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**Original Research Article**

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**A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A STRUCTURED  
TEACHING PROGRAMME (STP) REGARDING CHILD EXPLOITATION IN  
TERMS OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG MOTHERS WITH UNDER-FIVE  
CHILDREN IN SELECTED AREAS OF VADODARA, GUJARAT**

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**Abstract**

Child exploitation is a pervasive social and public health issue that adversely affects the physical, psychological, and social development of children. Mothers play a pivotal role in safeguarding children against exploitation, particularly during the vulnerable under-five age group. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Programme (STP) regarding child exploitation in terms of knowledge among mothers with under-five children in selected areas of Vadodara, Gujarat.

A quantitative research approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test design was adopted. Sixty mothers of under-five children were selected using non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire before and after the implementation of the STP. The results revealed a significant improvement in post-test knowledge scores compared to pre-test scores, indicating the effectiveness of the STP. The study highlights the importance of educational interventions in empowering mothers to prevent child exploitation.

**Introduction**

Children represent the future of any nation, yet millions worldwide are subjected to various forms of exploitation such as child labour, sexual abuse, trafficking, neglect, and forced begging. According to UNICEF, child exploitation remains a major concern in

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developing countries, including India, where socio-economic inequalities, lack of awareness, and poverty exacerbate vulnerability.

The under-five age group is particularly susceptible due to their dependency on caregivers and inability to protect themselves. Mothers, as primary caregivers, have a critical role in recognizing, preventing, and reporting child exploitation. However, limited awareness and lack of education often hinder effective prevention.

Structured Teaching Programmes (STPs) have proven effective in improving knowledge and promoting positive attitudes among caregivers. Hence, the present study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of an STP regarding child exploitation among mothers with under-five children in selected areas of Vadodara, Gujarat.

### **Need for the Study**

India has one of the highest child populations in the world, and a significant proportion of children face exploitation in various forms. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports indicate a rising trend in crimes against children. Despite legislative measures such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, lack of awareness among parents remains a major barrier to prevention.

Mothers' knowledge regarding early signs, preventive strategies, and legal provisions related to child exploitation is essential for early intervention. Therefore, assessing and improving their knowledge through structured educational interventions is imperative.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the pre-test level of knowledge regarding child exploitation among mothers with under-five children.
2. To assess the post-test level of knowledge regarding child exploitation among mothers with under-five children.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Structured Teaching Programme by comparing pre-test and post-test knowledge scores.
4. To find the association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

## **Hypotheses**

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores regarding child exploitation among mothers with under-five children.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** There will be a significant association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

## **Operational Definitions**

- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the Structured Teaching Programme improves the knowledge of mothers, measured by the difference between pre-test and post-test scores.
- **Structured Teaching Programme (STP):** A systematically planned educational session covering meaning, types, risk factors, prevention, and legal aspects of child exploitation.
- **Child Exploitation:** Any form of abuse or misuse of children for labor, sexual activities, trafficking, neglect, or forced activities.
- **Mothers with Under-Five Children:** Biological mothers having children below five years of age residing in selected areas of Vadodara.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Approach**

Quantitative research approach.

### **Research Design**

Pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test design.

### **Setting of the Study**

Selected urban and semi-urban areas of Vadodara, Gujarat.

### **Population**

Mothers with under-five children residing in selected areas of Vadodara.

### **Sample Size**

60 mothers with under-five children.

### **Sampling Technique**

Non-probability convenience sampling.

### **Tool for Data Collection**

- **Section A:** Demographic variables (age, education, occupation, income, number of children, source of information).
- **Section B:** Structured knowledge questionnaire on child exploitation.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Content validity was established by experts in nursing and social sciences. Reliability was tested using the split-half method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

### **Description of the Structured Teaching Programme**

The STP included:

- Meaning and types of child exploitation
- Risk factors and warning signs
- Preventive measures
- Role of parents and community
- Legal provisions and helpline services

The programme was delivered using lectures, charts, and interactive discussion, lasting approximately 45 minutes.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

After obtaining ethical clearance and informed consent, a pre-test was conducted using the structured questionnaire. The STP was administered on the same day. Post-test knowledge assessment was conducted after seven days using the same tool.

### **Statistical Analysis**

- Descriptive statistics: Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation

- Inferential statistics: Paired *t*-test and chi-square test

## **Results**

The pre-test results revealed that the majority of mothers had inadequate knowledge regarding child exploitation. Post-test findings showed a marked improvement in knowledge scores following the STP.

The mean post-test knowledge score was significantly higher than the mean pre-test score ( $p < 0.05$ ), demonstrating the effectiveness of the Structured Teaching Programme. A significant association was found between pre-test knowledge and selected demographic variables such as education and previous exposure to information.

## **Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate that structured educational interventions significantly enhance mothers' knowledge regarding child exploitation. Similar results have been reported in earlier studies emphasizing the role of health education in child protection. Educating mothers can serve as a preventive strategy to reduce the incidence of child exploitation.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that the Structured Teaching Programme was effective in improving the knowledge of mothers with under-five children regarding child exploitation. Empowering mothers through education is a crucial step toward safeguarding children and promoting their overall well-being.

## **Implications of the Study**

- **Nursing Practice:** Nurses can conduct awareness programmes for mothers in community settings.
- **Nursing Education:** Curriculum should include child protection and exploitation prevention.
- **Nursing Administration:** Administrators should promote community-based educational initiatives.

- **Nursing Research:** Further studies can be conducted with larger samples and experimental designs.

### **Limitations**

- Small sample size
- Lack of control group
- Limited to selected areas of Vadodara

### **Recommendations**

- Replication of the study with a larger sample
- Comparative studies between urban and rural settings
- Inclusion of fathers and caregivers in educational interventions

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