school age children regarding child abuse and its prevention in Bhuchio Mandi, Bathinda.<sup>5</sup> The study was conducted on 60 mothers with children in the age group of 6-12 years. Knowledge of mothers was assessed with the help of structured questionnaire using convenient non-probability sampling technique. The study revealed that out of 60, the level of knowledge of mothers 22(36.7%) were having inadequate knowledge, 23(38.3%) were having moderate knowledge, 15(25%) were having adequate knowledge. A Study on Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Programme about Prevention of Child Abuse among Parents of Under-5 Children in Paediatric OPD, Dehradun. Pre-experimental design with 30 parents of under-five children. Pre-test showed 86.7% had inadequate knowledge about prevention of child abuse. After the structured teaching programme knowledge levels improved significantly. The findings indicated that educational interventions are effective in improving parental awareness about child abuse prevention.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the importance of this issue, there is still a gap in knowledge among mothers of under-five children regarding the identification, prevention, and management of child neglect and abuse. Structured educational interventions are limited in many areas, particularly at the community level. Therefore, a Structured Teaching Programme (STP) can be an effective method to improve mothers' knowledge and awareness about child neglect and abuse. Hence, the present study aims to assess and improve the knowledge of mothers of under-five children regarding child neglect and abuse through a Structured Teaching Programme, thereby contributing to better child protection and well-being

### **Need And Significance Of The Study**

Abuse was more frequent in the higher age groups and classes at school. Abuse was also more frequent in nuclear families and families that reported alcohol use. The One-year prevalence of any abuse was 89.9% (95% CI: 89.1–90.7) suggesting that child Maltreatment was widespread. Physical and emotional abuses were also very common. Recently a case reported in Ernakulum, a 4 year old child was thrown into the river by her mother and the post-mortem report shows that the child was abused shortly before death and her paternal uncle was responsible.<sup>7</sup> Child abuse and neglect has been determined to be highly prevalent across the globe. Epidemiology survey has established globally that at least 50% of the child and youth population (aged 2 to 17) Experience violence in the past year. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) estimates Show that the majority of adolescents and adults report at least one ACE. Further, a Staggering global estimate of female victims of child sexual abuse

is about 25%. The Online environment has led rapidly changing victimization contexts. Similarly, changing policies, pandemics and extended conflict zones have created different modes Compromised child well-being

A descriptive survey was conducted in 2024 in Jhiverehdi village of Bhuddi Gram Panchayat, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, to assess the knowledge of mothers of under-five children regarding child abuse and its prevention. The study included 200 mothers selected through a non-probability convenient sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-structured knowledge questionnaire. The results showed that 22.5% of mothers had inadequate knowledge, 56% had moderate knowledge, and 21.5% had adequate knowledge about child abuse and its prevention. The study highlights the need for educational programs and awareness campaigns to improve mothers' knowledge about child abuse and its prevention.<sup>8</sup>

The United Nations target for 2030 on reduced levels of violence against children is rapidly approaching. This special issue is intended to profile review articles of topical Interest to the areas of child abuse, neglect and adversity. Topics may range from Epidemiology to intervention to policy. A descriptive study on child abuse revealed that 70% of respondents had encountered child abuse cases, with sexual abuse being the most common (58%), followed by physical abuse (28%)<sup>9</sup> About 40% of cases were reported in the hospitals where respondents worked, while 15% occurred in other hospital areas. The study found that 81% of respondents had knowledge about child sexual abuse, but only 34% were aware of the consequences of not reporting such cases. Additionally, 64% knew about the online complaint system for child abuse, and 70% were aware of the one-stop center available in their hospital. Most respondents (68%) were aware of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. However, only 36% were fully aware and 13% were partly aware of the evidence of anal sexual abuse among children and adolescents. Child abuse and neglect remain deeply relevant issues in today's society, with long-lasting consequences on the physical, emotional, and psychological well-Being of children.<sup>10</sup> Child abuse has serious effects not only on individuals but also on families, communities, and society. Recognizing warning signs, increasing awareness, and implementing prevention strategies are essential to protect children and ensure a safe environment. According to the Asian Centre for Human Rights, sexual offences against children in India have reached epidemic levels, with over 48,000 child rape cases reported between 2001 and 2011, showing a 336% increase during this period. A Government of India study on child abuse (UNICEF) also revealed that many children in India are not safe even in their own homes.

Child neglect and abuse remain significant problems affecting the health and development of young children. Children under five years of age are highly vulnerable because they depend completely on their caregivers for safety and care. Lack of knowledge among mothers about proper childcare, discipline, and emotional support can sometimes lead to unintentional neglect or abusive practices. According to the World Health Organization, nearly one billion children worldwide experience some form of violence, abuse, or neglect each year. Early childhood exposure to abuse can lead to long-term physical, psychological, and social problems. Therefore, improving parental knowledge is an important step in preventing child maltreatment. Research has shown that educational interventions can significantly improve parents' awareness and attitudes toward child protection. However, many mothers of under-five children still have limited knowledge about identifying and preventing child neglect and abuse. This gap indicates the need for effective educational strategies such as a Structured Teaching Programme (STP) to improve mothers' knowledge and promote safer childcare practices. Hence, the present study is conducted to assess and enhance the knowledge of mothers regarding child neglect and abuse among under-five children.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A cross-sectional study conducted in 2023 among parents with at least one child under 18 years used a self-administered online questionnaire. A total of 447 participants responded, with 62% females and a mean age of 37 years. About 60.6% believed that child abuse and neglect (CAN) is a common problem in Saudi Arabia. Only 53% had good knowledge of CAN, and more than one-third were unaware of the reporting hotline. Nearly half did not consider refusing childhood immunization or smoking in front of children as forms of CAN. Higher education and family income were significantly associated with better knowledge ( $P = 0.013$  and  $0.003$ ).<sup>11</sup> A study by Pappachan et al. (2024) assessed mothers' knowledge on the prevention of child abuse using a structured questionnaire among mothers attending a tertiary care hospital. The study evaluated awareness of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect. Results showed that 60% of mothers had excellent knowledge,

34% had good knowledge, and 6% had average knowledge. Most mothers were aged 26–30 years and had one or two children. The study concluded that although many mothers had good knowledge, continuous education and awareness programs are needed to further improve maternal knowledge and prevent child abuse.<sup>12</sup> A pre-experimental study was conducted in Thrissur to assess the effectiveness of a structured teaching program on mothers' knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among 30 mothers of under-five children. The pre-test results showed that 50% had average knowledge, 46.66% had poor knowledge, and only 3.34% had good knowledge. After providing structured teaching and conducting a post-test after one week, a significant improvement in knowledge was observed ( $t = 7.123$ ,  $df = 29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that the structured teaching program effectively improved mothers' knowledge about child abuse prevention.<sup>13</sup> These research study findings indicates the need for conducting teaching programmes among mothers of under-five children in order to reduce the child neglect and abuse among children.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Research Approach

A quantitative research approach was used to assess the effect of a structured teaching programme on the level of knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under-five children in a selected hospital at Kollam district.

### Research Design

The study adopted a one-group pre-test–post-test research design to evaluate the effect of the structured teaching programme on mothers' knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse.

### Variables

#### Independent Variable

Structured teaching programme on child neglect and abuse.

#### Dependent Variable

Knowledge of mothers regarding child neglect and abuse.

### Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in the paediatric ward of Holy Cross Hospital, at Kottiyam.

### Population

Mothers of children aged 0–5 years.

**Sample:** 30 Mothers of under-five children who met the sampling criteria and due to time constraints.

**Sampling Technique:** A purposive, non-probability sampling technique was adopted.

### Inclusion Criteria

Mothers of children aged 0–5 years.

Mothers available during data collection.

### Exclusion Criteria

Mothers who had attended any training programmes on child abuse and neglect.

Mothers not available at the time of data collection.

**Tools:** Structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the level of knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under-five children.

Content validity index of socio demographic variable is 0.85 and knowledge questionnaire is 0.98. Reliability obtained=0.96

### **Section A**

Demographic profile of mothers of under five children. It included age, education, occupation, religion, family type, number of children, and previous information regarding child neglect and abuse.

### **Section B**

Structured knowledge questionnaire regarding child neglect and abuse. It included multiple items, each carrying one mark for the correct answer and zero for an incorrect answer.

### **Data Collection Process**

#### **Phase 1**

After obtaining permission from concerned authorities, the demographic tool, questionnaire, and structured teaching programme were prepared.

#### **Phase 2**

Eligible mothers were selected according to the sampling criteria. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, obtained informed consent, and collected demographic data. A pre-test was conducted using the structured knowledge questionnaire. The structured teaching programme was administered with the help of audio-visual aids.

#### **Phase 3**

A post-test was conducted after 7 days to assess the change in knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse following the structured teaching programme.

### **Organization Of Findings:**

**Section A:** Distribution of demographic variables.

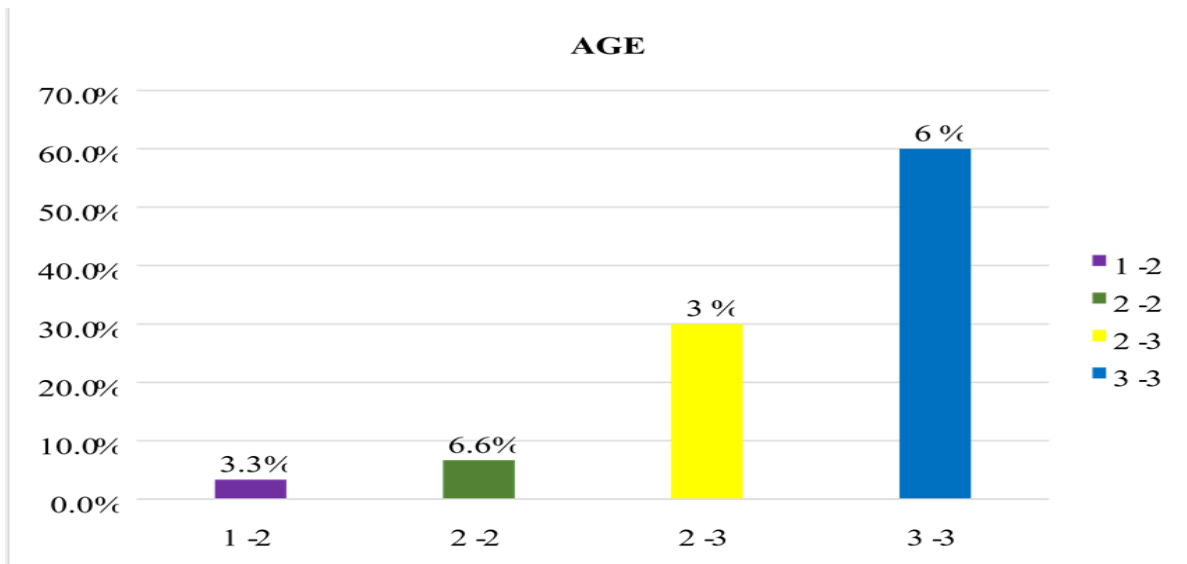
**Section B:** To assess the pre-test and post-test knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children in a selected hospital at Kollam district

**Section C:** To determine association between mean pre-test score on knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children in a selected hospital at Kollam district, with selected demographic variable.

### **Section A**

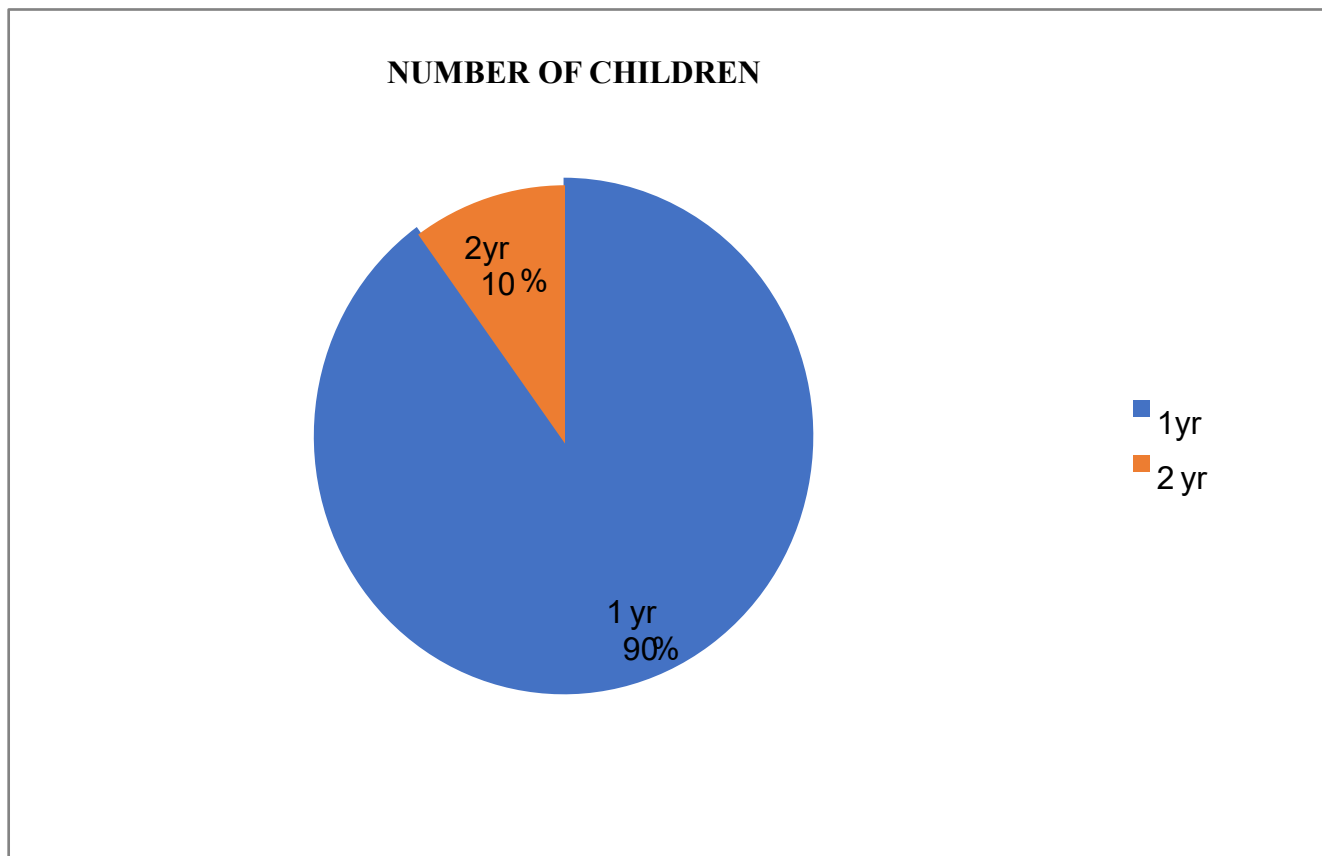
#### **Description of socio demographic variables of mothers of under five children.**

The section deals with the description of demographic variables which include age, education, occupation, and number of children and previous knowledge on child neglect and abuse



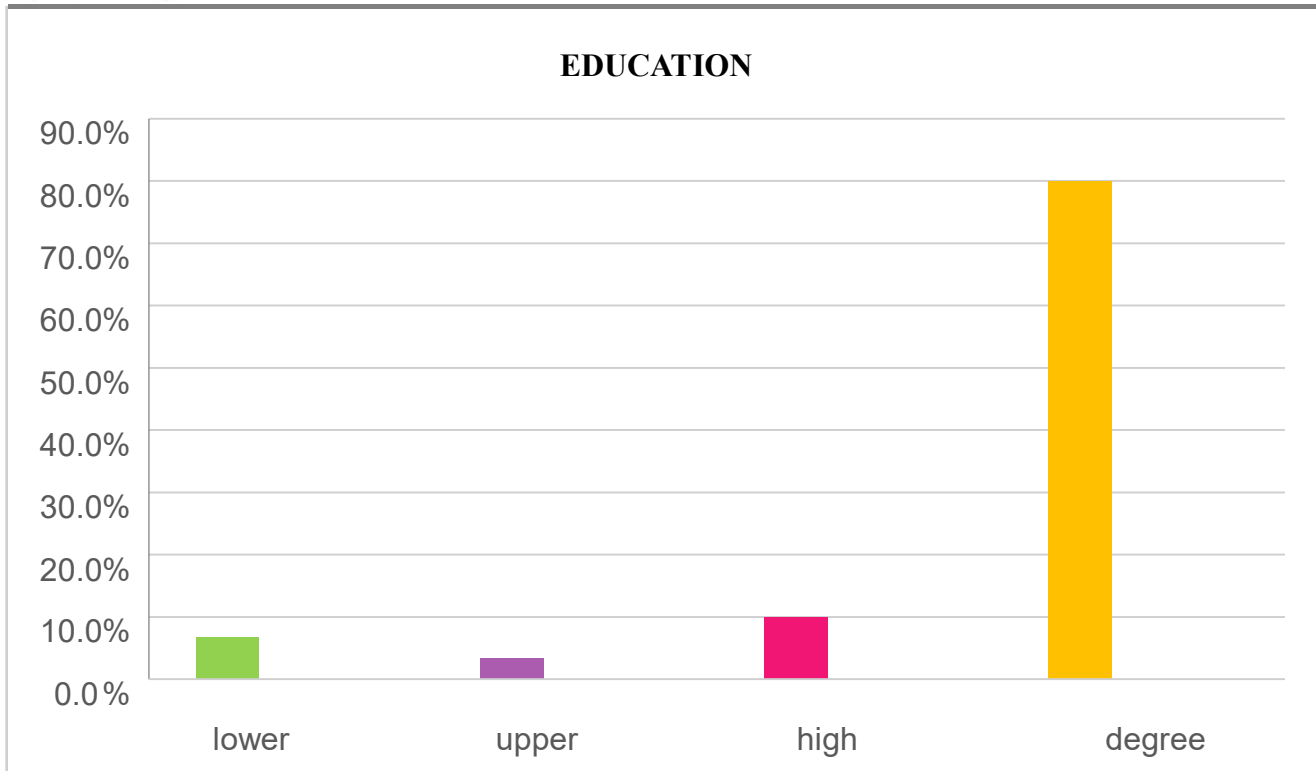
**Figure 1: bar diagram showing the percentage distribution of the sample according to age:**

Figure 1 shows that most of the under five children belongs to the age group of 3134(60%), about 30% belongs to the age group of 27-30, 6.66% belongs to the 2326 and 3.33% mothers belongs to the age group 19-22.



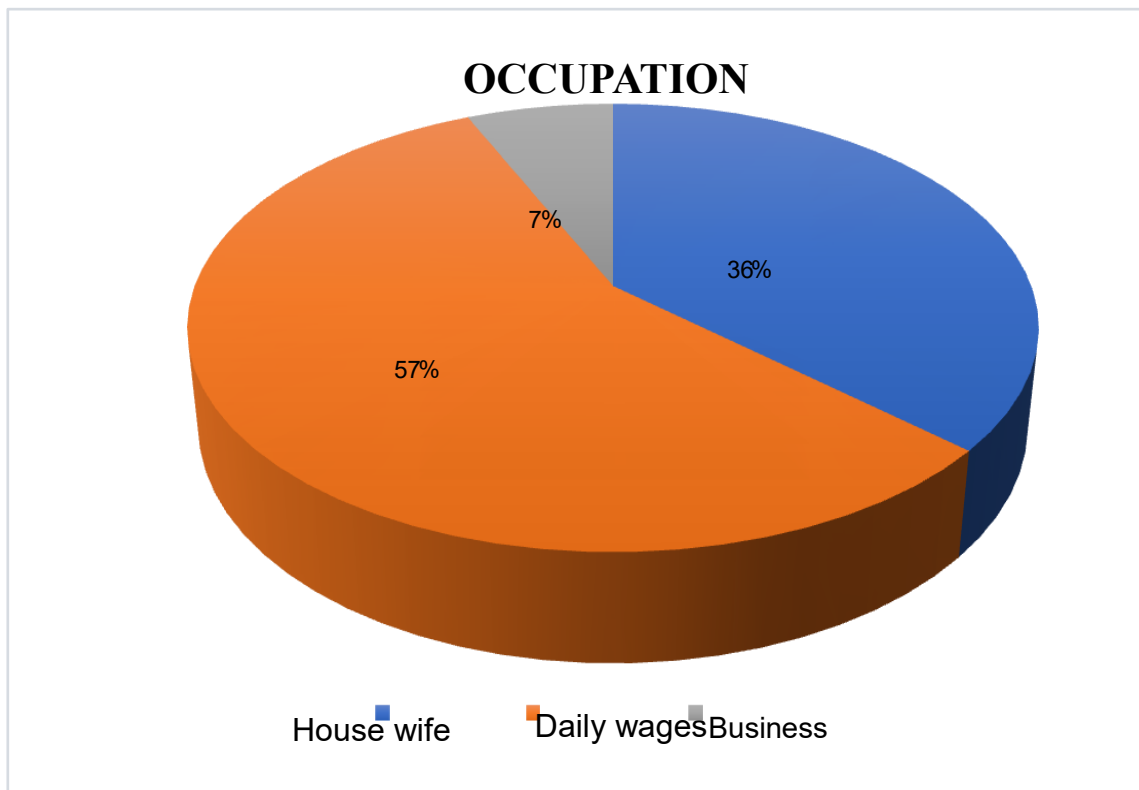
**Figure 2: Pie diagram showing percentage distribution of the sample according to the number of under five children.**

Figure 2 shows that 90% of the sample indicates number of children under one year of age among mothers of under five children and 10% of the sample indicates number of children under two years of age among mothers of under five children.



**Figure 3: Bar diagram showing the percentage distribution of the sample according to the educational qualification.**

Figure 3 shows that 6.66% of the sample indicates lower primary education, 3.33% shows upper primary education, 10% shows high school education and 80% shows degree qualification among mothers of under five children.



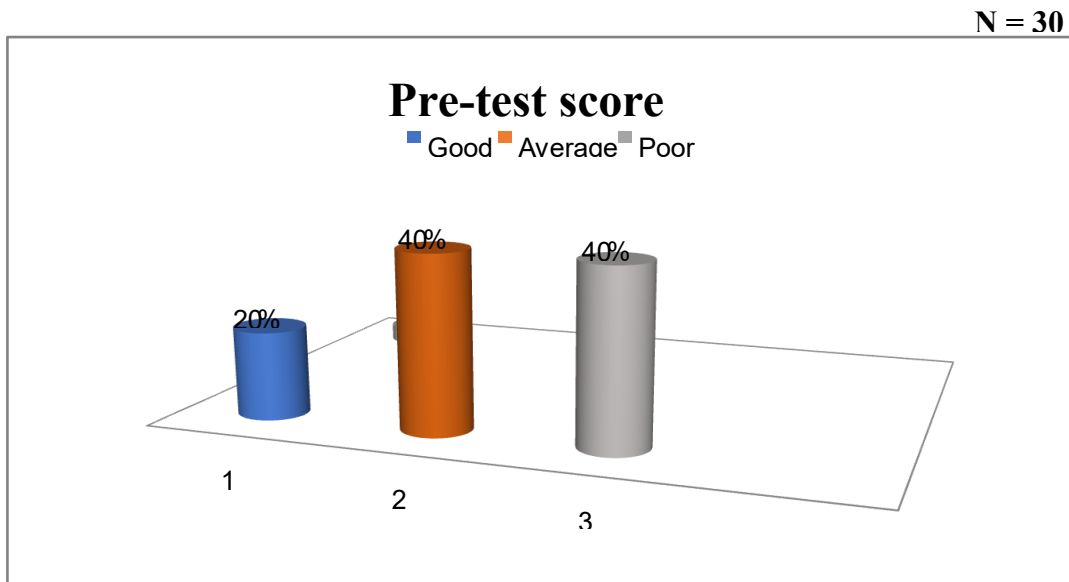
**Figure 4: Pie diagram showing the percentage distribution of the sample according to the occupation of under- five mothers.**

Figure 4 shows that 36% of the sample indicate housewife, 57% shows daily wages, 7% shows business among mothers of under five children.

**Section B:**

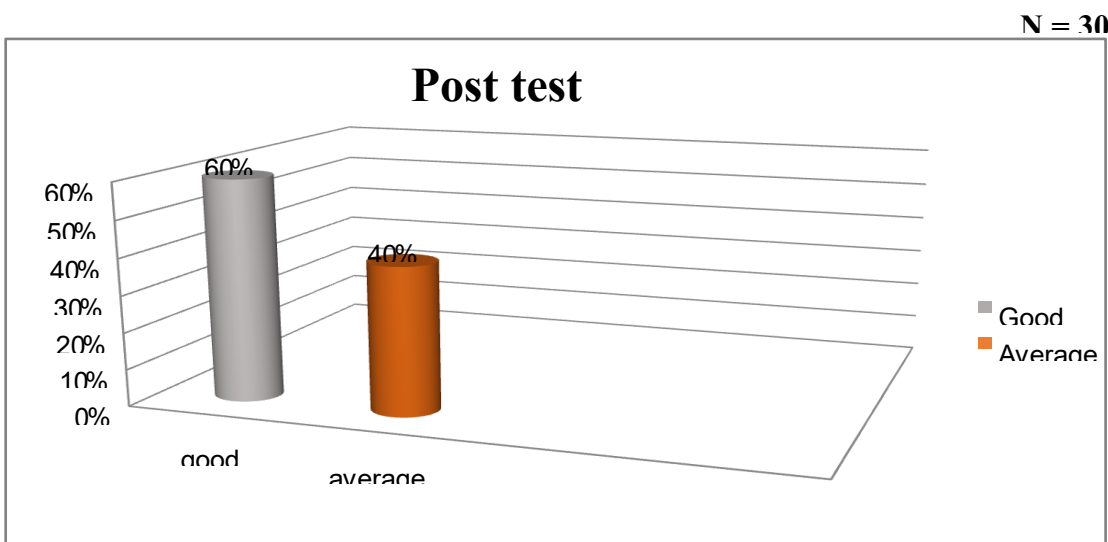
**Description of pre-test and post-test knowledge scores of mothers of under five children about child neglect and abuse**

The section deals with the knowledge scores of mothers of under five children about child neglect and abuse. The knowledge of 30 mothers of under- five children were assessed using structured knowledge questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistical method



**Figure 5: cylindrical diagram showing percentage distribution of sample according to pre-test score of knowledge.**

The figure 5 shows that before conducting structured teaching programme 40% of mothers had poor knowledge and 40% had average knowledge and 20% had good knowledge about child neglect and abuse.



**Figure 6: cylindrical diagram showing percentage distribution of the sample according to post-test score of knowledge**

The figure 6 shows that more than half sample is having good knowledge 60% and 40% of the sample had average knowledge after conducting structured teaching programme about child neglect and abuse.

**The paired t test value for the pre-test and post-test knowledge scores of knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under-five children in a selected hospital.**

Knowledge	Mean	Standard deviation	N	Mean difference	Paired t value	P value
Pretest	12.033	4.049	30	2.827	5.22	0.001
Posttest	14.87	3.041	30			

\*Significant at 0.001 level

The above table shows that the paired t test value for the pre-test and post-test knowledge scores is 5.22 which is greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance and there is significant difference in the mean post-test knowledge scores. Therefore, research hypothesis **H<sub>1</sub>** was accepted.

**Section C:**

The association between the pre-test knowledge scores of mothers of under five children on child neglect and abuse with the selected socio demographic variables. Data reveals that the calculated chi-square values were greater than the table values. The findings showed there was no significant association between the pre-test levels of knowledge with selected socio demographic variables. Hence research hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>** was rejected.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study focused on the effectiveness of structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children in a selected hospital at Kollam district. The findings of the present study showered that the posttest knowledge scores with a mean of and standard deviation demonstrated a significant increase in posttest knowledge scores with t value (t=5.22 at level of significance. Hence the structured teaching programme was effective in improving the knowledge regarding child neglect and abuse among mothers of under five children.

The findings of the study supported by a similar Study on Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Programme about Prevention of Child Abuse among Parents of Under-5 Children in Paediatric OPD, Dehradun .Pre-experimental design with 30 parents of under-five children.

Pre-test showed 86.7% had inadequate knowledge about prevention of child abuse. After the structured teaching programme knowledge levels improved significantly. The findings indicated that educational interventions are effective in improving parental awareness about child abuse prevention.<sup>6</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study indicates that more than half of the samples had good knowledge 60% and 40% of the samples had average knowledge after conducting structured teaching programme on child neglect and abuse .The present study concluded that the structured teaching programme was effective in improving the knowledge of mothers of under five children. The findings of the study can be used in the areas of Nursing Practice, Nursing Education, Nursing Administration, and Nursing Research.

**Delimitations:**

- The sample size is limited to 30 Mothers of under five children
- The study is limited to selected hospitals.

### **Implications for nursing practice:**

- Health education programs can be organized by Nurses, community health workers, and pediatric healthcare providers should conduct awareness programs to improve mothers' knowledge about child neglect and abuse.
- Parental guidance and counseling can be given such as Maternal counseling sessions during antenatal, postnatal, and immunization visits can include information about safe child care practices and early signs of abuse or neglect.
- Role of community health nurses can identify families at risk and provide education, home visits, and support services to promote safe child-rearing practices.
- Education about child protection can be incorporated into routine maternal and child health programs.

### **Implications for Policy:**

- Government and health authorities should strengthen child protection programs and reporting systems for neglect and abuse.
- Awareness regarding child neglect and abuse can be integrated into maternal and child health initiatives and early childhood development programs.
- Policies should support training of nurses, ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers to identify and manage cases of child neglect and abuse.
- Public health campaigns can increase awareness among parents and caregivers about child rights and safe parenting practices.

### **Implications for Future Research**

- Research can evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs or parenting interventions in improving knowledge and preventing neglect or abuse.
- Future research should examine factors such as education level, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, family stress, and parenting practices.
- Combining quantitative and qualitative methods could provide deeper understanding of mothers' perceptions, beliefs, and experiences related to child neglect and abuse.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Similar study can be conducted on a large sample and with different population and setting.
- Health education programs should be conducted for mothers to improve awareness about child neglect and abuse.
- Parenting training programs should be organized in community health centers to teach positive child-rearing practices.
- Regular awareness campaigns should be conducted by healthcare professionals to educate parents about child protection and prevention of abuse.
- Educational materials such as pamphlets, booklets, and posters should be distributed to mothers in hospitals and community settings.
- Workshops and seminars should be organized for mothers and caregivers to improve their understanding of child safety and well-being.

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