

## Knowledge on Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III Year Students

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** A study to assess the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students, College of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai. **Objectives:** (1) To assess the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (N) III year students, (2) To find out the association of knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc (N) III-year students with selected demographic variable. **Design:** The design used for the study was descriptive study design. **Subjects:** Third year B.Sc. nursing students studying in college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai and who fulfills the inclusion criteria. **Sample size:** The total sample size is 42 Third year B.Sc. nursing students of college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai. **Data collection tool:** The tool used to measure the knowledge level was knowledge structured questionnaire. **Conceptual framework:** The conceptual frame work for this study based on modified health belief model by Rosen Stock and Kegels in 1950. **Results:** The knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III-year students shows that out of 42 students, 71% had moderate knowledge and 29% had adequate knowledge. **Conclusion:** There is a significant association ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the religion, students education, education of father, occupation of the mother, family income, source of information about legal and ethical issues, reason for doing B.Sc. (N) and the knowledge on Legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.sc(Nursing)-III year students.

**Keywords: Not Provided**

### Introduction

*Medicine rests upon four pillars – philosophy, astronomy, alchemy and ethics.* Paracelsus

Ethics, which is taken from the Greek word "ethos", meaning character, most relevant to responsibility and community and deals with words like right, wrong, good, bad, ought and duty. Nursing profession requires knowledge of ethics to guide

performance. Nursing ethics is professional ethics of care. The nature of this profession necessitates ethical care more than routine care. Ethical concepts are one of the basic elements in this profession and the important indicator of its progress. Ethical performance is critical aspects of nursing care and development of moral competence, is essential for nursing practice in present and future. Promote the principles of professional practice by emphasizing ethical foundations are the only way to strengthen trusting on medical group. Today, worldwide definition of professional ethic codes has been done based on human and ethical issues in the communication between nurse and society.

International Council of Nurses began compilation of ethic codes in 2000 and it has been proposed as an indicator of professional nursing. In this regard, professional and international organizations, have written codes despite some apparent differences, their goal is accreditation of the nursing profession by providing good quality care to patients.

Nursing is an integral part of the health care system

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and nurses direct their energies towards the prevention, promotion, maintenance & restoration of health. The role of nurses has expanded rapidly within the past two decades to include expertise specialization, autonomy & accountability. The patient is considered the consumer of nursing & health care. With the advent of the Consumer protection Act of 1986, which has been drastically widened by the amendment of 1993 all professionals i.e. medical, architects, solicitors, chartered accountants etc. have come within the purview of the Act. Nursing also being a profession has come under the Act. The nurse must also be familiar with laws as: (I) IPC Sect 269- Negligent Act likely to spread infectious disease dangerous to life. II) Sect 284- Negligent conduct with respect to poisonous substances. It is stated that changes have occurred over the past decade in legal responsibilities of nurses.

#### *Need for the Study*

Leaders in the nursing profession know that we are legally responsible for what we do but there have been very little specifically stated by the profession to serve as a guide. This was due to the fact that citizens of India were not aware of their rights of protection from harmful or careless professional practice. But with the growing awareness of the law by the public, an understanding of the legal responsibilities is becoming more important.

Though the legal aspects of nursing are included early in the syllabus very little emphasis is given on its use. Nurses must know the law that governs her profession to avoid lawsuits against her. Legal issues confronting nurses today are many but the nurse should view the law not with apprehension but as a helpful adjunct to define nursing practice. Nurses who are aware of legal rights & obligations will be better prepared to care for clients. Knowledge of the law is essential for all nurses in the present health care market.

In a study to assess the impact of malpractice litigation on physicians' personal and professional lives although both sued and non-sued physicians reported changes in professional behavior. Sued physicians reported significantly more changes than non-sued physicians. It has been found, however, the learning that results in increased self-awareness, changed behavior, and the acquisition of new skills must actively engage the individual in the learning process. Most adults spend a considerable time acquiring information and learning new skills. The rapidity of change, the continuous creation of new knowledge, and an ever-widening access to information make such acquisitions necessary. Much

of this learning takes place at the learner's initiative, even if available through formal settings.

Based on the International Association of Nurses' Codes and also Codes in other countries the first professional responsibility of nurses emphasizes patients' needs and to provide an environment in which the values, beliefs, human rights and dignity are respected. To improve all dimensions of nursing, we need to respect ethic codes. Furthermore, nurses must understand and apply ethic codes in every dimension of nursing practice.

Hence there is a need to investigate the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among nursing students.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

A study to assess the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among III year B.Sc. nursing students, college of nursing, Madurai Medical college, Madurai.

#### **Objectives**

1. To assess the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among III year B.Sc. nursing students at college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai.
2. To associate the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among III year B.Sc. nursing students with their selected demographic variables.

#### *Hypotheses*

$H_1$ : There is a significant association between the knowledge score on legal and ethical issues in nursing among III year B.Sc. nursing students with their selected demographic variables.

#### *Conceptual Frame Work*

The present study is aimed at assessing the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among III year B.Sc. Nursing Students in College of Nursing, Madurai Medical College Madurai. The conceptual frame work selected for the study is based on the Health belief model Health awareness in modified through education as it help the individual to perceive the threat of an legal issues and increased awareness towards legal and ethical issues in nursing. The conceptual framework of the study is based on Rosen Stock's health belief model. The model addresses the relationship between students' belief and behavior.

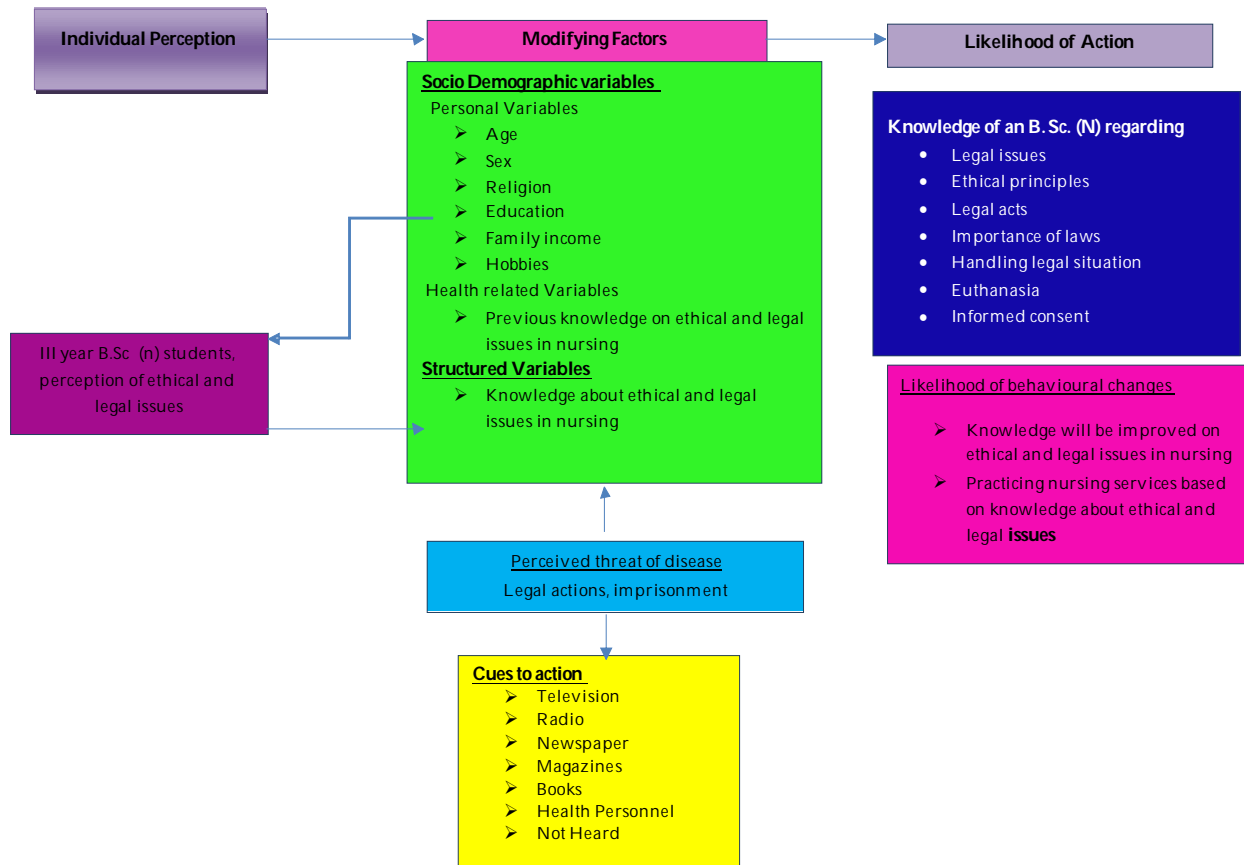


Fig. 1: Modified health belief model (Rosenstock and Kegels in 1950)

## Research Methodology

### Research Approach

A Quantitative Approach selected to present the study.

### Research Design

The research design selected to the present study is Non-experimental descriptive design.

### Settings of the Study

The project was conducted in the College of Nursing, Madurai Medical College, Madurai.

### Population of the Study

The population includes III year B.sc Nursing Students.

### Target Population

III-year B.Sc. nursing students, college of nursing.

### Accessible Population

III-year B.Sc. nursing students studying in college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai.

### Sample Size

The total sample size is 42 Third year B.sc nursing students of college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai.

### Sampling Technique

Subjects are selected through non-probability purposive sampling technique.

### Criteria for Sample Selection

#### Inclusion Criteria

- ❖ Third year B.sc nursing students irrespective of sex.
- ❖ Students who are willing to participate in this study.

<p><i>Exclusion Criteria</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The students who are studying, B.Sc.(n) First, second, fourth year, and M.Sc. (n)</li> <li>❖ The students are not available at the time of data collection.</li> </ul> <p><i>Data Collection Method</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Self- Administered -Structured questionnaire method</li> </ul> <p><i>Description of Tool</i></p> <p>Part-A: Socio Demographic data</p>	<p>Part-B: Self-administered questionnaire</p> <p><i>Scoring</i></p> <p>Self-administered questionnaire contains 30 questions</p> <p><i>Level of Knowledge</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Score</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Knowledge Level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1-10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Inadequate</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">11-20</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Moderate</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">21-30</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Adequate</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Knowledge Level	1-10	Inadequate	11-20	Moderate	21-30	Adequate
Score	Knowledge Level								
1-10	Inadequate								
11-20	Moderate								
21-30	Adequate								

**Table 1:** Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographic Variable

S. NO	Socio-demographic Variables	f	%
1	Age		
	a) 18 - 19 years	38	90%
	b) 20 - 21 years	4	10%
2.	Sex		
	a) Male	5	12%
	b) Female	37	88%
3.	Religion		
	a) Hindu	32	76%
	b) Christian	6	14%
	c) Muslim	4	10%
	d) Others	-	-
4.	Students Education		
	a) Higher secondary	42	100%
	b) Graduation	-	-
	c) Other course (if any specify.	-	-
5.	Education of father		
	a) No formal education	-	-
	b) Primary education	25	59%
	c) Secondary education	9	22%
	d) Graduate	8	19%
	e) Post graduate	-	-
6.	Education of mother		
	a) No formal education	4	10%
	b) Primary education	26	62%
	c) Secondary education	10	24%
	d) Graduate	2	4%
	e) Post graduate	-	-
7.	Occupation of father		
	a) Government employee	2	4%
	b) Private employee	11	26%
	c) Self employee	20	48%
	d) Coolie	9	22%
8.	Occupation of mother		
	a) Government employee	-	-
	b) Private employee	2	4%
	c) Self employee	15	36%
	d) Home maker	25	59%
9.	Family income (per month)		
	a) Below Rs. 5000	9	22%
	b) Rs. 5001 - 10,000	22	42%
	c) Rs. 10,001- 15,000	10	24%
	d) Above Rs.15000	1	2%

10.	Type of family		
	a) Nuclear family	32	76%
	b) Joint family	8	19%
	c) Extended family	2	4%
	d) Separated family	-	-
11	Locality		
	a) Rural	15	36%
	b) Urban	27	64%
12.	Source of information about legal and ethical issues		
	a) Health professionals	42	100%
	b) Friends	-	-
	c) Mass media	-	-
	d) Magazine, Newspapers, Books.	-	-
13.	Reason for doing B.Sc.(N)		
	a) By family force	15	36%
	b) To get higher job	15	36%
	c) To earn money	10	24%
	d) To acquire knowledge	2	4%

**Section-B**

*Frequency Distribution of Knowledge Regarding Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing*

The above table reveals that knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing, 30 (71%) were having moderate knowledge, 12 (29%) were having adequate knowledge and no one have inadequate knowledge.

**Table 2: Not Provided**

S.NO	Knowledge Level	f	%
1	Inadequate	0	-
2	Moderate	30	71%
3	Adequate	12	29%

**Table 3: Association of knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (N) III year students n = 42**

S.no	Demographic Variable	Level of Knowledge				$\chi^2$	't' Value		
		Adequate		Moderate				Inadequate	
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
1.	Age in years								
	a) 18 - 19 years	10	24%	28	68%	-	-	3.96	4.30
	b) 20 - 21 years	2	4%	2	4%	-	-		
2.	<b>Sex</b>								
	a) Male	2	4%	3	7%	-	-	2.36	4.30
	b) Female	30	71%	7	18%	-	-		
3.	<b>Religion</b>								
	a) Hindu	18	43%	14	34%	-	-	4.63	2.45*
	b) Christian	2	4%	4	10%	-	-		
	c) Muslim	3	7%	1	2%	-	-		
	d) Others	-	-	-	-	-	-		
4.	<b>Students Education</b>								
	a) Higher secondary	14	34%	28	66%	-	-	8.05	2.78*
	b) Graduation	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	c) Other course	-	-	-	-	-	-		
5.	<b>Education of father</b>								
	a) No formal education	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	b) Primary education	10	24%	15	35%	-	-	6.47	2.31
	c) Secondary education	5	12%	4	10%	-	-		
	d) Graduate	4	10%	4	10%	-	-		
	e) Post graduate	-	-	-	-	-	-		
6.	<b>Education of mother</b>								
	a) No formal education	2	4%	2	4%	-	-	0.29	2.31
	b) Primary education	10	4%	16	40%	-	-		
	c) Secondary education	6	24%	4	10%	-	-		
	d) Graduate	2	14%	-	-	-	-		
	e) Post graduate	-	4%	-	-	-	-		
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
7.	<b>Occupation of father</b>								
	a) Government employee	2	4%	-	-	-	-		

	b) Private employee	6	14%	5	12%	-	-	0.28	2.45
	c) Self employee	10	24%	10	24%	-	-		
	d) Coolie	4	10%	5	12%	-	-		
<b>8.</b>	<b>Occupation of mother</b>								
	a) Government employee	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	b) Private employee	2	4%	-	-	-	-	8.67	2.45*
	c) Self employee	10	24%	5	12%	-	-		
	d) Coolie	15	36%	10	24%	-	-		
<b>9.</b>	<b>Family income (per month)</b>								
	a) below Rs. 5000	5	12%	4	10%	-	-		
	b) Rs. 5001 - 10,000	10	24%	12	28%	-	-	2.75	2.45*
	c) Rs. 10,001 - 15,000	6	14%	4	10%	-	-		
	d) above Rs.15000	1	2%	-	-	-	-		
<b>10.</b>	<b>Type of family</b>								
	a) Nuclear family	12	28%	20	46%	-	-		
	b) Joint family	5	12%	4	10%	-	-		
	c) Extended family	2	4%	-	-	-	-	2.09	2.45*
	d) Separated family	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b>11.</b>	<b>Locality</b>								
	a) Rural	10	24%	5	12%	-	-	3.5	4.30
	b) Urban	15	36%	12	28%	-	-		
<b>12.</b>	<b>Source of information about legal and ethical issues</b>								
	a) Health professionals	20	48%	22	52%	-	-		
	b) Friends	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.2	2.45*
	c) Mass media	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	d) Magazine, Newspapers, Book	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b>13.</b>	<b>Reason for doing B.Sc.(N)</b>								
	a)By family force	10	24%	5	12%	-	-		
	b)To get higher job	5	12%	10	24%	-	-	2.8	2.45*
	c)To earn money	5	12%	5	12%	-	-		
	d)To acquire knowledge	2	4%	-	-	-	-		

\*: significant at P=0.05 level.

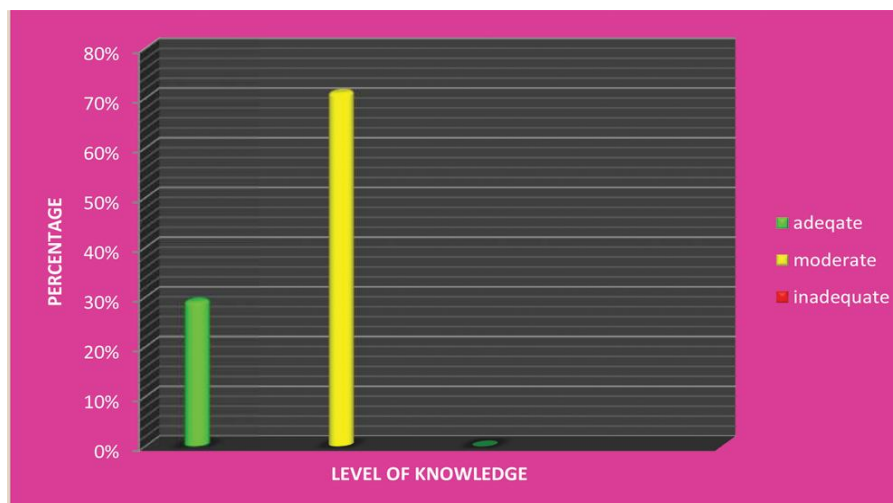


Fig. 1: Knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (N) III year students

The above figure reveals that knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing, 30 (71%) were having moderate knowledge, 12 (29%) were having adequate knowledge and no one have inadequate knowledge.

## Discussion

The study was conducted to assess the knowledge on Legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc.

(Nursing) III year students at College of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai.

Totally 42 samples were included in the study. Prior permission obtained and data were collected based on two sections. Section 1 deals with the demographic data assessment and section 11 deals with the structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students at college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai. 13 question in demographic session and 30 question in knowledge assessment session.

The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The analysis of the collected data brought out many interesting and useful aspects, which were discussed below. The study findings are discussed with objectives.

The findings of the study are discussed below under sections

Section I: Discussion regarding demographic data.

**Section II:** Discussion regarding knowledge on Legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students.

Section III: Discussion regarding association of knowledge on Legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students with their selected demographic variable.

#### *Section I: Discussion Regarding Demographic Data*

- Majority of the subjects 38 (90%) belongs to age group between 18 - 19 years of age and 4 (10%) belongs to the age group between 20-21 years of age.
- According to the sex, majority 37 (88%) were female, 5(12%) were male.
- The aspect of the religion the majority 32 (76%) were Hindu, 6 (14%) were Christian, 10 (4%) were Muslim and no one were other group.
- With regard to the education level of students 42 (100%) have completed higher secondary education. No one had graduate degree or other courses.
- According to the education of father 25 (59%) were had primary education, 9 (22%) had secondary education, 8 (19%) had graduate degree.
- In relation to education of mother 4 (10%) were no formal education, 26 (62%) were had primary education, 10 (24%) had secondary education, 2 (4%) had graduate degree and no one were post graduate.
- According to the occupation of father 2 (4%) were government employee, 20 (48%) were self-

employee, 11 (26%) were private employee, 9 (22%) of them were coolie.

- In concept of occupation of mother 25 (59%) were home maker, 15 (36%) were self-employee and 2 (4%) of them were private employee and no one were government employee.
- According to the income of family per month the majority 22 (42%) were belongs to Rs.5001-10000, 9 (22%) were belongs to below Rs.5000, 10 (24%) were belongs to Rs.10001-15000 and 1 (2%) belongs to above Rs.15000.
- On the basis of family type 32 (76%) were living in a nuclear family, 8 (19%) were living in joint family and 2 (4%) were living in an extended family and no one were separated.
- The study explains that the locality of students 27 (64%) were living in urban and 15 (36%) were living in rural.
- With regard to source of information all the students 42 (100%) knows the source of information about legal and ethical issues.
- Aspect of reason for doing B.Sc., Nursing 15 (36%) were by family force, 15 (36%) were doing to get higher job, 10 (24%) to earn money and 2 (4%) to acquire knowledge.

#### *The First Objective was to Assess the Knowledge on Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III Year Students*

The knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students at college of nursing, Madurai medical college, Madurai, shows that out of 42 students 30 students that is 71% had moderate knowledge regarding legal and ethical issues in nursing and rest 12 students about 29% had adequate knowledge regarding legal and ethical issues in nursing and no one had a inadequate knowledge.

#### *The Second Objective was to Associate the Knowledge on Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III Year Students*

The study findings reveals that there is a significant association between the religion, students education, education of father, occupation of the mother, family income, source of information about legal and ethical issues, reason for doing B.Sc. (N) and the knowledge on Legal and ethical issues in nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III year students.

### *Findings of the Study*

The study shows that majority of the students have moderate knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing.

### *Findings Related to Assess the Knowledge on Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III Year Students*

- Majority of the subjects 38 (90%) belongs to age group between 18 - 19 years of age and 4 (10%) belongs to the age group between 20-21 years of age.
- According to the sex, majority 37 (88%) were female, 5 (12%) were male.
- The aspect of the religion the majority 32 (76%) were Hindu, 6 (14%) were Christian, 10 (4%) were Muslim and no one were other group.
- With regard to the education level of students 42 (100%) have completed higher secondary education. No one had graduate degree or other courses.
- According to the education of father 25 (59%) were had primary education, 9 (22%) had secondary education, 8 (19%) had graduate degree.
- In relation to education of mother 4 (10%) were no formal education, 26 (62%) were had primary education, 10 (24%) had secondary education, 2 (4%) had graduate degree and no one were post graduate.
- According to the occupation of father 2 (4%) were government employee, 20 (48%) were self-employee, 11 (26%) were private employee, 9 (22%) of them were coolie.
- In concept of occupation of mother 25 (59%) were home maker, 15 (36%) were self-employee and 2 (4%) of them were private employee and no one were government employee.
- According to the income of family per month the majority 22 (42%) were belongs to Rs.5001-10000, 9 (22%) were belongs to below Rs.5000, 10 (24%) were belongs to Rs.10001-15000 and 1 (2%) belongs to above Rs.15000.
- In type of family the 32 (76%) were living in a nuclear family, 8 (19%) were living in joint family and 2 (4%) were living in an extended family and no one were separated.
- The study explains that the locality of students 27 (64%) were living in urban and 15 (36%) were living in rural.

- With regard to source of information all the students 42 (100%) knows the source of information about legal and ethical issues.
- Aspect of reason for doing B.Sc. Nursing 15 (36%) were by family force, 15 (36%) were doing to get higher job, 10 (24%) to earn money and 2 (4%) to acquire knowledge.

### *Findings Related to Association of Knowledge on Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing among B.Sc. (Nursing) III Year Students*

1. The obtained  $c^2$  value is 3.96. The table value is 4.30. Calculated value is less than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant association between students' age and level of knowledge.
2. With the respect of sex  $c^2$  values is 2.36. The table value is 4.30. Calculated value is less than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant association between students' sex and level of knowledge.
3. With regard to religion  $c^2$  value is 4.63. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between students' religion and level of knowledge.
4. The aspect of  $c^2$  value is 8.05. The table value is 2.78. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between student's education and level of knowledge.
5. The study reveals that  $c^2$  value is 6.47. The table value is 2.31. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between education of the father and level of knowledge.
6. The study explains that in religion  $c^2$  values are 2.36. The table value is 2.31. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant between education of mother and level of knowledge.
7. The obtained  $c^2$  value is 8.67. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant between occupation of father and level of knowledge.
8. The  $c^2$  value is 8.67. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between occupation of mother and level of knowledge.



9. With the respect of  $c^2$  values are 2.75. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is a significant association between family income and level of knowledge.
10. The  $c^2$  value is 2.09. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is less than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant between type of family and level of knowledge.
11. The  $c^2$  value is 3.5. The table value is 4.30. Calculated value is less than table value. So null hypotheses accepted. There is no significant between locality and level of knowledge.
12. The  $c^2$  value is 4.2. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between source of information about legal and ethical issues and level of knowledge.
13. The  $c^2$  value is 2.8. The table value is 2.45. Calculated value is greater than table value. So null hypotheses rejected. There is a significant association between reason for doing B.Sc. (N) and level of knowledge.

### Conclusion

The following conclusion were drawn from the study.

- Majority of the students had moderate knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing.
- Majority of the students are belongs to the age group between 18-19 years of age.
- Majority of the students belongs to Hindu.
- Majority of the students are got the information from health professionals.
- Majority of the students were had higher secondary education.

### Implication Nursing Practice

The students who are going to work in the hospital need to have adequate knowledge regarding the legal and ethical issues in nursing. The nurse assist with the physician in nursing practice, this knowledge plays a vital role to avoid legal issues and ethical also.

### Nursing Education

The students should be adequately taught regarding the knowledge on legal and ethical issues

in nursing, as the students are ready to step into nursing practice areas the basics are trained where nursing education needs to be given knowledge regarding legal and ethical issues in nursing.

### Nursing Research

More and more nursing research should be conducted regarding the legal and ethical issues in nursing to prevent legal complications. The findings of the study help the students to conduct further studies regarding the legal and ethical issues.

### Nursing Administration

Nurse should be given continuing nursing education regarding legal and ethical issues in nursing. As a nurse whenever needed and wherever need emerges like in the hospital setting and in the community. Administration should provide necessary facilities to provide education related to legal and ethical issues in nursing.

### Recommendations

The project recommends the following for further research.

1. The study can be replicated with larger samples
2. An experimental study can be done to assess the effectiveness of structured teaching programme improve the knowledge on legal and ethical issues in nursing.

### Limitations

- The study was limited to 42 samples to generalize the findings.

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