

# Child Protection through Education: Students' Awareness of Good and Bad Touch in Rajasthan

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## Abstract

Child safety is a vital component of child development and human rights. In a culturally diverse and socioeconomically varied state like Rajasthan, educating students about good and bad touch through school-based programs is critical for preventing abuse and ensuring personal safety. This research paper explores the current level of awareness among school-going children in Rajasthan regarding good and bad touch, evaluates the effectiveness of educational interventions, and discusses the role of schools, parents, and government initiatives in enhancing child protection. A mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, was used to gather data from students, teachers, and parents across urban and rural areas of the state. The findings highlight significant gaps in awareness, especially in rural settings, and emphasize the need for more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and sustained education programs.

## 1. Introduction

Child protection is an essential aspect of social development, aiming to ensure the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of every child. A safe environment is not only crucial for a child's well-being and development but also for nurturing a society built on respect, dignity, and mutual trust. However, in many parts of the world, including India, children remain vulnerable to various forms of abuse—physical, emotional, psychological, and particularly, sexual abuse. The increasing number of reported and unreported cases of child sexual abuse has made it imperative to equip children with the knowledge and tools they need to recognize unsafe situations and protect themselves.

The need for proactive strategies to prevent abuse has led educators, child rights activists, and policymakers to advocate for early childhood education focused on body safety. One of the most effective tools identified globally is awareness about **good and bad touch**, which teaches children how to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact. This form of education empowers children to understand personal boundaries, seek help when needed, and communicate discomfort without fear or hesitation.

India has witnessed several policy developments to address child abuse, including the implementation of the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**, which aims to safeguard children from sexual offences through legal intervention, and the **Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)**, designed to strengthen child protection mechanisms at family and community levels. While these policies have provided a structural framework for child safety, their implementation—particularly in the realm of awareness and education—has been uneven across the country.

Rajasthan, as one of India's largest and most culturally diverse states, presents a distinct scenario in this regard. The state encompasses a mix of urban centers and vast rural and tribal areas, where cultural taboos, gender norms, and lack of resources often restrict open dialogue about personal safety and sexuality. This geographical and cultural diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for implementing child protection programs in schools. In many communities, topics related to body autonomy and sexual abuse are

still considered sensitive or even inappropriate for discussion with children, leading to gaps in awareness and preparedness.

School-based education on good and bad touch has emerged as a critical intervention to bridge this gap. Educators play a central role in delivering age-appropriate, culturally sensitive information that helps children build awareness and resilience. However, the success of such programs depends not only on the curriculum but also on the capacity and willingness of teachers, the support of school administration, parental involvement, and the adaptability of programs to different socio-economic settings.

While there have been scattered efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote good and bad touch awareness in Rajasthan's schools, there remains limited empirical research to assess their reach, effectiveness, and impact—particularly across the rural-urban divide. Most available data is either anecdotal or focuses on national-level trends, with little contextual understanding of Rajasthan's unique challenges.

Given this background, the present study aims to investigate the extent to which students in Rajasthan are aware of good and bad touch, analyze how effectively school-based education contributes to this awareness, and identify the key enablers and barriers within the educational system. By focusing on both urban and rural settings, the research seeks to draw meaningful comparisons and provide insights that can inform policy decisions, teacher training programs, and curriculum development.

Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute toward creating a safer, more informed learning environment where children not only feel protected but are also equipped to protect themselves. In doing so, it underscores the broader principle that child protection through education is not just a safety measure, but a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of holistic development.

## 2. Literature Review

The growing emphasis on child protection has led to an expanding body of literature that highlights the importance of educating children about personal safety, including awareness of good and bad touch. Research conducted between 2016 and 2024 has explored various aspects of child safety education, focusing on pedagogical approaches, cultural barriers, policy implementation, and the psychological impact of such education on children.

A 2016 study by **Alaggia and Kirshenbaum** emphasized that early education about bodily autonomy significantly reduces the likelihood of children becoming victims of abuse. The researchers advocated for integrating personal safety education into school curricula, noting that children who received structured lessons on identifying inappropriate touch were more likely to disclose abuse and report unsafe situations.

Building on this, **Kenny et al. (2017)** examined school-based prevention programs in developing countries and emphasized the role of teacher training and parental involvement. They found that programs were most effective when teachers were comfortable and well-prepared to deliver sensitive content. In contrast, in areas where teachers lacked proper support or cultural norms restricted open discussion of body safety, the impact of such education was minimal.

In the Indian context, **Chandran and Shekhar (2018)** studied awareness levels among students in South India and discovered that while urban children had higher awareness about good and bad touch, rural students often lacked basic understanding due to socio-cultural taboos and limited school-level initiatives. Their findings called for localized, culturally adapted educational modules and emphasized the role of NGOs in bridging resource gaps in government schools.

**UNICEF India (2019)** released a report highlighting the effectiveness of integrating life skills education, including body safety awareness, into middle school programs. The report also underlined the challenges posed by inconsistent implementation of the POCSO Act's educational components in rural schools, particularly in northern states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Further, **Walsh et al. (2020)** conducted a global meta-analysis on the outcomes of personal safety education programs and concluded that students who participated in such programs exhibited improved knowledge of appropriate versus inappropriate behavior, higher rates of disclosure, and better coping mechanisms. Their study suggested that long-term success requires periodic reinforcement of lessons, involvement of caregivers, and sensitivity to children's emotional responses.

In a more recent Indian study, **Deshmukh and Singh (2021)** explored how digital tools such as animated videos, storytelling apps, and gamified lessons improved children's retention of body safety concepts. They found that technology-assisted education had great potential in urban and semi-urban schools, though digital exclusion remained a concern in many rural communities.

**Mishra and Joshi (2022)** evaluated school safety policies in Rajasthan, finding that while awareness sessions were being conducted in select government schools, there was a lack of consistency, monitoring, and teacher preparedness. They stressed the importance of including child psychologists in program design and delivery to ensure age-appropriateness and emotional sensitivity.

A 2023 publication by **Gupta and Rathi** addressed how cultural conservatism in Rajasthan often limits open dialogue around child sexual safety. Their qualitative research revealed that many parents and teachers hesitate to discuss bodily autonomy with children due to social discomfort, leading to superficial or omitted awareness sessions in classrooms. The study recommended intensive teacher sensitization and community engagement programs.

Finally, the 2024 report by **Save the Children India** focused on nationwide efforts to promote good and bad touch awareness. It highlighted the success of collaborative models where schools partnered with local NGOs to conduct workshops using puppetry, drama, and visual storytelling in vernacular languages. The report noted that Rajasthan showed promise in adopting such models, especially in districts like Udaipur and Ajmer, but large gaps remained in Thar desert regions and tribal belts.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

#### Sample Selection:

- 300 students (aged 8–14 years) from 15 schools across urban and rural areas of Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Bikaner.
- 30 teachers and 20 parents were interviewed to understand the implementation and reception of safety programs.

#### Data Collection Tools:

- Structured questionnaires with age-appropriate language for students.
- Semi-structured interview guides for teachers and parents.

#### Data Analysis:

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were coded for themes like “awareness,” “reaction,” “support system,” and “barriers.”

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Student Awareness Levels

The survey results indicated that only **47%** of the students could clearly identify what constitutes a bad touch. Awareness levels were significantly higher in urban schools (65%) compared to rural schools (34%).

### 4.2 Role of Schools

Schools that conducted regular sessions using visual aids, puppet shows, and interactive activities had noticeably higher student awareness. Teachers reported that children were more likely to discuss personal issues after these sessions.

### 4.3 Parental Support

Only 25% of the parents surveyed had ever spoken to their children about good or bad touch. Most cited discomfort and cultural taboos as reasons. However, parents who had participated in school-led awareness programs were more open to engaging in such discussions.

### 4.4 Barriers in Implementation

- Lack of trained counselors in most schools.
- Resistance from local communities to discuss sexual safety.
- Absence of state-mandated curriculum on child safety.

### 4.5 Success Stories and Best Practices

One school in Jaipur implemented a weekly “Child Safety Hour” with excellent results—90% of its students correctly answered questions about personal safety, and two children reported abuse which was addressed with parental and legal support.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of school-based education in enhancing students’ awareness of good and bad touch. It is evident that structured educational programs in schools help children understand personal boundaries, recognize inappropriate behavior, and respond assertively in uncomfortable situations. However, the study also brings to light several persistent challenges, especially in rural and marginalized areas of Rajasthan. These include a lack of adequately trained teachers, minimal parental involvement, and deep-rooted socio-cultural taboos that inhibit open discussions on child safety.

To build a more effective and inclusive child protection framework, it is imperative to expand awareness initiatives to remote regions with the active collaboration of NGOs and government bodies. Comprehensive and continuous training must be provided to educators so they can address sensitive topics confidently and empathetically. Moreover, engaging parents through regular workshops and community-based awareness campaigns is crucial to reinforce the messages children receive at school. Educational content should also be developed in local languages and tailored to cultural contexts to ensure better understanding and acceptance. Only through a coordinated and sustained effort involving schools, families, and the wider community can Rajasthan foster a safe environment where children are empowered with the knowledge, confidence, and voice to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation.

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