

Effectiveness of Assertive Training Programme on Abuse

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ABSTRACT: Abuse is the use of some bad words or treating someone other with harmful treatment that includes mental, physical, sexual, verbal or intellectual maltreatment. Adolescence is the transition age group that includes major changes in life like social, mental, physical and emotional changes. Thus, the adolescents are more prone to such conditions and dire need to be assertive in those particular situations. Assertive training is the procedure of acquiring skills within self and standing for the rights of one's own and is used and taught to adolescents as it can help in immensely improving their social skills, self-esteem and concept. The primary objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of assertive training programs on knowledge regarding the prevention of abuse among adolescents. A one-group pre-test post-test design was employed to get data collected. The study sample comprised 200 adolescents and a self-structured knowledge questionnaire was used for evaluating the knowledge regarding the prevention of abuse among adolescents. Assertive Training Program was prepared and administered to the adolescents. The study revealed that after the administration of the Assertive Training Program majority of the adolescents were having average knowledge on prevention of abuse. After the administration of the Assertive Training Program sumptuously significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores regarding prevention of abuse among adolescents.

Key Words: Assertive Training Program, Abuse, Effectiveness, Prevention of Abuse, Knowledge, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Abuse is an inappropriate behaviour and harmful treatment that immensely influences many populations throughout the world. It is the inappropriate use or treating of the person who is often done by the abuser to an unwarranted or an inappropriate profit. The abuse is classified in many types like physical maltreatment, verbal maltreatment, assault, violation, rape or eve-teasing. A great deal of maltreatment is unavoidable and only can be escaped once they take place. Eve-teasing and sexual abuse are two types of

abuse.¹ Eve-teasing is the making of unwanted sexual remarks in public places² and sexual abuse is sexual behaviour acted upon without consent³ Assertive training is the program that is used for modulating the behaviour of the person and stand for their rights in the right way. It helps in empowering themselves, interacts equally with every person in society and copiously creates a positive sense of one. The principal aim of assertiveness training is to teach the person about using social skills in social gathering and recognizing the needs and outcomes for the communication⁴.

The world health organization estimates that 879,000 adolescents have experiences with sexual abuse⁵. According to a census, in the world, the maximum number of adolescents i.e. 375 million is living in India and these are covering 40% of India's total population. Out of this 40% of the population, 69% of adolescents are the victim of different abuse like physical, emotional and sexual abuse. According to a report released in 2016 on criminal offences in New Delhi, India presented by the former Home Minister of India Rajnath Singh, 1, 06,958 cases were reported about the crimes for adolescents in the year 2016. Out of these, 36,022 cases were reported for sexual abuse and the reason was neglect and unable to discuss.⁶

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To assess the pre-test knowledge regarding prevention of abuse among adolescents.
- ❖ To plan and implement the assertive training programme regarding the prevention of abuse among adolescents.
- ❖ To assess the post-test knowledge regarding prevention of abuse among adolescents.
- ❖ To compare the pre-test and post-test knowledge regarding prevention of abuse among adolescents.

LITERARY REVIEW

Makinde et al. (2014) evaluated the effects of assertiveness training on self-esteem in Lagos

secondary schools. The sample selected was a total of 96 adolescents i.e. 48 males and 48 females from schools. The research design was quasi-experimental with a pre-test post-test control group method was undertaken. The findings concluded that assertiveness training and mentoring were quite effective for increasing self-efficiency. The study also concluded that there was no association between religion and the educational status of parents with assertiveness training and mentoring.⁷

Abraham (2016) conducted a quasi-experimental study of the management of sexual harassment through assertiveness skills. The study consisted of 150 adolescent girls. The findings revealed that majority of adolescent girls have some form of sexual harassment experience. There is a slight change in assertiveness level after intervention as well as a change in management of sexual harassment skills.⁸

Lobo (2018) conducted a research study on the relationship of sexual abuse knowledge with assertiveness skills and self-confidence among young adolescent girls. The study comprised the four selected high schools in Mangalore city. The sample size was 100 respondents, i.e. 25 girls of age group 13-15 years from each school. The research study concluded that nearly half of the girls were having poor knowledge. The findings also revealed that there is a significant increase in the knowledge of the girls with increasing assertiveness scores.⁹

Amole (2018) made an ardent study to know the impact of assertive training programs among adolescent. The study findings revealed that a highly significant difference was noticed between before and after training programs regarding the practice of communication skills, assertiveness and self-esteem in combating abuse.¹⁰

Nwadinobi (2019) conducted a study for assessing the role of assertiveness training programs for the prevention of non-consensual sexual experiences and abuse. The total study sample in the research study was 50 girls. The study indicated that 6 sessions were administered among 50 girls. The findings revealed that there is a significant improvement in the knowledge that non-consensual sexual abuse is a legal issue.¹¹

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sl. No	Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
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MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Puttur educational division of Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh. There are 700 high schools (Government and Private) in Chittoor district. In order to select the determined sample, multi-stage random sampling method had been employed. For this purpose, at the first step four educational divisions namely Chittoor, Tirupati, Puttur and Madanapalli are listed and Puttur division was randomly selected for the study. The total strength of students in 8th and 9th standard in Puttur division was 10,722. At the second stage, from 16 mandals in Puttur division two mandals (clusters) namely Vedurukuppam (9 schools) and Nagalapuram (5 schools) are randomly selected. The strength of students in these two clusters was 1,252. In the next stage, two schools from each of these two clusters, i.e. a total of four schools namely Pachikapallam and Allamadugu from Vedurukuppam cluster and Beerakuppam and Vembakam from Nagalapuram cluster were randomly selected. From the total of 460 students from these four schools, 200 students were selected following systematic random sampling technique by listing the names alphabetical order (boys and girls) and every second member was selected. The sample size was computed considering 10% of non-response rate. Thus, the final sample (size) consisted of 200 students who were selected from those studying 8th and 9th standards and whose age range was 13–15 years.

Differentials in Assertiveness Skills across selected background characteristics is carried out with bivariate analysis making use of mean scores of assertiveness skills, standard deviations and tests of significances, viz., independent sample t-test. All these are discussed with connected hypotheses, data (tables) and a small number of graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding the background characteristics of the respondents (*school-going students* in the presence context) is very much essential and necessary for the interpretation of results. Details of information related to socio-demographic profile (characteristics) of the school-going adolescents are presented in Table 1.

1	Age		
	13 Years	53	26.5
	14 Years	110	55.0
	15 Years	37	18.5
2	Gender		
	Male	108	54
	Female	92	46
3	Class		
	8 th Standard	62	31
	9 th Standard	138	69
Total		200	100

Age Distribution

Age is one of the pivotal demographic characteristics of the human beings. Table 1 shows that a sizeable majority of the respondents (55.0%) have completed 14 years (at the time of survey). On the other hand, around 26 per cent of the respondents have completed 13 years and around 19 per cent of the respondents at 15 years and above. The average age of respondents is $13.92 \text{ years} \pm 0.668$. Such pattern of age distribution is quite possible as the respondents were selected from those studying 8th and 9th standards only.

Gender

Gender is one of the major socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, which is likely to affect almost all their life-time events and behaviour. Gender distribution of the respondents demonstrates that among the sample respondents, boys are fairly higher in number than girls (54% vs. 46%). Compared to the situation of primary schooling of girls during 3-4 decades back, the situation has improved much better, but still their enrolment at middle-high school levels is somewhat lower than the boys.

Class of Studying

Distribution of respondents by class (Fig.1) highlights that a large majority of them (69%) are studying in 9th standard and the remaining 31% of them are attending 8th standard. This pattern is expected because of sample selection of respondents and their willingness to participate in this research investigation.

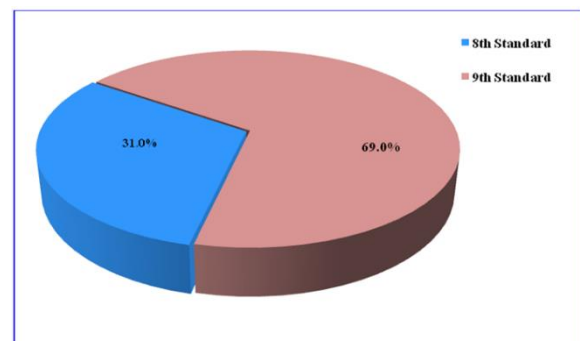


Fig.1 Distribution of Respondents by Class in which Studying

2. Measurement of Assertiveness Skills and Patterns

The assertiveness skills were measured through a scale developed by Erickson & Noonan's (2018) '*Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire*'. In this instrument, there are 20-items for which the responses from the school-going adolescents have been obtained on 5-point Likert type scale. Then the scoring is assigned as '1' to '5' to the responses ranging from 'Not very like me' to 'Very like me'. The scores for each respondent have been pooled together and then converted the pooled scores to a 100-point scale (scores).

a) Assertiveness Skills at Pre-test and Post-test Stages

After conversion the pre-test score range varies from 28 to 66, whereas similar scores at the post-test stage varied between 71 and 84. Here, it is to be interpreted that *higher the score higher will be the assertiveness skills among the school-going adolescents*. Data related to the patterns of assertiveness skills scores at pre-test and post-test stages (in terms of frequencies and percentages) are provided in Table 2 and Fig.2.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Cumulative Scores of Assertiveness Skills at Pre-test and Post-test Stages

Sl. No.	Cumulative Scores of Assertiveness Skills	Pre-test Stage		Post-test Stage	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	35 – 50	55	27.5	0	0.0
2	51 – 60	130	65.0	0	0.0
3	61 – 70	75	7.5	0	0.0
4	71 – 80	0	0.0	177	88.5
5	81 – 84	0	0.0	23	1.5
Total		200	100	200	100

The Table 2 revealed that a large percentage of the respondents' cumulative scores of assertiveness skills, at pre-test stage, fall in the range of 51–60 (65.0%), a sizeable percentage of them (27.5%) in the range of 35–50 and only 7.5% of them scored higher cumulative scores of 61 to 66. In contrast, a greater majority of the respondents' scores at the post-test stage fall in the range of 71–80 and remaining little over one-tenth of them (11.5%) scores are in between 81 and 84. By and large, it can be concluded that assertive skills have lot of impact on abuse.

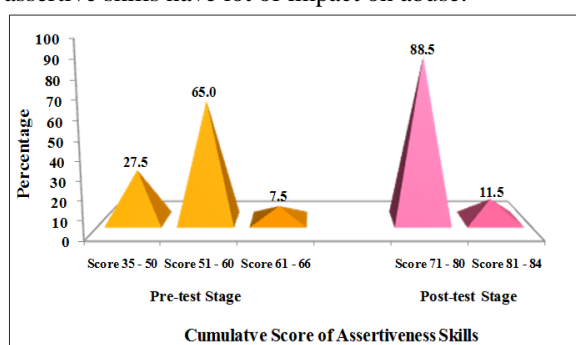


Fig.2 Distribution of Respondents by Cumulative Scores of Assertiveness Skills at Pre-test and Post-test Stages

Pre-test Score of Assertiveness Skills by Demographic Characteristics

This sub-section focuses on to accomplish one of the objectives of this research work, viz., *to examine the differentials in mean pre-test score of assertiveness skills among respondents (or associated with) across their background factors*. This endeavour has been carried out by the researcher through bivariate analysis with mean scores (and standard deviations) of assertiveness skills at pre-test stage by various background factors with suitable tests of significance (t-test). The three factors considered in the analysis include *age, gender and class*, the results have been given (in spite of not significant) as they are the fundamental background characteristics of the sample respondents (Table 3).

Table 3: Mean Pre-test Score of Assertiveness Skills among School-going Adolescents across their Age, Gender and Class in which Studying

Sl. No.	Demographic Characteristics	Assertiveness Skills Score			F- /t-Value P-Value Sig. Level
		N	Mean	SD	
1	Age				
	13 Years	53	53.25	5.83	0.014 ^{NS} 0.986
	14 Years	110	53.14	5.80	
	15 Years	37	53.03	7.04	
2	Gender				
	Male	108	53.20	6.00	0.149 ^{NS} 0.882
	Female	92	53.08	6.08	
3	Class				
	8 th Standard	62	53.31	5.48	0.203 ^{NS} 0.839
	9 th Standard	138	53.09	6.28	
Total/Average		200	53.15	6.02	

Note: NS = Not Significant

Age of Respondents and Assertiveness Skills

Age of the respondents is one of the key demographic variables, which is likely to influence their various

behavioural aspects. Hence, it is propose here that as age of respondents' increases there is possibility of increase in the assertiveness skills. This is mainly due to the fact that with an increase in age of respondents,

they would become more mature and critical thinking. Additionally, age has a positive association with class in which they are studying.

Table 3 shows that the mean score of assertiveness skills of sample school-going adolescents is negligibly varied, in negative direction, across their age. For example, the mean score of assertiveness skills is 53.25 for those who are 13 years old, which has slightly decreased to 53.14 or those who have completed 15 years and then to 53.03 for those who are 14 years old. Obviously, the one-way ANOVA test results related to this finding didn't turn out as significant.

Gender and Assertiveness Skills of Respondents

Gender differentials in assertiveness skills would also vary across their gender background. In general, assertiveness skills of boys would be higher than their girl counterparts as boys will have more interaction with peer and friends and also they have ample opportunities to learn assertive skills through different sources. In contrast, one can also argue that girls will obtain assertive skills to a higher extent as they are the victims to child abuse and other such adverse behavioural aspects related to female gender (or sex). From the Table 3 one can understand that the mean

pre-test score of assertiveness skills is minutely higher among boys as against girls (53.20 vs. 53.08). Consequently, the connected t-test results didn't turn out as statistically significant.

Class Studying and Assertiveness Skills of the Respondents

In general, adolescents studying in higher class are expected to learn or express assertive skills to a higher extent than those who are in (previous) lower class. From the Table 3, it is noted that the mean pre-test score of assertiveness skills is negligibly lower among those who are studying 9th class as compared to those who are studying 8th class (53.09 vs. 53.31). But the related t-test results didn't come out as significant. Thus, on the one side this finding is not on the expected direction and on the other side, it is statistically insignificant.

Effectiveness of Assertive Training to Assertiveness Skills

The effectiveness of assertive training programme delivered to the sample respondents (school-going adolescents) on their magnitude of assertiveness skills has been analysed and presented in 4 and Fig.3.

Table 4 : Mean Score of Assertiveness Skills among School-going Adolescents at Pre-test and Post-test Stages (N=200)

Assertiveness Skills	Mean Score	S.D.	Paired t-test	
			t-value	Sig. Level
Pre-test	53.15	6.02	49.037	p<0.001
Post-test	76.69	2.91		

The Table 4 shows that the mean score of assertiveness skills is conspicuously higher at post-test stage (76.69±2.91), i.e. after imparting the assertiveness training to sample respondents as compared to the corresponding pre-test score (53.15±6.02). Further, the paired t-test of significance value is also found to be quite higher as against the table value and thereby, the increase in the mean score of assertiveness skills is turned out as highly significant ($t_0 = 49.037$; $p < 0.001$). It may be interpreted that the assertiveness training given to the sample respondents is believed to be effective in increasing their assertiveness skills.

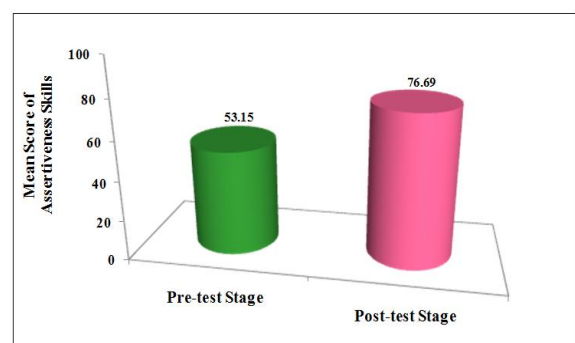


Fig.3. Mean Scores of Assertiveness Skills among Respondents at Pre and Post-tests

Principal Factors Influencing/Determinants of Assertiveness Skills among Respondents

Stepwise Regression Analysis on Assertiveness Skills among Respondents

The focus is to identify the prime factors that are likely to influence (or determine) the assertiveness skills among respondents. The step-wise regression analysis

is believed to be the apt statistical technique primarily due to the discrete nature of outcome (dependent) variable, i.e., Assertiveness Skills, which is in cumulative score. The results of step-wise regression analysis on respondents' assertiveness skills are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Assertiveness Skills among Respondents

Sl. No.	Explanatory Variables	β Co-efficient	t-Value	p-Level
1	Constant	--	31.021	0.001
2	Education of Mother (3 Cat.)	0.245	3.898	0.001
3	Type of Family (Joint Family)	0.206	3.348	0.001
4	Family Income per Month (3 Cat.)	0.187	2.967	0.01
5	Working Hours of Parents (3 Cat.)	0.185	2.784	0.01
6	Occupation of Father (4 Cat.)	0.176	2.708	0.01
7	Exposure to Awareness Programme(s) On Prevention of Child Abuse (Yes)	0.147	2.320	0.05
R ² (in %); N		29.1; 200		
F-Value; Sig. Level		13.173; 0.001		

On the whole, these results demonstrate that, of the twelve variables included in the regression model, six (variables) have been turned out as the principal factors in influencing the assertiveness skills among respondents. Moreover, all these six variables (factors) collectively have explained 29 per cent of variance in the assertiveness skills (score). This finding denotes that these six variables alone have jointly explaining a reasonably higher variance (statistically) in the assertiveness skills among respondents.

Of the six principal factors, education of mother has become the major one (based on its value of standardized regression coefficient, β and t-test value) in influencing the assertiveness skills of respondents ($\beta=0.245$; $p<0.001$). This finding indicates that as mother's educational level increases there is a definite increasing trend of assertiveness skills among the sample school-going adolescents. Type of family has turned out as the next noticeable variable (through regression analysis) in affecting (positively) the assertiveness skills ($\beta=0.206$; $p<0.001$). This finding specifies that respondents who are part of joint family are more likely to have assertiveness skills among respondents as compared to those who belonged to nuclear family.

Following these two factors, another three factors, viz., family income per month ($\beta=0.187$; $p<0.01$), working hours of parents ($\beta=0.185$; $p<0.01$) and occupational status / grade of father ($\beta=0.176$; $p<0.01$) have also emerged as the major factors in influencing the assertiveness skills of respondents. These three findings indicate that there are higher chances of increase in assertive skills among adolescent school-going girls with an increase in the family income per month, parents working for more number of hours and occupational position / grade of father. Finally, respondents who have exposure to one or more awareness programme(s) appear to be demonstrating a moderately significant improvement in their assertiveness skills ($\beta=0.147$; $p<0.05$).

CONCLUSION

Sexual abuse and eve-teasing are quite common and increasing day by day among adolescents. Some of the cases remain rather unreported in some areas. Thus, the use of proper skilful training is needed to educate and empower them. Majority of the respondents are 14 years of age and males and studying 9th standard. But insignificant differentials in the mean scores of

assertive skills across the age, gender and class is noticed. The mean score of assertiveness skills is turned out as highly significant and thus it is concluded that the assertiveness training given to the sample respondents is believed to be effective in increasing their assertiveness skills. There are higher chances of increase in assertive skills among adolescent school-going girls with an increase in the family income per month, parents working for more number of hours and occupational position / grade of father. Finally, respondents who have exposure to one or more awareness programme(s) appear to be demonstrating a moderately significant improvement in their assertiveness skills. The findings also reported that there is an increase in knowledge of adolescents after the assertive training program. The findings should be used in practice to assess the knowledge and assertiveness among adolescents. Administrators can organize in-service education programs to improve self-esteem and awareness about abuse among staff. The study concluded that after the administration of the Assertive Training Program highly significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores regarding prevention of abuse among the adolescents.

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