



A study to assess the perceived attitude of Indian rural population towards post-burn recovered victims of selected villages of Rahata Taluka

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Abstract

Background of the Study: Burn injuries are a major public health problem worldwide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Survivors often experience long-term physical disfigurement, psychological trauma, and social stigma. In rural India, misconceptions, superstition, low literacy, and socio-cultural beliefs may influence community attitudes toward post-burn recovered individuals, affecting their rehabilitation and quality of life.

Objectives:

1. To assess the perceived attitude of the Indian rural population toward post-burn recovered victims.
2. To analysed attitudes across domains including physical appearance, social, family, religious, workplace, and psychological factors.

Material and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used. The study was conducted in selected villages (Adgaon, Gogalgaon, Nirmal Pimpri, and Chandrapur) of Rahata Taluka, Maharashtra, India. A total of 200 participants aged 18-75 years were selected using quota sampling (50 from each village). Data were collected using a structured socio-demographic questionnaire and an attitude-perception scale. Descriptive statistics including mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation were used for analysis.

Results: The findings revealed that a considerable proportion of elderly participants had inadequate to moderate awareness regarding elder abuse. Awareness levels varied significantly with selected demographic variables such as age, education, and type of family. The results highlight the need for structured awareness and educational programs to enhance understanding and reporting of elder abuse among the elderly population.

Keywords: Burn survivors, attitude, rural population, social stigma, rehabilitation, burn recovery, community perception

Introduction

Burn injuries are among the most devastating forms of trauma, leading to physical disability, psychological distress, and social challenges. Survivors frequently face discrimination due to visible scars and functional limitations. In rural communities, traditional beliefs and lack of awareness may intensify stigma, affecting reintegration into society. Understanding community attitudes is essential for planning effective rehabilitation and awareness programs.

Statement of Problem: A study to assess the perceived attitude of the Indian rural population toward post-burn recovered victims in selected villages of Rahata Taluka.

Objectives

General Objective

To assess the perceived attitude of the rural population toward post-burn recovered victims.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.
2. To assess attitudes regarding physical appearance of burn survivors.
3. To evaluate social, family, religious, workplace, and psychological perceptions.

Methodology

1. Research design and approach

Descriptive research design with a cross-sectional survey approach.

2. Setting of the study

This study was conducted in selected rural villages of Rahata Taluka, Maharashtra: Adgaon, Gogalgaon, Nirmal Pimpri, and Chandrapur.

3. Sample

Rural residents aged 18-75 years residing in selected villages.

4. Sample size

The total number of samples selected for the study was 200.

5. Sampling technique

The sampling technique used in the study was Quota sampling technique.

6. Sampling Procedure

Samples were screened for eligibility of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Patients eligible and willing to participate were included in the study. Fifty participants were selected from each of the four villages to ensure equal representation

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: The patient who are;

1. Age 18-75 years
2. Permanent resident of selected villages
3. Willing to participate
4. Able to understand instructions

Exclusion criteria: The patient who are;

1. Individuals with cognitive impairment or severe illness
2. Those unwilling to participate
3. Individuals unavailable during data collection period

7. Tools and techniques

Instruments Used

1. Socio-demographic questionnaire
2. Attitude and perception scale (Yes/No format) covering:
 - Physical appearance
 - Social factors
 - Family factors
 - Religious beliefs
 - Workplace acceptance
 - Psychological perceptions

Validity of tools was established through expert review.

8. Data collection procedure

Permission was obtained from institutional authorities and village leaders. Informed consent was secured from participants. Data were collected over 10 days through face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires.

Results

A total of 200 rural residents from selected villages of Rahata Taluka participated in the study to assess their perceived attitude toward post-burn recovered victims.

1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Age Distribution

The majority of participants were in the age group of 31-45 years (38.5%), followed by 18-30 years (26.5%), 46-60 years (24.5%), and ≥ 61 years (10.5%).

Gender

Most respondents were male (66.5%), while females constituted 33.5%.

Educational Status

Secondary education was most common (35%), followed by primary education (29%), graduates (23.5%), illiterate participants (10%), and postgraduates (2.5%).

Occupation

Farmers comprised the largest occupational group (42.5%), followed by housewives (24.5%), employed individuals (23%), laborers (7.5%), and others (2.5%).

Income

Most participants had an annual income of ₹50,000-₹1,00,000 (45.5%), followed by below ₹50,000 (42.5%). Only a small proportion reported income above ₹1,50,000.

Religion

The majority were Hindu (86%), followed by other religions (11.5%), Christian (1.5%), and Muslim (1%).

2. Perceived Attitude toward Post-Burn Recovered Victims

Attitudes were assessed across six domains: physical appearance, social factors, family factors, religious beliefs, workplace factors, and psychological perception.

Domain-Wise Scores (Mean \pm SD)

- **Physical appearance:** 3.94 ± 1.92
- **Social factors:** 4.01 ± 0.09
- **Family factors:** 2.92 ± 1.21
- **Religious factors:** 0.66 ± 1.05
- **Workplace factors:** 3.64 ± 1.13
- **Psychological perception:** 5.05 ± 2.04

The overall attitude score was 20.19 ± 4.22 (range 0-36).

3. Level of Attitude

Participants were categorized based on total attitude scores:

- **Poor attitude (0-12):** 1 participant
- **Average attitude (13-24):** 30 participants
- **Good attitude (25-36):** 169 participants

The majority (84.5%) demonstrated a good level of attitude toward post-burn recovered victims, while 15% showed average attitudes.

4. Qualitative Responses

Participants expressed varied opinions toward burn survivors:

- Fear of burn survivors — 10%
- Willingness to form friendships — 15%
- Sympathy toward survivors — 20%
- Respect — 5%
- No difficulty in communication — 5%
- No impact on social life — 4%
- Feeling sorry for survivors — 13%
- Perception of disfigurement (ugliness) — 10%
- Willingness to help — 12%
- Recognition of suffering — 6%

5. Attitude Toward Friendship

When asked about willingness to befriend burn survivors:

- **Yes:** 166 participants (83%)
- **No:** 34 participants (17%)

Reasons for unwillingness included fear, discomfort, and negative perceptions of physical appearance.

6. Belief About Risk of Burn Injury

Regarding whether burn injuries can happen to anyone:

- **Yes:** 84 participants (42%)
- **No:** 116 participants (58%)

Those who responded affirmatively cited accidental causes and improper handling of fire as major reasons.

Summary of Key Findings

The findings indicate that although the majority of rural participants demonstrated generally positive attitudes toward post-burn recovered victims, elements of fear,

stigma related to physical appearance, and misconceptions persist. Psychological empathy coexists with social discomfort, highlighting the need for community education and rehabilitation awareness programs.

Discussion

The study highlights persistent stigma toward burn survivors in rural communities, primarily due to lack of awareness, myths, and fear of disfigurement. Education level and socio-cultural background appear to influence attitudes. These findings align with global literature indicating that burn survivors face long-term social exclusion despite medical recovery. Community education programs and psychosocial interventions are essential to promote acceptance and improve rehabilitation outcomes. Per the objectives.

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