A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude Towards Suicide Prevention in Children Among School Teachers in Selected Schools at Coimbatore

Kiruthika. R[1], Suja Santosh[2], Poovarasan. S[3], Ramya. S[4], Rathi. V[5], Riji Paama. P.B[6], Rohini Priya. A[7], Saju. S[8]

[1]*Associate Professor, RVS College of nursing, Sulur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.*

[2]*Statistician, RVS College of nursing, Sulur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.*

[3,4,5,6,7,8]*B.Sc. Nursing (IV Year) students, RVS College of nursing, Sulur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.*

***Abstract*—Background: Suicide among children and adolescents is a major public health concern. School teachers play an important role in identifying early warning signs and providing timely support to children at risk of suicide. The present study aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude towards suicide prevention in children among school teachers in selected schools at Coimbatore.**

Method: A quantitative research approach with a non-experimental descriptive research design was adopted. A total of 100 school teachers were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic characteristics, 25 knowledge questions and 15 attitude statements. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: The findings revealed that 53% of teachers had poor knowledge, 46% had average knowledge and 1% had good knowledge. Regarding attitude, 74% had a moderately positive attitude, 25% had a negative attitude and 1% had a positive attitude. The mean knowledge score was 9.55 ± 3.41, and the mean attitude score was 40.90 ± 7.16. A moderate positive correlation was found between knowledge and attitude (r = +0.542). No, statistically significant association was reported between knowledge and selected demographic variables.

However, a statistically significant association was reported between attitude and category of teachers (χ^2 = 10.674, df = 2, P = 0.005).

Conclusion: The study concluded that most teachers had poor knowledge and moderately positive attitudes towards suicide prevention. The findings highlighted the need for structured educational programmes and regular training to improve teachers' knowledge, attitudes and preparedness for early identification and referral of children at risk of suicide.

***Index Terms*—Knowledge, attitude, suicide prevention, children, school teachers.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Suicide is a major global public health problem and a leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that more than 740,000 people die by suicide each year and that suicide was the second-leading cause of death among individuals aged 15–29 years globally in 2023 (World Health Organization, 2026). Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to emotional distress, academic stress, peer pressure, family problems, and difficulty expressing their feelings. Early identification of suicidal ideation, self-harm, and behavioural warning signs is essential for timely intervention and prevention (World Health Organization, 2026). Ramakrishnan et al. (2026) reported that 100,787 suicide deaths occurred among children and adolescents aged 0–18 years in India between 2014 and 2023. The leading reported causes were family problems (25,049 cases), failure in examinations (12,988 cases), and love affairs (12,223 cases). The study emphasized the importance of early identification and suicide prevention among schoolchildren. Schools are important settings for suicide prevention because teachers spend considerable time with children and can observe changes in behaviour, academic performance, attendance, mood, and peer relationships. Teachers are therefore the first adults to notice signs of emotional distress or suicidal risk in a child.

However, teachers have limited knowledge of suicide risk factors, warning signs, myths, safe communication, crisis response, and referral procedures. They also experience fear, stigma, uncertainty, or discomfort when discussing suicide-related issues with children. These gaps can delay the identification and referral of children at risk. Therefore, assessing school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward suicide prevention among children is necessary.

1.1 Need for the study

Suicide among children is a growing public-health concern in India. In 2023, 10,785 children below 18 years were reported to have died by suicide in India, accounting for 6.3% of the total suicides reported that year (National Crime Records Bureau, 2025).

Teachers have a unique opportunity to identify children at risk because they interact with students regularly and observe behavioural, emotional, and academic changes. Schools can serve as key settings for prevention through life-skills education, awareness programmes, early screening, and referral systems (Ramakrishnan et al. 2026).

Despite their important role, teachers do not receive adequate training on suicide prevention. They lack knowledge about warning signs, risk and protective factors, appropriate communication, and referral pathways. In addition, negative attitudes, stigma, fear, and uncertainty prevent teachers from responding in a timely manner to children who show suicidal behaviour. (Ramakrishnan et al. 2026.

Teachers are in a key position to identify early signs of emotional distress and suicidal risk among children, yet they may not have adequate knowledge, confidence, or positive attitudes to respond appropriately. Suicide is a major public-health concern among children and adolescents, and schools provide an important setting for prevention, early identification, and referral. As nurses focus on holistic care, health promotion, prevention, and community mental health, assessing teachers' knowledge and attitudes helps to identify gaps that delay timely support for vulnerable children.

The findings can guide nursing students and health professionals to develop an information guide book, awareness program, or gatekeeper training for teachers, thereby strengthening school-based suicide prevention and promoting the safety and mental well-being of children

1.2 Statement of the problem

A study to assess the knowledge and attitude towards suicide prevention in children among school teachers in selected schools at Coimbatore.

1.3 Objectives

- To assess the level of knowledge regarding suicide prevention
- To assess the level of attitude towards suicide prevention
- To correlate the level of knowledge and attitude regarding suicide prevention
- To associate the level of knowledge regarding suicide prevention among school teachers with selected demographic variables.
- To associate the level of attitude regarding suicide prevention among school teachers with selected demographic variables

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramakrishnan et al. (2026) conducted a study on Suicide Among Children and Adolescents in India as a Public Mental Health Priority. The aim was to examine trends, causes and risk factors of suicide among children and adolescents in India. A quantitative, descriptive study based on secondary data analysis was adopted. The study included national suicide mortality records for children and adolescents aged 0–18 years from 2014 to 2023.

Kamody and Bloch (2022) published an editorial titled Schools on the Frontline of Suicide Prevention in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. The article discussed the importance and effectiveness of school-based suicide prevention programs among adolescents. The authors reviewed the findings of a meta-analysis conducted by Walsh et al. (2022), which included 12 studies published between 1991 and 2020, involving 33,155 adolescents aged 11–18 years from 329 schools.

Fatima et al. (2026) conducted a systematic review titled Educator Perspectives on, Experiences of, and Attitudes towards Student Self-Harm and Suicide. The study aimed to examine educators' perspectives, experiences, and attitudes toward student self-harm

and suicide and to identify their training and support needs.

2.1 Research Approach

The research approach is a fundamental procedure for conducting research inquiry. Based on the nature of the research problem and objectives, the present study used a quantitative survey approach.

2.3 Research Design

This present study adopted a non-experimental, descriptive research design.

III. SETTING OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted in selected government and private schools at Coimbatore. The institutions include classes from PRE KG to XII std and have non-teaching staff across all schools. Data were collected in online through google forms. Population refers to the target population comprises both male and female teachers from the selected schools, with a total teacher strength of 124.

Sample Size: The sample for the present study consists of 100 school teachers who met the predetermined inclusion criteria.

Sampling Technique: A nonprobability convenience sampling technique was used to select the samples for this study.

Sampling Criteria:

a. Inclusion criteria

- Male and female personnel.
- Both private and government schools.
- Teachers who were willing to participate in the study.

b. Exclusion criteria

- Teachers who were not available during data collection.
- Teachers who were on leave.
- Teachers who were not physically and mentally well
- Teachers who submitted incomplete questionnaires

Data Collection Procedure: The researchers collected information about demographic characteristics, knowledge, and attitudes regarding suicide prevention using the structured questionnaire. At the end of data collection, the researchers thanked all school authorities and participants and ensured data privacy and confidentiality. Throughout the study, participants were treated with utmost respect and dignity. The sample cooperated exceptionally well, and there were no refusals.

Ethical Consideration: Adequate explanations were provided whenever clarification was needed. The participants were treated with respect and dignity, ensuring their autonomy throughout the study. The privacy and confidentiality of the collected data were strictly maintained, and participants were assured of the anonymity of their information.

IV. RESULT

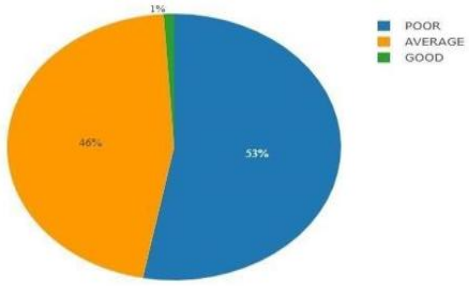


Figure 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of school teachers according to their level of knowledge regarding suicide prevention in children.

The majority of the samples, 53 (53.0%), had poor knowledge, 46 (46.0%) had average knowledge, and the remaining 1 (1.0%) had good knowledge regarding suicide prevention among children.The findings in the figure indicates that the school teachers had poor or average knowledge regarding suicide prevention in children.

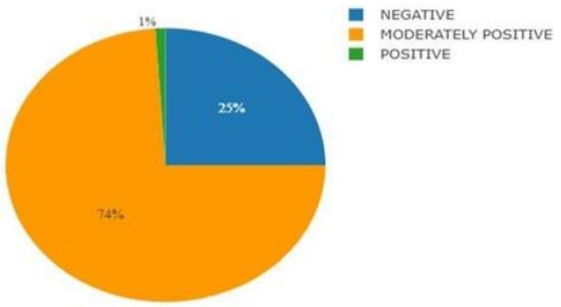


Figure 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of school teachers according to their level of attitude regarding suicide prevention in children.

The majority of the school teachers, 74 (74.0%), had a moderately positive attitude, 25 (25.0%) had a negative attitude, and the remaining 1 (1.0%) had a positive attitude towards suicide prevention in children.

The findings concluded that the majority of the school teachers possessed a moderately positive attitude, while a quarter of them had a negative attitude toward suicide prevention.

Correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude among school teachers regarding suicide prevention in children N=100

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	r - value
Knowledge	9.55	3.41	+ 0.542
Attitude	0.90	7.16	

The mean knowledge score was 9.55 with a standard deviation of 3.41, and the mean attitude score was 40.90 with a standard deviation of 7.16. The calculated Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was r = +0.542, indicating a moderate positive correlation between knowledge and attitude. This showed that school teachers with higher knowledge scores tended to have more positive attitudes towards suicide prevention in children.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study revealed that 53% of the school teachers had poor knowledge, 46% had average knowledge, and only 1% had good knowledge regarding suicide prevention among children. The mean knowledge score was 9.55 ± 3. 41.. The findings were supported by Samuvel (2023), who conducted a study among 50 school teachers in Karur, Tamil Nadu, and reported that 10% had inadequate knowledge, 84% had moderately adequate knowledge, and only 6% had adequate knowledge before the teaching program. Similarly, Fatima et al. (2026), in a systematic review of 54 studies, reported that many educators lacked adequate knowledge and training regarding suicide prevention. The present study revealed that 74% of the school teachers had a moderately positive attitude, 25% had a negative attitude, and only 1% had a positive attitude towards suicide prevention among children.

The mean attitude score was 40.90 ± 7.16. The findings indicated that the majority of the school teachers had a moderately positive attitude, while one-fourth had a negative attitude. The findings were supported by Abraham (2024), who conducted a study among 50 school teachers in Kollam, Kerala, and reported a statistically significant improvement in attitude following a school-based teaching program ($t = 35.25$, $P < 0.001$).

Similarly, Manjula et al. (2023) conducted a study among 102 school teachers in Bangalore and reported a significant improvement in attitude following a mental health literacy program ($t = 4.67$, $P = 0.001$). These findings suggested that educational programs may help improve teachers' attitudes towards suicide prevention among children.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that more than half of the school teachers had poor knowledge, and the majority of the school teachers had a moderately positive attitude towards suicide prevention in children. A moderate positive correlation was found between knowledge and attitude (r = +0.542), indicating that teachers with better knowledge tended to have more positive attitudes.

No, statistically significant association was reported between knowledge and the selected demographic variables. However, the category of teachers showed a statistically significant association with attitude. The findings highlighted the need for educational programs, awareness activities, and suicide prevention training to improve school teachers' knowledge and promote positive attitudes towards suicide prevention in children.

VII. NURSING IMPLICATION

Nursing practice: Nurses, especially school health nurses and community health nurses, should create awareness among school teachers regarding suicide prevention in children. They should educate teachers about suicide warning signs, risk factors, emotional and behavioural changes, supportive communication and appropriate referral procedures. Nurses should work with teachers, parents, and school counsellors to promote early identification and timely support for children at risk.

Nursing education: Nurse educators should provide knowledge regarding child and adolescent mental health and suicide prevention to nursing students. Nursing students should be encouraged to organize school health education programmes, awareness campaigns and workshops for teachers. Role-play, group discussions and demonstrations may be used to improve communication and referral skills related to suicide prevention.

Nursing administration: Nurse administrators should encourage school health programmes focusing on mental health promotion and suicide prevention. They should collaborate with school authorities to organize regular awareness programmes and training sessions for teachers. They should also support the development of clear referral guidelines and coordination between schools and mental health services.

Nursing research: Nurse researchers should conduct further studies to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of school teachers regarding suicide prevention in children. Researchers should disseminate the findings of the present study through seminars, conferences, research publications and school awareness programmes to improve knowledge and promote positive attitudes towards suicide prevention.

VIII. LIMITATIONS

The study had the following limitations:

- The study was limited to 100 school teachers.
- The study was conducted in selected schools at Coimbatore.
- A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used.
- The data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations are

- A similar study can be conducted with a larger sample size.
- A comparative study can be conducted among government and private school teachers.
- A structured teaching programme can be developed to improve teachers' knowledge regarding suicide prevention.

REFERENCE

[1]. Basavanthappa, B. T., *Textbook of Research and Statistics*, 1st ed. New Delhi: Jaypee Brothers, 2014, pp. 49, 153.

[2]. Sharma, S. K., *Textbook of Research and Statistics*, 3rd ed. Vishwa Prakashan, 2002, pp. 276–290.

[3]. K. N. Clark, P. Levins, and D. Strissel, “Engaging educators in school-based suicide prevention: Evaluating educators’ perspectives on the implementation of a gatekeeper training program,” *Sch. Ment. Health*, vol. 18, pp. 448–461, 2026, doi: 10.1007/s12310-025-09840-4.

[4]. E. Nadeem, S. H. Kataoka, V. Y. Chang, P. Vona, M. Wong, and B. D. Stein, “The role of teachers in school-based suicide prevention: A qualitative study of school staff perspectives,” *Sch. Ment. Health*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 209–221, 2011, doi: 10.1007/s12310-011-9056-7.

[5]. S. Fatima, T. Bühler, R. Baffsky, P. Cullen, and M. Torok, “Educator perspectives on, experiences of, and attitudes towards student self-harm and suicide: A systematic review,” *Sch. Ment. Health*, 2026, doi: 10.1007/s12310-026-09906-x.

[6]. D. Qu, X. Zhang, D. Liu, B. Liu, D. Chen, C. Cai, *et al*., “Effectiveness of a school-based Life Gatekeeper Training Program on suicide prevention in China: Protocol for a randomized

controlled trial," *Trials*, vol. 25, Art. no. 335, 2024, doi: 10.1186/s13063-024-08137-2.

[7]. R. C. Kamody and M. H. Bloch, "Editorial: Schools on the frontline of suicide prevention," *J. Child Psychol. Psychiatry*, vol. 63, no. 8, pp. 833–835, 2022, doi: 10.1111/jcpp.13663.

[8]. J. Stickl Haugen, C. C. Sutter, J. L. Tinstman Jones, and L. O. Campbell, "Teachers as youth suicide prevention gatekeepers: An examination of suicide prevention training and exposure to students at risk of suicide," *Child Youth Care Forum*, vol. 52, pp. 583–601, 2023, doi: 10.1007/s10566-022-09699-5.

[9]. T. Ramakrishnan, A. A. Deac, S. Vivekanandhan, T. T. Salisbury, D. P. Ramasamy, A. V. Cherian, *et al*., "Suicide among children and adolescents in India," 2026.

[10]. M. Manjula, B. N. Roopesh, B. Bhaskarapillai, and G. Mendon, "Mental health literacy on youth depression and suicides for teachers and its impact on knowledge, attitudes and help facilitation: A preliminary study," *Indian Psychiatry J.*, 2023, doi: 10.4103/ipj.ipj_135_22.