

# Primary School Teachers Knowledge and Prevention Strategies Regarding Conduct Disorders Among Children in Selected Schools of Mysuru: A Descriptive Study

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## Abstract:

### ➤ *Background of the Study:*

Childhood is an essential stage of life characterized by swift growth in physical, mental, and emotional domains, during which important behavioural patterns are formed. Behavioural issues and academic difficulties are common concerns seen in schools. Primary school teachers have an important role in recognizing the early indicators of behavioural problems, as children spend a significant portion of their time in school.

### ➤ *Aim:*

The study aimed to evaluate the current level of knowledge among primary school teachers about conduct disorders and their prevention in children.

### ➤ *Materials and Methods:*

The study adopted a descriptive research design to explore the variables under investigation. To gather data, a sample of 60 primary school teachers were recruited using non-probability purposive sampling technique. Participants completed a structured knowledge questionnaire and the collected data were analysed using a both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

### ➤ *Results:*

The findings showed that the average knowledge score of primary school teachers was 13, with a standard deviation of  $\pm 2.76$  and scores ranging from 7 to 21. In terms of knowledge levels, 27 (45%) teachers demonstrated moderate knowledge, 17 (28.3%) had good knowledge, and 16 (26.6%) had poor knowledge. The chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant association between knowledge level and variables such as age, educational qualification, type of employment, prior identification of children with behavioural problems, and sources of information at the 0.05 level of significance. In contrast, no significant association was observed with gender and years of teaching experience ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### ➤ *Conclusion:*

The study concludes that primary school teachers have varying levels of knowledge regarding conduct disorders and their prevention, with many demonstrating moderate to poor knowledge. This highlights the need for targeted educational and training interventions to improve early identification and prevention among children.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Primary School Teachers, Conduct Disorders.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Child development is an ongoing process in which a child engages with and adjusts to their surroundings, with the environment playing a vital role in influencing growth. This process involves a combination of biological, physiological, psychological, social, and emotional changes from birth until independence. During childhood, especially between 6 to 12 years, children undergo significant transitions from dependence to increasing self-sufficiency, often accompanied by mild behavioural challenges. Behavioural issues, academic difficulties, and family-related stress are common concerns seen in school. Among these, conduct disorder is a major concern, characterized by persistent behaviours such as aggression, rule violation, and dishonesty can negatively affect a child's social and academic functioning.

Primary school teachers play a key role in identifying early signs of behavioural problems, as children spend a significant portion of their time in school. Conduct disorders, characterized by aggression, rule violation, and antisocial behaviours, are increasingly recognized among school-aged children and can adversely affect academic performance, peer relationships, and overall well-being. Early detection and timely preventive measures are crucial in minimizing the long-term effects of these disorders. However, teachers may not always possess adequate knowledge or skills to identify and manage such behavioural concerns effectively. Hence, it is important to evaluate the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention, so that suitable educational interventions can be designed to enhance mental health outcomes among school children in Mysuru.

### ➤ *Need for the Study*

Conduct disorders among children present significant challenges in educational settings. Assessing teachers' knowledge regarding these disorders is essential for early identification, effective management, and overall better outcomes for affected children. Such assessments can lead to targeted professional development, enhanced collaboration with mental health professionals, and the creation of more supportive educational environments.

Conduct disorder is a significant child and adolescent mental health problem worldwide, with a global prevalence of approximately 2–5%, and a pooled estimate around 3%. This condition is observed more frequently in adolescents compared to younger children, with boys being affected two to three times more often than girls. Its occurrence increases with advancing age, especially during adolescence, indicating a gradual development and intensification of behavioural problems over time. However, reported rates vary across studies due to differences in diagnostic criteria, assessment methods, and cultural contexts. Overall, conduct disorder represents a substantial public health concern due to its impact on social, academic, and emotional functioning in affected children.

In India, the prevalence of conduct disorder among children shows some variation across studies, but available

evidence suggests it falls within a similar range to global estimates. Community-based and school studies report prevalence rates ranging from **about 0.2% to 8.7%**, with many Indian studies finding rates around **4–5%** among school-going children.

Teachers have a vital role in preventing conduct disorders in children by recognizing early signs of behavioural difficulties, encouraging positive behaviour in the classroom, and maintaining a supportive learning atmosphere. They apply effective classroom management techniques, reinforce desirable behaviours, and respond to inappropriate actions in a timely and consistent manner. In addition, teachers help develop students' social and emotional abilities, including empathy, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. Collaboration with parents and mental health professionals helps in early intervention and effective management. Additionally, teachers contribute to prevention by participating in training programs and applying evidence-based practices in the classroom.

### ➤ *Objectives*

- To determine the current knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention in children.
- To determine the association between primary school teachers level of knowledge regarding conduct disorders and their prevention with their selected personal variables.

### ➤ *Hypothesis*

- H<sub>1</sub>: There will be significant association between primary school teachers level of knowledge regarding conduct disorders and their prevention with their selected personal variables.

### ➤ *Assumptions*

- Primary school teachers possess a certain level of basic understanding about conduct disorders and their prevention in children.
- The knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention can support early identification of such disorders among school children.

### ➤ *Delimitations*

- The study was limited to 60 primary school teachers working in selected primary schools in Mysuru.
- The study focused solely on primary school teachers, excluding administrative staff and other non-teaching personnel.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main aim of this study was to evaluate the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders in children. A descriptive research design was used for this purpose, as it allowed the collection of information about the existing level of knowledge without manipulation of variables.

### A. Variables Under Study

#### ➤ Study Variable:

The level of knowledge among primary school teachers concerning conduct disorders and their prevention in children.

#### ➤ Personal Variables:

Age, gender, educational qualification, years of teaching experience, type of employment, prior identification of children with behavioural problems, and sources of information related to conduct disorders.

#### ➤ Setting of the Study:

The research was carried out in selected schools located at Mysuru, i.e., St. Mary's English Higher Primary School, Ramanuja Road, Ramachandra Agrahara at Mysuru and Nalanda English School, Vidyaranyaapuram at Mysuru, Karnataka.

### B. Population

The study population comprised primary school teachers.

### C. Sample and Sampling Technique

The study sample included 60 primary school teachers selected from selected schools in Mysuru. Participants were recruited using a non-probability purposive sampling technique.

### D. Criteria For Sampling

#### ➤ Inclusion Criteria

- Primary school teachers who are
- Having valid teaching qualification or certification appropriate for primary school education.
- Willing to participate in the study

#### ➤ Exclusion Criteria

- Primary school teachers who are
- Working on a part-time basis with limited and inconsistent interaction with the school environment and students.
- Having less than one year of teaching experience in primary schools
- Having prior extensive training or education specifically focused on conduct disorders.
- Having administrative roles

## III. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE AND INSTRUMENTS

#### ➤ Selection and Development of Data Collection Tools:

A research instrument is a tool used to gather data. After an extensive review of the literature, the investigators developed the following instruments for the study.

- Proform for selected Personal Variables of primary school teachers
- Structured Knowledge Questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention in children.

#### ➤ Description of Proforma for Selected Personal Variables:

This section consists of basic details of primary school teachers, including age, gender, educational qualification, years of teaching experience, type of employment, previous identification of children with behavioural problems, and sources of information related to conduct disorders.

#### ➤ Description of Structured Knowledge Questionnaire:

The investigators developed a structured knowledge questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention in children.

#### ➤ The Following Steps were Followed in Constructing the Questionnaire:

- Review of relevant literature related to conduct disorders and their prevention in children.
- Consultation with experts to identify and finalize the content areas.
- Development of a blueprint for the questionnaire.

The blueprint categorized the knowledge items under the following headings: meaning and definition of conduct disorders (3 items), types of conduct disorders (3 items), etiology and risk factors (5 items), clinical manifestations (5 items), complications (1 item), and management of conduct disorders (6 items).

The questionnaire consists of 23 multiple-choice questions, each with four options. Each correct response is awarded one mark, while incorrect responses receive zero marks. The total possible score ranges from 0 to 23. Based on the scores, knowledge levels were classified as poor (<50%), moderate (50–75%), and good (>75%).

#### ➤ Reliability

The reliability of the structured knowledge questionnaire on conduct disorders and their prevention in children was established using the split-half method. The tool was administered to 30 primary school teachers, and the Karl Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The obtained *r* value of 0.823 indicated that the instrument had good reliability.

#### ➤ Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out after obtaining permission from the appropriate authorities. The objectives were to pre-test the data collection tool, evaluate the feasibility of the study, and refine the plan for statistical analysis. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. The results of the pilot study confirmed that the study was feasible.

#### ➤ Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee. Formal permission was also secured from the selected schools. Participants were informed about the purpose and importance of the study, and the nature of their involvement was clearly explained. Confidentiality was ensured, and informed consent was obtained prior to data

collection. Data were gathered using the structured knowledge questionnaire.

➤ *Plan for Data Analysis*

Data analysis involves the systematic organization, classification, and interpretation of collected data to test research hypotheses. In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were planned for data analysis.

➤ *Descriptive Statistics*

- Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe selected personal variables.
- Mean, median, range, and standard deviation were used to summarize the knowledge scores of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention.
- Frequency and percentage were used to present the distribution of teachers based on their level of knowledge.

➤ *Inferential Statistics*

- The chi-square test was computed to determine the association between the level of knowledge of primary school teachers regarding conduct disorders and their prevention and their selected personal variables.

**IV. RESULTS**

The analyzed data were systematically organized and presented in line with the objectives of the study.

*Section A: Description of Selected Personal Variables of study Participants*

More than half of the primary school teachers, 31 (51.6%), belonged to the age group of 36–40 years. This was followed by 13 (21.7%) who were aged 40 years and above, 9 (15%) in the 31–35 years group, and 7 (11.7%) in the 26–30 years group. The majority of participants were female (46; 77%), while 14 (23%) were male. In terms of educational

qualification, 22 (36.7%) held a B.Ed degree, 21 (35%) had completed M.Ed, and 17 (28.3%) possessed a graduate degree. Regarding teaching experience, 22 (36.7%) had 7–10 years of experience, 14 (23.3%) had 4–6 years, 13 (21.7%) had 11–13 years, and 11 (18.3%) had 1–3 years of experience.

Most of the teachers were permanent staff members 46 (77%), while 14 (23%) were employed on a temporary basis. A majority of participants 40 (67%) reported that they had not identified any children with behavioural problems, whereas 20 (33%) had encountered such cases. Concerning sources of information, 34 (56%) identified health personnel as their main source, followed by 15 (25%) who cited mass media, and 11 (19%) who obtained information from family members.

*Section B: Knowledge of Primary School Teachers Regarding Conduct Disorders and their Prevention Among Children*

➤ *Mean, Median, Range and Standard Deviation of Knowledge Scores*

The knowledge scores obtained from the participants were compiled and entered into a master sheet, and the total scores were calculated. Statistical measures such as mean, median, standard deviation, and range were computed. The findings showed that the mean knowledge score was 13, with a standard deviation of ±2.76, indicating a moderate variation in scores. The scores ranged from a minimum of 7 to a maximum of 21.

➤ *Distribution of primary school teachers based on their level of knowledge regarding conduct disorders and their prevention among children*

The knowledge score was ranged from 7-21. The knowledge score was further arbitrarily divided as poor knowledge (<11), moderate knowledge (11-17), good knowledge (>17).

Table 1 The Distribution of Primary School Teachers Based on their Level of Knowledge Regarding Conduct Disorders and their Prevention Among Children, Expressed in Terms of Frequency and Percentage. n= 60

Level of knowledge	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor knowledge	16	26.66
Moderate knowledge	27	45
Good knowledge	17	28.33

The results show that most primary school teachers, 27 (45%), had a moderate level of knowledge, while 17 (28.3%) demonstrated good knowledge and 16 (26.6%) had poor knowledge.

*Section C: Association Between level of Knowledge and Selected Personal Variables of Primary School Teachers.*

➤ *Association Between Primary School Teachers Level of Knowledge Regarding Conduct Disorders and their Prevention Among School Children with their Selected Personal Variable.*

To find out the association between level of knowledge of primary school teachers and their personal variables, chi square was computed and following null hypothesis is stated.

H<sub>0</sub>: There will be no Significant Association Between Primary School Teachers Level of Knowledge Regarding Conduct Disorders and their Prevention among School Children with their Selected Personal Variables.

The calculated chi-square values showed a statistically significant association at the 0.05 level with variables such as age, educational qualification, type of employment, prior identification of children with behavioural problems, and source of information. However, no significant association was observed with gender and years of teaching experience (p > 0.05).

## V. DISCUSSION

The study findings on knowledge levels showed that most primary school teachers, 27 (45%), had a moderate level of knowledge, while 17 (28.3%) demonstrated good knowledge and 16 (26.6%) had poor knowledge. These results are in agreement with the findings of a study conducted by John A, Smith B, and Adams C. on teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward children with conduct disorders, which also reported a similar distribution of knowledge levels among primary school teachers. This indicates a consistent pattern in teachers' knowledge regarding behavioral problems among children.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendation is suggested:

- Planned educational programmes and regular in-service training sessions should be organized to improve the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding behavioural problems in children.
- Development and dissemination of simple guidelines and teaching modules may support teachers in early identification and management.
- Awareness programs should be organized to emphasize the importance of early detection of behavioural problems.
- Studies involving larger sample sizes and varied settings are recommended to enhance generalizability and to assess the effectiveness of educational intervention.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The current study examined the level of knowledge among primary school teachers regarding behavioural problems in children. The results indicated that the majority possessed a moderate level of knowledge, with smaller proportions exhibiting higher and lower levels. These findings indicate the need to strengthen teachers' understanding for effective early identification and management. Certain demographic variables were significantly associated with knowledge levels. Health personnel were the most common source of information. Overall, the study highlights the need for targeted educational interventions to improve teachers' knowledge and support better child outcomes.

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