
Evaluating the effectiveness of an informational booklet on knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences at selected rural areas of Sheopur district, Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child sexual offences (CSOs) remain a critical and underreported issue in India, with limited awareness among primary caregivers such as parents and teachers. Despite legal safeguards under the POCSO Act, gaps in knowledge and negative attitudes continue to hinder early identification and prevention. **Objective:** To assess the effectiveness of an information booklet in enhancing the knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences. **Material and Method:** A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test research design was adopted. A total of 400 participants were selected using systematic random sampling from the Sheopur district, Madhya Pradesh. Data were collected using a structured tool comprising demographic data, a 20-item knowledge questionnaire, and a 16-item attitude Likert scale. **Result:** Post-intervention knowledge scores showed a significant increase among both parents (from M = 11.14 to 15.61, $p < 0.0001$) and teachers (from M = 6.29 to 16.27, $p < 0.0001$). Attitude scores also improved significantly for both parents (from M = 48.16 to 38.64, $p < 0.0001$) and teachers (from M = 49.17 to 35.18, $p < 0.0001$). **Conclusion:** The information booklet was effective in enhancing knowledge and fostering positive attitudes among parents and teachers. These findings underscore the need to implement similar structured educational interventions in school and community health settings to promote awareness and prevention of child sexual offences.

Keywords- Child Sexual Offences, Knowledge and Attitude, POCSO Act, Sexual Abuse Prevention, Child Protection.

INTRODUCTION : India, home to 17.7% of the world's population, also has the largest child population globally, with over 432 million children (India Population, 2021; UNICEF, 2022). Despite various protective measures, child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a critical and underreported public health issue in the country(1). The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported that in 2018 alone, an average of 109 children were sexually abused each day, amounting to 39,827 cases filed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act (India News, 2020). Given India's population density and persistent societal stigma, the actual prevalence is likely significantly higher, with many cases going unreported(2).

Indian data show even more alarming trends, with CSA prevalence reported to be 4–41% among girls and 10–55% among boys(3). A cross-sectional study in Kerala reported a one-year CSA prevalence of 16.7% and 19.9% lifetime prevalence(4). In Spain, only 9.3% of teachers could correctly identify CSA signs despite 65.3% having received training(5). In Jordan, 74% of mothers believed that CSA education was necessary, though only 17% actively practiced preventive measures(6).

In the Indian context, several studies point to limited awareness among parents and educators. A study in Tamil Nadu found that only 12.9% of mothers were aware of the POCSO Act, and 32.8% knew about the child helpline number(7). Another study reported that merely 2% of parents were well-informed about the POCSO Act, while 21% had never heard of it(8). Teacher preparedness is also lacking, as reflected in Rani's (2019) study, which found that 43% of teachers had knowledge scores below the mean regarding CSA, and 38% exhibited negative attitudes(9).

These deficiencies in knowledge and perception can have long-lasting implications for child safety. The emotional toll of CSA includes stigmatization, betrayal, and psychological trauma that can persist into adulthood(10). Prevention of CSA hinges on awareness, education, and proactive engagement of parents and teachers, who serve as the primary protectors of children. Studies confirm that parents' and educators' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors play a vital role in recognizing early signs of abuse, promoting safe environments, and facilitating timely reporting(11–13).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to identify the existing knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences and to evaluate the effectiveness of an information booklet in enhancing their knowledge and attitude on this subject. The study also aims to determine the correlation between the knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers concerning child sexual offences. Furthermore, it seeks to find the association between their knowledge and attitude with selected socio-demographic variables.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Design and Data Collection Tool : This study used a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design to assess the effectiveness of an information booklet on improving the knowledge and attitudes of parents and teachers regarding child sexual abuse (CSA). Data were collected using a structured tool with three sections: Section A captured demographic details (age, gender, education, occupation); Section B assessed CSA knowledge through a 20-item multiple-choice questionnaire scored from 0 to 20; and Section C measured attitudes using a 16-item, 4-point Likert scale.

Study Setting : The target population for this study comprised all parents and teachers of school-going children residing in the Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Data were collected using a structured, pre-validated questionnaire after obtaining informed consent, following ethical clearance from LNCT University. Confidentiality was ensured, and all procedures adhered to national ethical guidelines.

RESULTS

Data were analyzed to evaluate changes in knowledge and attitudes before and after the intervention, assess the effectiveness of the booklet, and examine correlations with demographic variables.

Demographic Findings:-

The percentage-based distribution of participants across age, gender, and marital status categories highlights distinct demographic patterns among parents and teachers (Figure 1). In the age group 22–31 years, 57% were parents and 33% were teachers, indicating a higher parental representation in this category. Conversely, in the 32–41 years group, teachers accounted for 57%, while parents comprised 33%, reflecting greater professional representation among middle-aged individuals. Participants under 21 years and those above 42 years demonstrated a relatively balanced distribution, with parents constituting 2.5% and 7.5%, respectively, and teachers 2% and 8%. In terms of gender, 69% of female participants were parents and 29.5% were teachers, whereas 70.5% of male participants were teachers and only 31% were parents. This suggests that females were predominantly parents in the sample, while a majority of male participants were teachers.

Regarding marital status, a significant proportion of married participants were parents (92.5%), while only 72% were teachers. The widow/widower category also had a high parental representation (6.5%), with just 0.5% being teachers. Interestingly, in the single/spouse deserted category, 27.5% were teachers compared to only 1% parents, highlighting a strong skew toward

teacher participation in this subgroup. The divorced category showed no participant representation.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of parents and teachers who participated in the study. Regarding educational qualifications, a vast majority of parents (88%) had completed higher secondary education, whereas most teachers (87.5%) were postgraduates.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

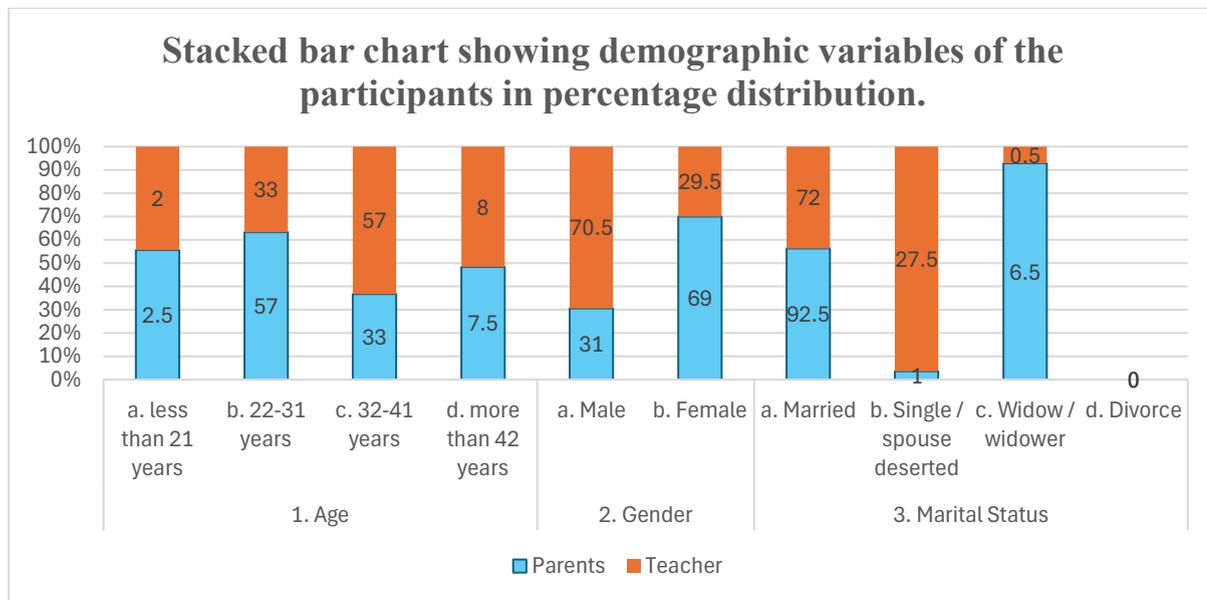


Figure 1 shows the demographic variables of the participants in percentage distribution.

While 12.5% of teachers were graduates, only 5% of parents had graduate-level education, and 3.5% had attained primary or postgraduate qualifications. In terms of occupation, 91% of parents were engaged in private jobs, with a small percentage involved in business (5%) or as homemakers (3.5%). Conversely, among teachers, 56.5% held private positions, and 43.5% were employed in government jobs, indicating formal employment predominance in the teacher group

Family income data revealed a striking economic disparity: 88.5% of parents reported earning less than ₹5000 per month, whereas 91% of teachers earned more than ₹15,000 monthly, highlighting a significant socioeconomic divide between the two groups. Religious affiliation showed that 89.5% of teachers and 53% of parents identified as Hindu. Among parents, 39.5% were Muslim, while small proportions belonged to other religious groups.

Regarding the type of family, 64.5% of parents came from extended families, while 66.5% of teachers lived in joint family systems. Single-family structures were reported almost equally

between both groups (27.5% parents and 26.5% teachers). The number of children also varied: while none of the teachers reported having no children, 18% of teachers did, compared to none among parents. 47.5% of parents and 37% of teachers reported having two children, making it the most common family size. When asked about prior awareness of child sexual offences (CSO), only 3.5% of parents had heard of it compared to 97.5% of teachers, indicating a significant gap in baseline awareness. Similarly, 98.5% of teachers reported gaining information through media sources, while only 2% of parents did so.

Table 1; showing demographic variables of the participants in percentage distribution.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

Demographic variables		Parents (in %)	Teacher (in %)
1. Education	a. Primary school	3.5	0
	b. Higher school	88	0
	c. Graduate	5	12.5
	d. post graduate	3.5	87.5
2. Occupation	a. Private job	91	56.5
	b. Govt job	0.5	43.5
	c. Business	5	0
	d. Housewife/ househusband	3.5	0
3. Family income (PM)	a. less than Rs 5000/-	88.5	0.5
	b. Rs 5001 - 10000/-	3	3.5
	c. Rs 10001-Rs 15000/-	5	5
	d. More than Rs 15000/-	3.5	91
4. Religion	a. Hindu	53	89.5
	b. Christian	0	3
	c. Muslim	39.5	7.5
	d. Others	7.5	0
5. Type of family	a. Single	27.5	26.5
	b. Joint	8	66.5
	c. Extended	64.5	7
6. No. of children	a. No children	0	18
	b. 1	35	39.5
	c. 2	47.5	37
	d. More than 2	17.5	5.5
7. How did you come to know about CSO	a. Yes	3.5	97.5
	b. No	96.5	2.5

8. Information gained through the media	a. Yes	2	98.5
	b. No	98	1.5

Table 1 showing demographic variables of the participants in percentage distribution.

Participant’s Knowledge Regarding Child Sexual offences

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage distribution of knowledge levels among teachers and parents regarding child sexual offences (CSO) before and after the administration of the information booklet. During the pre-test, a substantial proportion of teachers (67%) demonstrated poor knowledge, while the remaining 33% fell into the average knowledge category. Notably, none of the teachers exhibited good knowledge prior to the intervention. Following the educational intervention, there was a marked improvement in knowledge levels. In the post-test, 89% of teachers achieved good knowledge, while only 8% remained at the average level and a mere 3% at the poor level. This shift indicates a significant gain in knowledge attributable to the information booklet.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

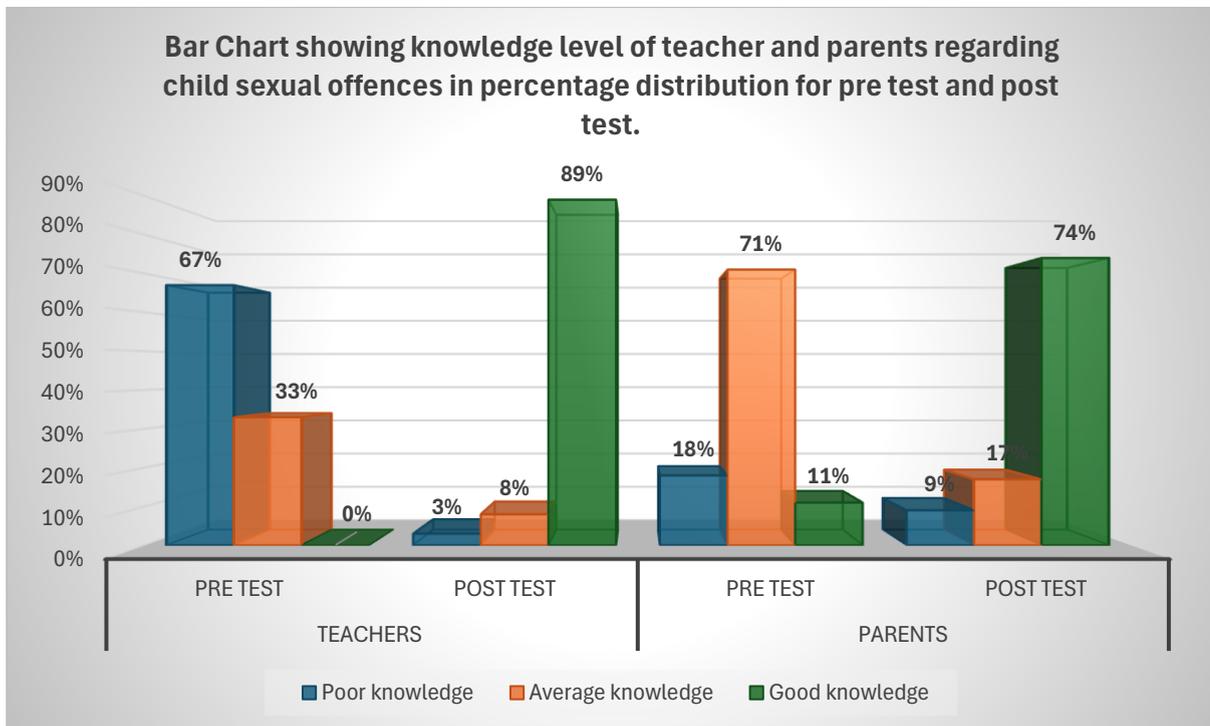


Figure 2 illustrates the percentage distribution of knowledge levels among teachers and parents regarding CSO before and after the administration of the information booklet.

Among parents, the pre-test results revealed that 71% had average knowledge, while 18% exhibited poor knowledge and only 11% demonstrated good knowledge. Post-intervention, there was a remarkable improvement, with 74% achieving good knowledge, and reductions in the proportions of both average (17%) and poor (9%) knowledge levels.

These findings collectively suggest that the information booklet was highly effective in enhancing participants' awareness and understanding of child sexual offences. The notable transition from poor and average knowledge to good knowledge in both groups underscores the intervention's success in meeting its educational objectives.

Figure 3 illustrates the comparison of mean knowledge scores and standard deviations among teachers and parents before and after the administration of the educational intervention on child sexual offences. For teachers, the mean pre-test knowledge score was 6.29 with a standard deviation (SD) of 3.98, indicating a low baseline understanding and relatively high variability in knowledge levels. Following the intervention, the post-test mean significantly increased to 16.27, while the SD decreased to 2.68, suggesting a substantial improvement in knowledge as well as more consistency in responses among teachers.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

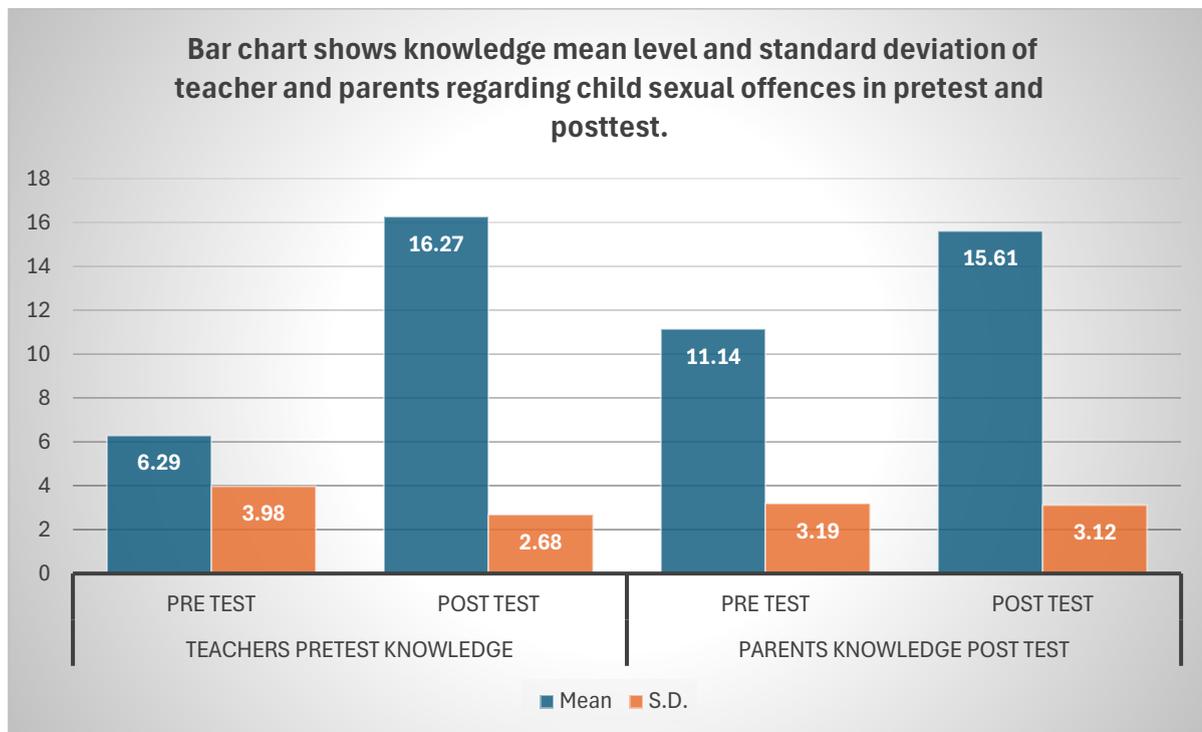


Figure 3 Bar chart shows knowledge mean level and standard deviation of teacher and parents regarding child sexual offences in pretest and posttest.

Among parents, the mean pre-test score was 11.14 with an SD of 3.19, reflecting a moderate level of baseline knowledge. Post-test results showed a marked improvement in knowledge, with the mean rising to 15.61, accompanied by a slightly reduced SD of 3.12. This demonstrates not only enhanced awareness but also relative consistency in post-intervention knowledge levels. The marked increase in mean scores across both groups from pre- to post-test, along with the reduction in standard deviation, highlights the effectiveness of the information booklet as a structured

educational tool in significantly improving the participants' understanding of child sexual offences.

Participant’s Attitude Regarding Child Sexual offences

Figure 4 presents the distribution of participants’ attitudes toward child sexual offences among teachers and parents, both before and after the educational intervention.

In the pre-test phase, only 1.5% of teachers and 4.5% of parents demonstrated a positive attitude toward child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, whereas a large majority—98.5% of teachers and 95.5% of parents—exhibited negative attitudes. Following the intervention, a modest improvement was observed. The percentage of teachers with a positive attitude increased to 6%, and among parents, it rose to 11%. Correspondingly, negative attitudes decreased to 94% in teachers and 89% in parents.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

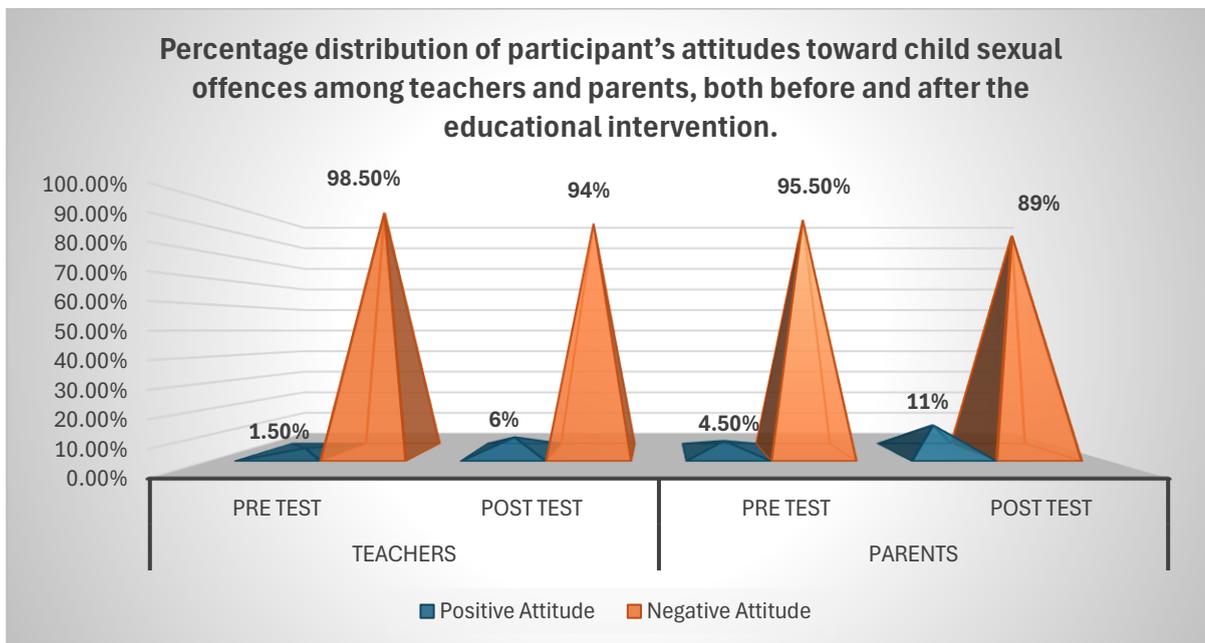


Figure 4 presents the distribution of participant’s attitudes toward child sexual offences among teachers and parents, both before and after the educational intervention.

Although the overall change in attitude was less pronounced compared to the knowledge improvement, the upward shift indicates that the educational intervention began to influence participants’ perspectives positively. These findings suggest that sustained, repeated, or more immersive educational strategies may be necessary to effect a more substantial change in attitude among parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences.

Effectiveness of Informational Booklet on Knowledge Regarding Child Sexual offences

Table 2 presents the effectiveness of the information booklet in improving the knowledge of parents regarding child sexual offences. The mean pre-test score was 11.14 with a standard deviation (SD) of 3.19, indicating a moderate level of baseline knowledge. Following the intervention, the mean post-test score increased significantly to 15.61, with a slightly lower SD of 3.12, suggesting both improvement and consistency in knowledge acquisition. The paired t-test analysis yielded a t-value of 27.31 and a p-value of <0.0001, which is statistically highly significant. This result clearly demonstrates that the educational intervention through the information booklet had a marked and positive impact on enhancing the parents' knowledge about child sexual offences.

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis of the effectiveness of the information booklet in improving the knowledge of teachers regarding child sexual offences. The mean pre-test score was 6.29 with a standard deviation (SD) of 3.98, reflecting a low level of baseline knowledge and wide variability among participants.

Table 2; shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on knowledge of parents.

Knowledge Component	Mean	SD	N	T-value	P-value	Remark
Pre test	11.14	3.19	200	27.31	<.0001	Significant
Post test	15.61	3.12				

Table 5 shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on knowledge of parents.

Following the educational intervention, the mean post-test score increased substantially to 16.27, with a reduced SD of 2.68, indicating a significant improvement in knowledge and a higher level of consistency in responses.

Table 3; shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on Knowledge of teachers.

Knowledge Component	Mean	SD	N	T-value	P-value	Remark
Pretest	6.29	3.98	200	33.24	<.0001	Significant
Post test	16.27	2.68				

Table 3 shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on knowledge of teachers.

The paired t-test revealed a t-value of 33.24 and a p-value of <0.0001, which is statistically

highly significant. These findings confirm that the information booklet was highly effective in enhancing teachers’ knowledge about child sexual offences, supporting the value of structured educational materials in professional awareness and capacity-building efforts.

Effectiveness of Informational Booklet on Attitude Regarding Child Sexual offences

The results presented in Table 4 demonstrate the effectiveness of the information booklet in improving the attitude of parents regarding child sexual offences. The mean attitude score significantly decreased from 48.16 (SD = 4.23) in the pre-test to 38.64 (SD = 3.18) in the post-test, indicating a more favorable shift in perception. This difference was statistically significant with a t-value of 32.45 and a p-value of <0.0001, confirming the impact of the intervention. Similarly, Table 5 highlights the change in attitude among teachers. The pre-test mean score of 49.17 (SD = 3.3) dropped to 35.18 (SD = 3.2) in the post-test, showing a considerable improvement in attitude. The corresponding t-value of 43.81 and p-value of <0.0001 further affirm that the intervention had a significant positive effect. Thus, both Table 4 and Table 5 provide strong statistical evidence that the information booklet was effective in fostering more positive attitudes toward the prevention and management of child sexual offences among parents and teachers.

Table 4; shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on attitude of parents.

Attitude Component	Mean	SD	N	T-value	P-value	Remark
Pretest	48.16	4.23	200	32.45	<.0001	Significant
Posttest	38.64	3.18				

Table 4 shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on attitude of parents.

Table 5; shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on attitude of teachers.

Attitude Component	Mean	SD	N	T-value	P-value	Remark
Pretest	49.17	3.3	200	43.81	<.0001	Significant
Posttest	35.18	3.2				

Table 5 shows effectiveness of information booklet regarding child sexual offences on attitude of teachers.

Correlation between knowledge and attitude

Figure 5 illustrates the correlation between knowledge and attitude scores among parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences.

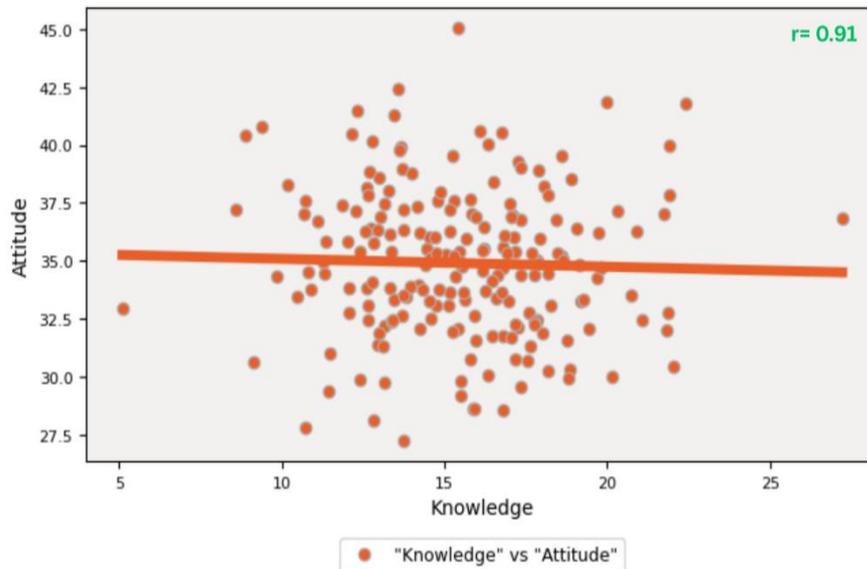


Figure 5 illustrates the correlation between knowledge and attitude scores among parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences.

Although Pearson’s correlation coefficient ($r = +0.91$) indicates a strong positive linear relationship, the distribution of data points and the nearly flat regression line suggest no meaningful trend between the two variables. This is further supported by the associated p-value (0.15), which indicates that the correlation is not statistically significant. Therefore, despite a high R-value, no conclusive association between knowledge and attitude can be established based on this dataset.

Association of Knowledge and Attitudes with selected variables

Table 6 presents the statistical association between selected demographic variables and the knowledge and attitude levels of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences. The findings demonstrate several significant associations, particularly among parents.

Table 6; shows association between knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences.

N=400

N₁-200 & N₂-200

Demographic Variable	P values for Knowledge		P values for Attitude	
	Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Parents
Age	0.399	0.003	0.97	0.32
Gender	0.276	0.966	0.95	0.0185
Marital Status	0.004	0.649	0.884	0.0001
Education	0.15	0.00001	0.76	0.0001

Occupation	0.83	0.011	0.842	0.99
Family income (PM)	0.96	0.019	0.0097	0.90
Religion	1	0.17	0.00001	0.0004
Type of family	0.78	0.00001	0.21	0.035
No. of children	0.069	0.13	0.89	0.048
How did you come to know about CSO	0.98	0.1746	0.00001	0.157
Information gained though media	0.99	0.60	0.009	0.018

Table 6 shows association between knowledge and attitude of parents and teachers regarding child sexual offences

*At 0.05 L.O.S.

The association between selected demographic variables and knowledge and attitude levels among parents and teachers was assessed using p-values. Among parents, significant associations with knowledge were found for age ($p = 0.003$), education ($p < 0.00001$), occupation ($p = 0.011$), family income ($p = 0.019$), and type of family ($p < 0.00001$). For attitude, significant associations were observed with gender ($p = 0.0185$), marital status ($p = 0.0001$), education ($p = 0.0001$), type of family ($p = 0.035$), number of children ($p = 0.048$), and media exposure ($p = 0.018$). Among teachers, only marital status ($p = 0.004$) showed a significant association with knowledge, while religion ($p < 0.00001$), source of CSO awareness ($p < 0.00001$), and media exposure ($p = 0.009$) were significantly associated with attitude. These findings suggest that demographic characteristics, particularly among parents, play a crucial role in influencing both knowledge and attitude regarding child sexual offences.

DISCUSSION

Addressing child sexual offences through targeted awareness programs is vital in low-awareness communities. This study assessed the effectiveness of an information booklet in improving knowledge and attitudes of parents and teachers in rural Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh. Post-intervention findings revealed significant gains in both domains, aligning with outcomes from similar educational initiatives. The knowledge improvement among parents—from a pre-test mean score of 11.14 to a post-test score of 15.61—was statistically significant ($t = 27.31, p < 0.0001$). Similarly, teachers showed a considerable gain from a pre-test mean of 6.29 to 16.27 in the post-test ($t = 33.24, p < 0.0001$). These results are strongly supported by earlier studies. Kodi et al. reported a mean increase from 15.04 to 20.6 in students following a structured school-based education program, with a highly significant t -value of 40.88 ($p < 0.05$), confirming that such interventions are impactful in building conceptual clarity regarding CSO prevention(14).

Parallel findings were reported by Rani et al., where post-intervention knowledge scores significantly improved among both parents (from 29.68 to 35.73) and teachers (from 39.28 to 46.53), again validating the strength of targeted educational tools in improving baseline awareness(9). A similar effect was found in a study conducted by Mrs. Hima V Krishnan's on

rural mothers in Kerala, with a rise in mean knowledge score from 14.40 to 24.08 after administering an educational package ($t = 24.73, p < 0.05$)(15).

Regarding attitude, the current study revealed modest but statistically significant improvements. Among parents, the pre-test mean attitude score reduced from 48.16 to 38.64 ($p < 0.0001$), and among teachers from 49.17 to 35.18 ($p < 0.0001$), indicating a shift toward more favorable attitudes. This finding is consistent with Kodi et al., where student attitudes improved from a pre-test mean of 30.6 to 41.96 after an educational session ($t = 34.36, p < 0.05$)(14). Similarly, Rani et al. documented a post-intervention improvement in parent attitudes (from 114.78 to 130.85) and in teachers (from 124.78 to 139.03)(9).

Interestingly, while the correlation coefficient ($r = +0.91$) in the present study suggested a strong positive relationship between knowledge and attitude, the result was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.15$). This observation contrasts with findings from previous literature where positive and significant correlations were reported between knowledge and attitude after intervention. This may be due to the short duration of the intervention or the influence of underlying cultural and psychosocial factors not adequately addressed through a single educational session.

Furthermore, the association between demographic factors and knowledge/attitude levels revealed important patterns. Among parents, variables such as age ($p = 0.003$), education ($p < 0.00001$), occupation ($p = 0.011$), and family income ($p = 0.019$) were significantly associated with knowledge, aligning with findings by Himanshu Vyas et al., who noted that education and age significantly influenced knowledge levels on child abuse(16).

These findings collectively reaffirm that educational interventions are effective in bridging knowledge gaps and initiating attitudinal change regarding child sexual offences. However, to ensure lasting behavioral transformation, multimodal and continuous awareness programs—especially targeting underprivileged and less-educated groups—are essential. Programs must be reinforced through school curricula, media engagement, and parent-teacher collaborations to build a protective and informed community.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that information booklets effectively enhance knowledge and attitudes on child sexual offences among parents and teachers. Integrating such tools into school and community health programs can support early prevention, reporting, and child safety.

Conflict of Interest- None to declare by author(s).

Financial Aid- Self financed and no financial aid applied or received.

Ethical Approval Statement: This study was ethically approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee of LNCT University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The approval was granted under Letter No. LNCTU/Ph.D./Sep-19/RDC/2020/222.

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Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy and confidentiality agreements.

Author Contributions Statement:

Raghuveer Meena: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Collection, Formal Analysis, Interpretation, Writing – Original Draft. Mr. Meena is the principal investigator of this study, conducted as part of his Ph.D. degree in Nursing.

Sunil Jaiswal: Supervision, Validation, Review & Editing. He contributed to the study by supervising the research process and validating the data and findings.

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