



Nutritional Awareness among Adolescent Girls in Mahabubnagar District in Telangana

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ABSTRACT

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between age 10 and 19 yr. Adolescent girls are backbone of healthy and progressive family and thus future builders of positive health of community. The present study was conducted to know the nutritional awareness of adolescent girls of Mahabubnagar district in Telangana state. The results showed that majority of rural adolescent girls (73%) have moderate nutritional awareness and in urban areas, majority (57%) of the respondents have high nutritional awareness. The nutritional awareness of adolescent girls depends on their education, their father's occupation and mass media exposure. They need school-based nutrition education and thus, interventions should be undertaken to improve the nutritional awareness of adolescent girls in rural areas.

Key Words: Adolescent, Girls, Intervention, Mass media exposure, Nutritional awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The word adolescence is Latin in origin, derived from the verb *adolescere*, which means "to grow into adulthood." Adolescence is a time of moving from the immaturity of childhood into the maturity of adulthood. Adolescence is a crucial part of life. Adolescents constitute over 21.4 per cent of the population in India and adolescent girls constitute about 10 per cent of the Indian population. Adolescence in girls is a turbulent period of development, which includes stressful events like menarche, which is considered as the landmark of female puberty. Some of the special problems of adolescents are nutritional problems, menstrual disorders and psychological problems. Precise estimates of under-nutrition of adolescent girls seem to receive little attention from any quarter especially in rural India. With this background kept in mind, present study was undertaken with the objectives to study the profile characteristics of rural and urban adolescent girls and to know the nutritional awareness for adolescent girls.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana. Expost-facto research design was followed for the study. Simple random sampling procedure was used for selection of respondents. A total of 60 adolescent girls, 30 girls from rural area and 30 girls from urban area who were studying in government and private schools were randomly selected for the study. The data were collected with the help of questionnaire developed by Melaku (2018) with slight modifications for assessing the nutritional awareness of rural and urban adolescent girls. The specific objectives for the study were to know the profile characteristics, the existing nutritional awareness and correlation between the profile characteristics and nutritional awareness among rural and urban adolescent girls.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in the Table 1 reveal that the majority of the respondents both in rural and urban

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Table 1. General profile of the respondents (rural and urban adolescent girls).

Sr. No	Variable	Rural (n=30)		Urban (n=30)		Total=60 (n=60)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (yr)						
	11-14	24	80	22	73	46	77
	14-17	6	20	8	27	14	23
2	Level of Education						
	VIII class	0	0	7	23	7	12
	IX class	30	100	19	63	49	82
	X class	0	0	4	13	4	6
3	Type of family						
	Joint	4	13	3	10	7	12
	Nuclear	26	87	27	90	53	88
4	Father's Education						
	Illiterate	26	87	5	17	31	52
	Primary School	1	3	1	3	2	3
	Middle School	2	7	6	20	8	13
	High School	1	3	8	27	9	16
	College education	0	0	8	27	8	13
5	Mother's Education						
	Illiterate	20	67	6	20	26	43
	Primary School	3	10	0	0	3	6
	Middle School	3	10	8	27	11	18
	High School	4	13	8	27	12	20
College education	0	0	6	20	6	10	

population fall under 11-14 yr as 80 and 77 per cent, respectively. In rural area, majority of the respondents were from nuclear families (87%) followed by joint family (13%) whereas in urban area, 90 per cent were from nuclear family and 10 per cent from joint family. Therefore, there was no difference as for as type of family is concerned. The reason for the above distribution could be because people preferred to live in nuclear families for the sake of better harmony and satisfaction of basic needs, lesser responsibilities, privacy, and also feel that they can take better care for their family health and nutrition. Further, the educational level of the respondent parent's, in rural majority (87%) of the

respondent's fathers were illiterate and in urban majority (27%) of the respondent's fathers have education up to high school and college education. Similarly, in rural area majority (67%) of the respondent's mothers were illiterate followed by high school education and in urban majority (27%) of the respondent's mothers have education up to high school.

The data (Table 2) clearly indicate that respondents in rural area, 57 per cent watched television daily whereas 97 per cent never listen to radio, 43 per cent read newspaper, 50 possess access to the internet and 87 per cent read magazines. Similarly, in urban area, the situation was same to

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Table 2. Mass media exposure of rural and urban Adolescent respondents.

Mass media exposure	Rural Population (N =30)			Urban Population (N =30)		
	Daily (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)	Daily (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)
Viewing television	57.0	43.0	0.0	87.0	10.0	3.0
Listening to radio	0.0	3.0	97.0	0.0	20.0	80.0
Reading newspaper	23.0	43.0	33.0	30.0	67.0	3.0
Access to the internet	7.0	43.0	50.0	20.0	47.0	33.0
Reading magazines	0.0	13.0	87.0	20.0	60.0	20.0

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their nutritional awareness.

Sr. No	Nutritional awareness	Rural (n=30)		Urban (n=30)		Total (n=60)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low level (0-6)	8	27	0	0	8	13
2	Moderate level (7-13)	22	73	13	43	35	58
3	High level (14-20)	0	0	17	57	17	28

that of rural area. Hence, it can be said that now, there is not much difference in the living style in rural and urban areas.

It was observed (Table 3) that in rural area, majority (73%) of the respondents had moderate level nutritional awareness followed by (27%) low level nutritional awareness and (0%) high level nutritional awareness. In urban, majority (57%) of the respondents have high level nutritional awareness followed by (43%) moderate level nutritional awareness and (0%) low level nutritional awareness. By taking into consideration the total respondents, majority (58%) of the respondents have middle nutritional awareness followed by (28%) high nutritional awareness and (13%) low nutritional awareness.

Correlation

In order to study the correlation between the profile characteristics and nutritional awareness, Chi-square values (p values) were computed and values were presented in table 4. It was

found that there was a significant correlation between the profile characteristics viz, education of the respondent, father's education, mass media exposure and nutritional awareness.

There was a non significant association between the age (0.98 NS) and nutritional awareness. There was a significant association between education of the respondent (0.02*) and nutritional awareness. The adolescent girls had good nutritional awareness that they learned from the school. Likewise a non significant association between type of family (0.48 NS) and nutritional awareness but a significant association was observed with father's education. It was observed that the mass media exposure impact was more on the adolescent girls about nutritional awareness.

CONCLUSION

Improving nutrition presents a key opportunity to improve health and growth. Findings of this study showed that majority of the respondents

Table 4. Correlation between the profile characteristics and nutritional awareness.

Sr. No	Independent variable	Nutritional awareness (p value)
1.	Age	0.98 NS
2.	Education	0.02 *
3.	Type of Family	0.48 NS
4.	Father's education	0.03*
5.	Mother's education	0.30 NS
6.	Mass media Exposure	0.04*

If p value is < 0.05 that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

* = Significant at 5% level, NS = Not Significant

(77%) belonged to the age group of 11-14 yr and (23%) of the respondents belonged to 14-17 yr. The nutritional awareness was high for urban adolescents. Improving adolescent nutrition requires a range of policies, programmes, and interventions at different stages of life. Nutritional awareness should be done to improve their nutritional needs of adolescent girls in rural areas which shall play an important role in to remain healthy and lead a healthy life.

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