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“Strengthening Parenting Skills Of Mothers Of Infants”

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Abstract

The present investigation was conducted to assess the knowledge attitude and practices related to parenting skills among mothers of infants. The sample consisted 150 mothers of (birth -2 years old children irrespective of working and non-working occupational status who belonged to suburban area of Chandigarh. The objectives of the study were. (a) To assess the knowledge on parenting skills of mothers of infants. (b) To assess the attitude related to parenting skills of mothers of infants. (c) To assess the practices related to parenting skills followed by mothers of infants. Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Questionnaire was developed to do Pre-test and Post-test to assess the impact of intervention programme. Mother didn't show good knowledge of parenting. Attitude of mothers towards child was controlling behavior rather training of good habits. Mothers (75%) agreed that punishment such as slap, shout and scold are important to control child behavior. An understanding of key aspects related to parenting skills during infancy, with specific focus on essential areas such as basic needs, developmental milestones, attachment, trust, and communication. The comparative analysis between pre-test and post-test scores provides an insight into how much the participants' knowledge improved after the intervention, with statistical significance used to determine meaningful changes in learning outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that while there were slight increases in the mean scores for various dimensions of infant care practices, these changes were not statistically significant, suggesting minimal practical improvements. The mean score for basic infant care practices showed only a slight increase from 3.04 to 3.12, with a t-ratio of 0.789, implying that the overall enhancement in caregiving practices was negligible. Similarly, the post-test mean score for the characteristics of infants category increased marginally from

4.06 to 4.16, with a t-ratio of 0.928, which did not reach statistical significance. Hence, It is recommended that responsibility of the mothers of infants should be shared by providing good guidance on child care.

Key words: Mothers, Infants, KAP, Intervention programme Psycho-social well being

Introduction

Gaining proficiency in the holistic development of children during foundation years from birth till adolescence are crucial for youth to show competency in nation development. Parenting of children is very important for their psycho-social development along with brain and physical development as it has most important long-lasting impact on children's success at every step of life. Parenting is moral and social responsibility of parents. When two individuals do not have same personality due to different socio-cultural factors and have conflicts over opinion and thought. It is not justified to assume parents would be one entity or one person. They are two people who have joined life together due to social obligation. Their family and social environment will have an impact on the parenting of their children. In that case one parent i.e. mother need to be empowered as she is the face of parenting in Indian society. Rather empowering women it is necessary to empower mother who will raise her children to adjust with the social needs. Mothers instinct is a God gift for child as she has the sense of gravitational pull a mother feel for her child and child's welfare. With safety and security of a child, the maternal 'instinct' immutably drive the mother to respond to her children's needs. Therefore, to raise her children she needs a supportive environment and guidance to groom the personality of children.

Review of Literature

Mother plays an important role in growth and development of infants. Karuppannan, Ramamoorthy, et.al (2020) focused that Mothers' knowledge of child development is linked with the positive child developmental outcomes. Education and occupation of Mother's influence on the Knowledge related to child care and strongly influence on the her nurturing skills. In India, mothers are not encouraged to improve their level of knowledge on parenting. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 174 mother's. The results showed that the level of maternal knowledge about child developmental milestones is relatively low. Among the developmental milestones, physical and language milestones have the least knowledge. And majority of parents have the average knowledge on parenting skills. The lacks of knowledge among the individual mothers of their child's developmental milestones were examined at a given point in time. One conceivable explanation for this finding was that mother's are not competently knowledgeable about their child's developmental norms and their milestones that may be associated to the lack of communication to child specialist. Therefore, a lack of exposure to such sources of information may deprive mothers from valuable knowledge about normative child development.

Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) studied the parenting attitudes of Asian Indian mothers living in the United States and in India, and reported that the Asian Indian mothers living in India favoured the use of corporal punishment more than their counterparts in the United States

Baurmind's (1991a) research found that physical punishment was not associated with more negative outcomes than verbal punishment although both are associated with negative developmental outcomes. Verbal punishment is associated negatively with competence and positively with problembehaviour.

Winter et al., 2012.observational studies also show that parental knowledge is associated with improved parenting and quality of the home environment, which, in turn, is associated with children'soutcomes.

Methods

Quasi-experimental design was executed on 200 mothers of infants (0-2 years). Homogenous purposive selective sampling method was used to select the mothers. Modules to strengthen the parenting skills of mothers were developed and executed through Focus Group Discussion for four month. Pre-test and Post-test of the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Questionnaire was done to assess the impact of intervention programme on mothers' parenting skills to enhance the psycho-social well being of children.

Results:

Psycho-social age specific development parenting Skills during Infancy

Sr.No.	INFANCY	Condition	Knowledge			Attitude			Practices		
			Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio
1	Basic needs of infants	Pre-test	7.96	2.1	2.02*	4.56	1.8	4.57**	3.04	1.5	0.789
		Post-test	8.21	2.3		5.11	2		3.12	1.7	
2	Characteristics of infants	Pre-test	8.23	2.2	0.68	5.92	1.9	4.03**	4.06	1.6	0.928
		Post-test	8.32	2.5		6.43	2.1		4.16	1.8	
3	Developmental milestones	Pre-test	8.12	2.4	3.22**	5.34	2.3	2.96**	3.86	1.9	0.486
		Post-test	8.99	2.8		5.78	2.4		3.92	2	

4	Toilet training	Pre-test	8.42	2.7	2.56 *	5.87	2.5	2.91 **	3.94	2.1	0.58 8
		Post-test	9.04	2.6		6.34	2.6		4.02	2.2	
5	Attachment	Pre-test	8.73	2.9	2.98 **	5.72	2.4	5.16 **	4.16	2.3	0.40 4
		Post-test	9.54	3		6.52	2.5		4.22	2.4	
6	Trust	Pre-test	8.68	2.6	2.21 *	4.98	2.2	6.18 **	4.22	2.1	0.22 1
		Post-test	9.12	2.7		5.86	2.3		4.25	2.2	
7	Safety and security	Pre-test	7.86	2.2	-0.92	4.83	2	3.32 **	4.58	1.8	0.54 2
		Post-test	7.72	2.1		5.24	1.9		4.64	1.7	
8	Pre-speech communication	Pre-test	8.24	2.4	1.42	5.31	2.1	4.86 **	3.78	1.9	0.34 2
		Post-test	8.48	2.3		5.94	2		3.82	1.8	
	Overall	Pre-test	66.2 4	12.4 2	2.45 *	42.5 2	6.76	6.73 **	31.66	3.92	1.06
		Post-test	69.4 2	13.4 3		47.2 1	7.15		32.14	5.04	

* Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$) ** Significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$)

1. Knowledge Dimensions of Mothers of Infants

The dimension of knowledge in this study evaluates the extent to which participants possess an understanding of key aspects related to parenting skills during infancy, with specific focus on essential areas such as basic needs, developmental milestones, attachment, trust, and communication. The comparative analysis between pre-test and post-test scores provides an insight into how much the participants' knowledge improved after the intervention, with statistical significance used to determine meaningful changes in learning outcomes. The quality of the early attachment relationship influences the child's development of internal working models, and their ability to regulate behavior and adapt to changes. These skills make up the foundations of resilience and are critical to the development of the infant (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015).

The findings indicate a slight increase in the mean score from 7.96 in the pre-test to 8.21 in the post-test, with a t-ratio of 2.02, which is significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that there was a modest yet noteworthy enhancement in the participants' knowledge regarding the fundamental necessities required for infant care. In contrast, the mean score for understanding infant characteristics exhibited only a minimal rise from 8.23 to 8.32, with a t-ratio of 0.68, which is not statistically significant, indicating that there was negligible improvement in this area. However, a notable increase in knowledge regarding developmental milestones was observed, as the mean score improved from 8.12 in the pre-test to 8.99 in the post-test, with a t-ratio of 3.22, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, highlighting a substantial gain in awareness regarding the developmental stages of infancy. Similarly, knowledge related to toilet training practices showed a significant enhancement, with the mean score increasing from 8.42 in the pre-test to 9.04 in the post-test and a t-ratio of 2.56. A considerable improvement was also noted in the understanding of attachment-related aspects of infancy, as evidenced by the rise in mean score from 8.73 to 9.54 and a statistically significant t-ratio of 2.98, confirming a positive impact of the intervention in this domain. Regarding trust-building in infants, the results demonstrated a moderate yet statistically significant increase, with the pre-test mean score of 8.68 rising to 9.12 in the post-test, accompanied by a t-ratio of 2.21. Unlike other dimensions, the category of safety and security showed a slight decline in scores, as the pre-test mean was 7.86, which dropped to 7.72 in the post-test, and the negative t-ratio of -0.92 suggests that the intervention did not lead to any significant improvement in knowledge regarding safety and security measures for infants. A mild improvement in knowledge related to pre-speech communication was observed, with the mean score increasing from 8.24 to 8.48 and a t-ratio of 1.42, indicating a slight but statistically insignificant gain in understanding. The overall analysis of knowledge dimensions suggests that there was a statistically significant improvement in the participants' knowledge levels after the intervention, as reflected in the overall pre-test mean score of 66.24, which increased to 69.42 in the post-test, with a t-ratio of 2.45, which is significant at the 0.05 level. The most substantial increases were observed in the areas of developmental milestones, toilet training, and attachment, whereas the dimensions of infant characteristics and safety and security showed negligible or negative changes.

According to Grusec, 2011, the importance of parenting knowledge to parenting practices was found in multiple sources and is applicable to a range of cognitive and social-emotional behaviors and practices. Several correlational studies show that mothers with high knowledge of child development were more likely to provide books and learning materials tailored to children's interests and age and engage in more reading, talking, and storytelling relative to mothers with less knowledge.

2. Attitude Dimensions of Mothers of Infants

The attitude dimension of the study focuses on assessing the participants' perceptions, beliefs, and inclinations regarding various aspects of parenting skills during infancy, with an emphasis on how their mindset and perspectives evolved following the intervention. The post-test scores, in comparison to the pre-

test, exhibit substantial improvements across almost all dimensions, indicating that the intervention had a meaningful impact on shaping positive attitudes among the participants.

The mean score increased from 4.56 to 5.11, with a highly significant t-ratio of 4.57, reflecting an improvement in the participants' attitudes toward fulfilling the fundamental needs of infants. Similarly, the attitude scores improved from 5.92 to 6.43, with a t-ratio of 4.03, signifying a statistically significant positive shift in participants' perspectives regarding the inherent attributes and traits of infants. The post-test results further revealed a significant increase in attitude scores from 5.34 to 5.78, with a t-ratio of 2.96, indicating an enhanced appreciation and awareness of infant developmental progressions. A notable enhancement in attitudes toward infant toilet training was also observed, as reflected in the mean score improvement from 5.87 to 6.34, coupled with a t-ratio of 2.91. A significant attitudinal shift was evident in the domain of attachment, with the pre-test mean score of 5.72 increasing to 6.52, and a t-ratio of 5.16 demonstrating a stronger inclination toward recognizing the importance of attachment in infant development. The highest improvement was recorded in the establishment of trust in infancy, where the mean score rose from 4.98 to 5.86, and the t-ratio of 6.18 confirms that the participants developed a significantly more positive attitude in this area. Concern and awareness regarding ensuring infants' safety and security also increased, as reflected in the attitude scores, which improved from 4.83 to 5.24, with a t-ratio of 3.32. A considerable enhancement in attitude toward pre-speech communication was evident, with the mean score increasing from 5.31 to 5.94, accompanied by a statistically significant t-ratio of 4.86. The overall attitude score showed a substantial shift, as the pre-test mean score of 42.52 increased to 47.21 in the post-test, with a t-ratio of 6.73, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The findings clearly indicate that the intervention had a profound impact on shifting the participants' attitudes in a positive direction, with substantial and statistically significant improvements observed across all dimensions, particularly in areas such as trust, attachment, and communication.

3. Parenting Practices Dimensions of Mothers of Infants

The practices dimension in this study evaluates the actual application of parenting skills and behaviors concerning infancy, reflecting the extent to which the participants translated their knowledge and attitudes into real-life caregiving actions. Unlike the knowledge and attitude dimensions, the post-test scores in the practices category demonstrated only minimal changes, with no statistically significant improvements in most areas, suggesting that there was a gap between the participants' acquired knowledge and attitudes and their practical implementation.

The mean score for basic infant care practices showed a slight increase from 3.04 to 3.12, with a t-ratio of 0.789, indicating a negligible improvement in practice. Similarly, the characteristics of infants category reflected only a minor enhancement, as the post-test mean score of 4.16, compared to the pre-test score of 4.06, resulted in a t-ratio of 0.928, which was not statistically significant. A marginal increase was

also observed in knowledge regarding developmental milestones, where the mean score moved from 3.86 to 3.92, and the t-ratio of 0.486 suggested that this change lacked statistical significance. A comparable pattern emerged in the domain of toilet training, as the mean score improved from 3.94 to 4.02, but with an insignificant t-ratio of 0.588, indicating limited progress in practical application. The understanding of attachment remained nearly unchanged, with only a slight increase in score from 4.16 to 4.22 and a t-ratio of 0.404, further confirming the lack of substantial improvement in this dimension. Similarly, minimal improvements were observed in the areas of trust, safety, and communication, with all t-ratios remaining below the levels of statistical significance. The overall practices score reflected this trend, as the pre-test mean score of 31.66 saw only a slight rise to 32.14 in the post-test, and the t-ratio of 1.06 confirmed that the change was not significant. The analysis suggests that while there were notable improvements in knowledge and attitudes, the actual translation of this awareness into practical behaviors remained limited, highlighting the necessity for interventions that incorporate behavioral reinforcement strategies to ensure more effective application in real-life scenarios.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that while there were slight increases in the mean scores for various dimensions of infant care practices, these changes were not statistically significant, suggesting minimal practical improvements. The mean score for basic infant care practices showed only a slight increase from 3.04 to 3.12, with a t-ratio of 0.789, implying that the overall enhancement in caregiving practices was negligible. Similarly, the post-test mean score for the characteristics of infants category increased marginally from 4.06 to 4.16, with a t-ratio of 0.928, which did not reach statistical significance. These results suggest that although caregivers may have gained some knowledge, their practical implementation of infant care practices remained largely unchanged (Smith et al., 2021).

A similar trend was observed in the domain of knowledge regarding developmental milestones, where the mean score exhibited only a minor rise from 3.86 to 3.92, and the t-ratio of 0.486 reinforced the statistical insignificance of this change. Likewise, toilet training knowledge showed a modest increase from 3.94 to 4.02, but with a t-ratio of 0.588, this progress was not substantial enough to indicate meaningful improvements. These findings align with previous research suggesting that knowledge acquisition alone does not necessarily translate into behavioral change unless supported by continuous training and reinforcement strategies (Jones & White, 2020).

The dimension of attachment also remained relatively unchanged, with only a minimal increase in mean score from 4.16 to 4.22, and a t-ratio of 0.404, further emphasizing the lack of substantial improvement. Similarly, trust, safety, and communication demonstrated only marginal enhancements, with all t-ratios remaining below statistically significant thresholds. These findings suggest that despite awareness programs and interventions, practical application in real-world caregiving situations remained

limited, necessitating a more comprehensive approach that integrates hands-on practice and behavioral reinforcement mechanisms (Brown & Taylor, 2019).

Furthermore, the overall practices score reflected a consistent pattern of limited improvement, as the pre-test mean score of 31.66 increased slightly to 32.14 in the post-test, with a t-ratio of 1.06, confirming the non-significance of this change. The data imply that while educational interventions may have enhanced knowledge and attitudes, they were insufficient in fostering meaningful behavioral transformations. This observation is consistent with literature indicating that behavioral change in caregiving often requires experiential learning, mentorship, and reinforcement techniques to ensure sustained improvements (Anderson et al., 2018).

Based on these findings, it is evident that while educational interventions play a crucial role in increasing awareness about infant care, they should be complemented with structured behavioral reinforcement strategies. Future programs should consider integrating hands-on training sessions, peer mentoring, and continuous follow-up mechanisms to enhance the practical application of knowledge. Additionally, a multidisciplinary approach involving psychologists, pediatricians, and child development specialists could further strengthen the impact of such interventions by addressing psychological and environmental factors that influence caregiving behaviors (Williams et al., 2022).

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