

Practice of Child Rights by School Teachers- A focal area of School Social Work Practice

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ABSTRACT

School Social Work is a vast area of practice that responds to the needs of students and school community. In their commitment to human rights and social justice, School Social Workers advocate for the rights of students (Lakshmi J 2014). Today the School Social Work profession has wider scope as the population of students faces a more complex set of individual, school, family, and community level risk factors (Kelly et al. 2010). Less interest in academics, suicides due to stress and low marks, corporal punishment and sexual abuse, wrong parenting roles, drug abuse and addictions etc are all the broad-ranging educational challenges of pupils today. Millions of children suffer from varied forms of abuse and exploitation resulting in the violation of their rights. On the other hand school teachers lack ability and information on how to address students problems (Berzin S C et al. 2011) (Abrahams et al. 1992). Studies show that the awareness and practice of Child Rights among school teachers are very poor (Kumar D 2016). This calls to the attention of the School Social Workers the vital need for enhancing practice of Child Rights among school teachers. Hence the present study attempts to explore the practice of Child Rights among school teachers in Udupi District Karnataka. The aim of this study is to know the practice level of Child Rights among School Teachers. The Research design is Descriptive in nature. Universe of the study is Udupi District in Karnataka. 782 samples of school teachers were selected by using Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling method. Self Prepared Questionnaire on 'Child Rights Practice by School Teachers' was used for data collection and data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science 23 version. The finding of the study reveals that more than half 51.4 percent of the respondents are having low level of practice on Child Rights. The Government school teachers have high level of practice on Child Rights than those in management schools. To conclude teachers from unaided schools followed by aided schools have low level of Child Rights practice indicating these category of teachers is a focal area of scope for School Social Workers to enhance Child Rights practice.

Key Words: Child Rights, Practice, School Teachers, Social Work, School Social Work

1. INTRODUCTION

School Social Work is a vast area of practice that responds to the needs of students and school community. In their commitment to human rights and social justice, School Social Workers advocate for the rights of students (Lakshmi J 2014). The service of the Social Workers in Schools as de facto family case managers, mental health practitioners or behavior interventionists within the school is highly reflective of school Social Work (Gherardi, S. A. and Whittlesey Jerome, W. K 2017). Today the School Social Work

profession has wider scope as the population of students faces a more complex set of individual, school, family, and community level risk factors (Kelly et al. 2010).

Schools once known as the temple of learning has now become an area of fear and violence. Children are at risk both inside and outside the school premises. They not only face harassment first hand they also witness it which impacts them adversely (Aditi Bishnoi 2013). Less interest in academics, corporal punishment and sexual abuse, suicides due to

stress and low marks, drug abuse and varied addictions, negative peer-group influence, wrong parenting roles, family conflicts and parents' separation etc are the broad-ranging educational challenges of pupils today. Millions of children suffer from varied forms of abuse and exploitation of their rights. Out of the 430 million children in India approximately 55 percent currently experience rights violation (Capt. P. K Barua 2014).

On the other hand today teachers who have vital role in molding the young minds are faced with a challenge that each child in the class has unique capacity, unique personality and unique behaviour and problems (Jacob, S. 2014). While some teachers remain up to their responsibility of teaching just the academic syllabus, some are unable to identify or understand academic and non academic problems affecting the pupils. Still many of the school teachers who are aware of students' varied problems lack ability to address such problems. And several of them engage in the abuse and exploitation of Children. This is all mainly because of lack of Child Rights Practice among the school teachers (Berzin S C et al. 2011). Studies show that the awareness and practice of Child Rights among school teachers are very poor (Kumar D 2016). This calls to the attention of the School Social Workers the vital need for enhancing practice of Child Rights among school teachers.

The Researcher in her Social Work Practice with Children, Parents and school teachers in Udupi District of Karnataka identified the multifaceted problems faced by children and frequent occurrence of Child Rights violation. The investigator also observed the limitations of the teachers as well as the challenges they faced in addressing the students problems. This was the stimulating factor of this study. Hence the present study attempts to explore the practice of Child Rights among school teachers in Udupi District Karnataka

Review of Literature

In their study **Hassan M et al. (2016)** found out that majority (81.3 percent) of elementary school teachers at Tabriz in Iran had only average performance in dealing with child abuse cases where in only meager (6.0 percent) of the teachers had officially reported the child mistreatment cases. **Abrahams et al.**

(1992) conducted a 568 sample survey among the middle school full-time teachers from 40 Districts across the country which revealed that majority of the teachers reported that they confront child abuse among their students, three quarters of the teachers have evidenced the occurrences of child abuse among their students and seventy four percent of the respondents suspected a child being abused or neglected one time or another. However the study revealed that majority of the teachers stated that they had minimum level of information on how to address cases of child abuse and neglect. **Ajithkumar U (2013)** understood the severity of child abuses occurring in the form of corporal punishments in the secondary schools of greater Mumbai. She perceived such violence on children was happening because the teachers were neither aware nor in practice of Child Rights. Her study revealed that the awareness as well as the practice on Child Rights among the Secondary school teachers is very poor.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of this study is to know the level of Practice on Child Rights among the School Teachers of Udupi District in Karnataka. The major objectives are: to describe the Demographic Characteristics of the School Teachers in Udupi District, to measure the level of Practice on Child Rights among the School teachers and to provide appropriate suggestion based on the findings of the study for promoting Child Rights Practice among the school teachers. Three hypotheses are formulated for this study. The study is Descriptive in nature and the universe consists of 7799 school teachers in Udupi District Karnataka (Report from Department of Primary and Secondary Education Udupi 2016) from which 782 samples were selected by using Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling Technique. Where in 10 percent of the samples were selected from each of the stratum – Government, Aided and Unaided schools.

Self Prepared Questionnaire on 'Practice of Child Rights by School Teachers' was used which consisted of five dimensions: Practice of Right to Survival, Rights to Development, Rights to Protection, Rights to Participation and Child Friendly School. Practice of Child Rights Index was prepared using five point Likert type scale in order to measure the level

of Practice on Child Rights. Adopting the Questionnaire method the data was collected from the selected samples and the statistical analysis was done by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 23 Version). The inference was drawn by applying the tests namely mean, median, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Karl Pearson Co-efficiency of Correlation and 'Z' test

Major Findings

While analyzing the age of the respondents it was noted that more than one third 37.0 percent of the respondents were belonged to 22 to 35 years of age group, less than half 40.9 percent of school teachers belonged to 36 to 50 years of age group and less than one fourth 22.1 percent of the respondents belonged to 51 to 70 years of age group. It has been found that the mean age of the respondents was 40 years. While analyzing the educational qualification of the respondents, it was observed that more than three fourth 76.7 percent of the school

teachers have done the professional courses which include B. Ed, D.Ed and BP. While only less than one fourth 23.3 percent of the school teachers have done PUC and Degree Courses. With regard to the type of school working, less than half 49.0 percent of the respondents were from Government schools, more than one third 44.0 percent of the respondents are from Unaided schools and only meager 17.0 percent of them were from Aided schools.

While analyzing the level of Practice on Child Rights among the respondents it has been observed that in all the dimensions of Child Rights Practice more than half 52.7, 47.4, 57.7, 55.6 and 53.6 percent of the respondents had low level of practice of Rights to life, Rights to development, Rights to Protection, Rights to Participation and Child Friendly School respectively. As a result in overall Practice on Child Rights more than half 51.4 percent of school teachers were seen having low level of practice on Child Rights.

Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation between Age of the Respondents and Dimensions of Child Rights Practice

Variables/Dimensions	Correlation Value	Strength /Direction of Relationship	Statistical Analysis
Age with Practice of Right to life	.201	Weak Positive Relationship	P<0.01 Highly Significant
Age with Practice of Rights to Development	.038	Very Weak Positive Relationship	P>0.05 Not Significant
Age with Practice of Rights to Protection	.016	Very Weak Positive Relationship	P>0.05 Not Significant
Age with Practice of Rights to Participation	.073	Very Weak Positive Relationship	P<0.05 Significant
Age with Practice of Child Friendly School	.157	Very Weak Positive Relationship	P<0.01 Highly Significant
Age with Overall Practice on Child Rights	.126	Very Weak Positive Relationship	P<0.01 Highly Significant

The above Karl Pearson Co-efficiency of Correlation Statistical test analysis table portrays that there is high level of statistical Significant Positive relationship between the Age of the respondents and Overall Practice on Child Rights [$r = .126$, $P < 0.01$]. The direction of the relationship is positive i.e. age of the respondents and Practice on Child Rights are positively correlated which means

when the age of the respondents increases the level of child rights practice also increases. The strength of the relationship is very weak. It has been inferred that as the age increases the level of Child Rights Practice also increase.

There is Highly Significant relationship between the participants' age and two

dimensions of child rights practice: Practice on Right to life, and Child Friendly School, there is statistically significant relationship between participants' Age and the dimension of Practice on Rights to Participation. But no statistical significant relationship found between participants' Age and two dimensions of Child Rights Practice: Practice on Rights to development and Rights to Protection. The direction of relationship is positive (Age of respondents and all dimensions of child rights practice are positively correlated) Regarding the Strength of relationship, there is very weak

relationship between age of respondents and four dimensions: Practice on Rights to development, Rights to Protection, Rights to Participation and Child Friendly School and weak relationship between participants' Age and practice on Survival Rights.

Statistical Inference: The Karl Pearson's Co-efficiency of Correlation Statistical test was applied to test the research Hypothesis and it has been inferred that there is statistically high significant relationship between respondents' Age and their Practice on Child Rights. Hence the Research Hypothesis is accepted.

Z Test between Gender of the Respondents and Practice on Child Rights

SL. NO	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Statistical Inference
1	Practice on Right to life	Female	31.5817	4.27333	Z= -2.026 df=348.523 P<0.05 Significant
		Male	32.3333	4.74110	
2	Practice on Rights to Development	Female	30.4218	3.93046	Z= -.279 df=333.856 P>0.05 Not Significant
		Male	30.5211	4.60985	
3	Practice on Rights to Protection	Female	32.2935	4.16981	Z= .960 df= 350.984 P>0.05 Not Significant
		Male	31.9484	4.58588	
4	Practice on Rights to Participation	Female	30.8067	3.86815	Z= -.263 df= 361.107 P>0.05 Not Significant
		Male	30.8920	4.10965	
5	Practice on Child Friendly School	Female	30.7065	5.05184	Z=.005 df= 347.596 P>0.05 Not Significant
		Male	30.7042	5.62355	
6	Overall Practice on Child Rights	Female	155.8102	16.76418	Z= -.385 df=331.912 P>0.05 Not Significant
		Male	156.3991	19.81674	

The Z test analysis table demonstrates that there is statistically significant difference between the gender of the respondents and their practice on Right to life the dimensions of Child Rights Practice. But there is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and four dimensions: Practice of Rights to development, Rights to Protection, Rights to Participation, Child Friendly School and overall practice on Child Rights. It is found that in two dimensions - Practice of Right to life and Child Friendly

School, the female respondents have slightly higher mean score than the male respondents. However in three dimensions: Practice on Rights to development, Rights to Protection and Rights to Participation, the male respondents have slightly higher mean score than their counterparts. Even in overall Practice on Child Rights the male participants have slightly higher mean score than the female participants. Hence it has been inferred that male participants have possessed slightly higher Practice of Child Rights.

Statistical Inference: The Z test applied revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the

respondents and Practice of Child Rights. Hence the Research Hypothesis gets rejected and the Null Hypothesis stands accepted.

One Way Analysis of Variance among Respondents' Type of School Taught and various Dimensions of Child Rights Practice

Dependent Variable	Type of school taught & child rights practice	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Mean	Standard Deviation	Statistical Inference
Practice of Rights to life	Between Group	1951.293	2	975.646	G1=33.2037 G2=31.9173 G3=29.6805	4.19178 4.04903 4.07377	F=57.257 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	13274.043	779	17.040			
Practice of Rights to Development	Between Group	252.573	2	126.287	G1=31.0052 G2=30.2331 G3=29.7556	4.10911 4.12106 4.04555	F=7.551 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	13028.881	779	16.725			
Practice of Rights to Protection	Between Group	359.845	2	179.922	G1=32.8381 G2=32.1053 G3=31.3271	4.30693 4.16199 4.17565	F=10.016 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	13993.035	779	17.963			
Practice of Rights to Participation	Between Group	363.099	2	181.550	G1=31.4360 G2=30.9098 G3=29.9173	3.83296 3.93018 3.91715	F=12.070 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	11717.281	779	15.041			
Practice of Child Friendly School	Between Group	2293.921	2	1146.960	G1=32.0783 G2=31.4887 G3=28.3383	4.88229 4.81572 5.04304	F=47.258 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	18906.432	779	24.270			
Overall practice of Child Rights	Between Group	20989.019	2	10494.510	G1=160.5614 G2=156.6541 G3=149.0188	17.69138 16.32485 15.92440	F=36.834 P<0.01 Highly Significant
	Within Group	221947.304	779	284.913			

G1= Government School

G2=Aided School

G3=Unaided School

The ONE WAY Analysis of Variance statistical test table illustrates that there is statistically Highly Significant variance among the respondents type of school taught and their practice of Child Rights in all dimensions; Practice of Right to life, Rights to development, Rights to protection, Rights to participation, Child Friendly School and overall Practice of Child Rights among the respondents. It is found that the participants who are working in the Government schools had higher mean score in all dimensions of child rights practice scale followed by the mean score of those working in Aided schools and Unaided schools. It has been inferred that the teachers who are working in Government

school have possessed higher level of practice on child rights than those working in Aided and Unaided Schools. It is understood that comparatively participants working in Unaided Schools have low level of Child Rights practice than those working in Aided and Government Schools.

Statistical Inference: the one way ANOVA statistical test applied revealed that there is highly significant variance among the type of schools taught by the respondents and Practice on Child Rights. Hence research Hypothesis stands accepted.

3. DISCUSSION

Ajithkumar U (2013) discovered that the practice of Child Rights among the school teachers is very poor. The present study has a similar finding as more than half 51.4 percent of the school teachers of this study show low level of Child Rights Practice. But for Shahid M (2009) vast majority 91.3 percent of the respondents were in practice of child rights in their class.

For Kumar D (2016) the male respondents of his study showed higher level of child rights practice while compared to their counterpart female teachers. This is parallel to the finding of the present study as the male participants of this study show slightly higher level of practice on child rights while compared to the female participants. However Shahid M (2009) found that both male and female teachers of his study had same level of practice on rights of Children.

The present study inferred that there is statistically highly significant relationship between the Age of the respondents and their practice on Child Rights where, as the age of the respondents increased the level of practice of Child Rights also increased positively. But oppositely the study by Shahid M (2009) inferred that participants who were below as well as above 40 years of age both had same level of practice on the rights of the children. Another important inference of the present study is that there is statistically highly significant variance among the respondents type of school taught and their practice on child rights wherein teachers working in Government schools had higher level of child rights practice as compared to the teachers working in aided and unaided schools. But Kumar D (2016) found that secondary school teachers teaching in unaided schools had higher level of child rights practice than the teachers of aided schools.

Recommendations

1. More than half 51.4 percent of the participants of this study show low level of practice on Child Rights. And respondents working in the unaided schools show lower level of child rights practice than those working in aided and government schools. Hence the researcher strongly recommends that the school management need to provide practice based child rights training to the school

teachers especially those from unaided and aided schools.

2. A team of experts from both government and Non Government Organizations related to children could prepare a training module on Child Rights and the School Social Workers could facilitate the preparation and implementation of the training module.
3. As the study reveals more than half 57.7 percent of the respondents have low level of practice on Child Protection Rights, the Department of Education along with the Department of Women and Child Development need to organize capacity enhancement programme on Child Rights Protection Mechanisms for school teachers at the block level in entire District.
4. A strong recommendation for the Social Work educators as well as the Social Work Practitioners to widen their professional approach to schools. And the school social workers could conduct activity based Child Rights programmes focusing on the enhancement of Child Rights Practice among the teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

School Social Work is a crucial need of the hour today as Children be it at home, school or community are faced with varied risks with their rights being neglected, denied and exploited. The school teachers who play vital role in forming the life of pupils are unable to address the multiple educational challenges that children face today. The investigator perceives that lack of Child Rights Practice as one of the causes for the teachers' inability to tackle students' problems. From the present study it is found that majority of school teachers in Udupi District are with low level of Child Rights Practice. The inference that teachers who are working in Unaided followed by aided schools have lower level of Child Rights Practice indicates that practice of Child Rights among school teachers as a vital area of School Social Work Practice.

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