

A Study on Analysing the Impact of Child Rights Awareness among School Students in Salem District

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Abstract

Awareness on rights of the children among the school students is attempted to examine in this research among students in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. UNCRC defines "Child" is the one who is less than 18 years. Children are termed a greatest gift of families, they are innocent and trustful. As like adults, they also have all the rights and privileges to live their life happily but still they face several problems both at their families and in the society. Children have the right to survival, participation, protection, and development framed by UNCRC. Hence in the present study an attempt is made to create awareness among the children on their rights. The present intervention study was conducted among elementary school children studying in first to fifth standard in Mecheri, Salem.

Keywords: Child rights, Children, and UNCRC

Introduction

Children are the precious gift of Mankind. Any society will be having a greater future only when the present children are treated in humanitarian grounds. They are the asset of any nation needs to be addressed with compassion, love and bestowal of best care to protect them in the aspects of physical, mental, emotional and social wellness for creating a holistic development of both the children and the society. Child rights have garnered widespread attention from numerous international and national bodies, each contributing to the establishment and promotion of standards aimed at protecting and empowering children globally.

United Nations (UN): The UN has been a pivotal force in advocating for child rights, primarily by adopting of the Convention in 1989 on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This landmark treaty outlines fundamental rights of children that includes the right to survival, right to development, right to protection, and right to participation. They emphasize that children should be treated with dignity, have their best interests considered in all decisions, and have a voice in matters affecting their lives.

The four main child rights, often referred to as “four pillars” are:

- The right to survival
- The right to protection
- The right to participation and
- The right to development.

The purpose is to define the primary human rights that should be afforded to children. There are four wide classifications of those rights. These 4 classes cover all civil, political, social, financial and cultural rights of each baby.

- a) Right to Survival: This right starts 20 weeks after the conception of the mother where exactly meets the birth of the baby. Thus, it focusses on birth, food, shelter and dress or clothing all together denotes the basic fulfillment that supports to live in a dignified manner.
- b) Right to Protection: This states the safety measures to enhance and oblige to protect the neglect, support against exploitation, abuses at different places even at own home.
- c) Right to Participation: The involvement in decision making process either directly or indirectly is the right covers up. This varies with respect to
- d) A child has a right to participate in any decision making that involves him/her directly or indirectly. There are varying degrees of participation as per the age and maturity of the child.
- e) Right to Development: Children have the right to all forms of development: Emotional, Mental and Physical. Emotional development is fulfilled by proper care and love of a support system, mental development through education and learning and physical development through recreation, play and nutrition.

UNICEF: The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) plays a crucial part in implementing as well as monitoring child rights globally. UNICEF works to ensure that the principles of the CRC are integrated into national laws and policies. Their programs focus on areas such as education, health, protection from abuse and exploitation, and advocacy for children’s rights at both community and governmental levels (UNICEF, 2020).

Human Rights Watch (HRW): HRW actively monitors and reports on violations of children’s rights across the world. Their work includes documenting cases of child labor, child soldiers, and abuse, and advocating for policy changes and legal reforms to safeguard children’s rights. HRW’s reports aim to raise awareness and prompt action to address human rights abuses impacting children (Banks, 2008).

Save the Children: This organization is supporting towards improving the children and their lives through emergency relief, education, and health programs. Save the Children works on both advocacy and practical interventions, striving to ensure that children’s rights are upheld in crisis situations and everyday contexts.

National Governments: Many countries have enacted legislation and established agencies focused on child welfare in alignment with the CRC. These national bodies are responsible for enforcing child protection laws, providing social services, and creating policies that promote children’s well-being and development.

International Labour Organization (ILO): The ILO addresses child labor issues through conventions including Convention 138 that deals with minimum age for employment and the Convention 182 dealing the child labour and its worst forms. The ILO agreements aim to eradicate exploitative child labor practices and ensure safe working conditions for minors.

These bodies collectively work towards creating a world where children’s rights are universally recognized and respected, advocating for comprehensive legal frameworks and practical measures to protect children and enhance their quality of life.

Review of Literature

Ravi, (2023) conducted a study on Teacher Understanding of Child Rights: Challenges and Opportunities and found that Teachers generally exhibit a higher level of awareness compared to students, influenced by their training and professional development opportunities. Research on Student Awareness of Child Rights: A Case Study in Tamil Nadu Schools conducted by Ramachandran, (2022) indicates that awareness among students varies widely depending on educational interventions and socio-economic factors. In many cases, students have limited knowledge about their rights. Chakraborty,S (2016) in his research titled “A study of children of the families living on the streets of Kolkata with special reference to child right to protection” found that the migrant families was the lack of livelihood option in their native village and the violence against the children occurs in different settings were within family, at school. There were 81% children who felt uncomfortable to live on the streets.

Methods and Materials

The present study adopts Descriptive Research Design. The researcher conducted the study among the elementary school children studying in I to VIII standard in a private school in Mecheri, Slaem District. The sample for the study consists of all the students studying in I to VIII standard comprising of 540 students and hence researcher adopts Census method of sampling. The students were approached and are examined with the interview schedule to measure their awareness towards their rights. After examining, a training programme was scheduled for a period of two months in which four classes will be covered in a month and the training was given for all the students and after training an evaluation was again conducted to identify their level of awareness towards the rights of children after providing a training programme. The teachers of the respective classes are also given orientation on the rights of the children and the role of teachers in protecting their rights.

Objectives of the Study: (To)

- identify the level of awareness on child rights among the school students studying in Class I to VIII.
- promote training programmes towards creating awareness on child rights.
- evaluate the level of awareness on child rights after the training programme.

Hypothesis

- Level of awareness among children does not have a difference with respect to child rights after the training programme

Analysis and Interpretation

a) Level of Awareness before the Training Programme

The data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The opinion of the students before training program is examined and is presented in the following table 1.

Table No 1 Level of Awareness on Child Rights Before Training Programme

S.No	Rights of Children (UNCRC)	Level of Awareness					
		Low		Moderate		High	
			%	N	%	N	%
1	Right to Survival	428	79	70	13	42	8
2	Right to Protection	389	72	98	18	53	10

3	Right to Participation	476	88	53	10	11	2
4	Right to Development	448	83	58	11	34	6

The table given above portrays that majority of the children are not much familiar with their rights. It was observed that more than 3/4th of the children (79%) are found to have a low level of awareness towards right to survival, 72% reported that they have a low level of awareness towards right to protection, 88% have a low level of awareness towards right to participation and majority 83% have a low level of awareness towards right to development.

b) Level of Awareness after the Training Programme

The children were classified into groups and are provided training on the rights given by UNCRC. They are also oriented towards protecting their rights through lectures, presentations, drama, stories and chart works. After the training their level of awareness is measured and presented in the table 2 as follows:

Table No 2 Level of Awareness on Child Rights After Training Programme

S.No	Rights of Children (UNCRC)	Level of Awareness					
		Low		Moderate		High	
			%	N	%	N	%
1	Right to Survival	0	0	21	4	519	96
2	Right to Protection	0	0	17	3	523	97
3	Right to Participation	0	0	13	2	527	98
4	Right to Development	0	0	18	3	522	97

The table given above portrays that majority of the children got familiar with their rights after the training programme. It was observed that a vast majority of the children (96%) are living with high level of awareness towards right to survival, 97% have a high level of awareness towards right to protection, 98% are reported with higher awareness level on right to participation and 97% of the children are found highly aware on right to development.

c) Comparison of level of awareness before and after training programme

Statistical analysis was used to compare and present the significant difference after the training programme given to the school students by testing the hypothesis on Level of awareness among children does not have a difference with respect to child rights after the training programme

Table No 3 Statistical Analysis towards Awareness on Child Rights

Rights of Children (UNCRC)	Awareness on Child Rights						t Value	Sig.
	Before Training			After Training				
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD		
Right to Survival	18.02	540	9.792	21.61	540	9.993	15.837	.000
Right to Protection	18.15	540	10.906	23.67	540	8.692	14.394	.000
Right to Participation	18.59	540	9.923	24.02	540	10.849	23.196	.000
Right to Development	18.26	540	8.644	23.68	540	7.739	27.05	.000

The highest mean value found among the school children for the Right to Participation before intervention was with a mean value of 18.59 and standard deviation of 9.923 whereas, the lowest mean value was found to be 18.02 for the Right to Survival with a standard deviation of 9.972 whereas, The highest mean value found among the school children for the Right to Participation after intervention was with a mean value of 24.02 and standard deviation of 10.849 whereas, the lowest mean value was found to be 23.68 for the Right to Development with a standard deviation of 7.739. The hypothetical results between the four child rights are measured after providing training programme reveal that there exists a significant difference between the means of school children. It was found that the children show significant growth in acquiring knowledge on child rights after the training programme. The value of $p < 0.05$ depicts a significant difference for children in their level of acquiring knowledge on their rights such as right to survive, right to protection, right to participation and right to development. The analysis projects that there exists a significant difference between the mean scores of before and after training programme at a 5 per cent level of significance rejecting null hypothesis.

Conclusion

Child rights is important and increasing awareness among school students is much important in fostering an environment where children's rights are respected and upheld. While there are existing frameworks and programs aimed at increasing awareness, there is a need for enhanced curriculum integration, targeted teacher training, and community involvement. By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can better support the realization of child rights and contribute to the development of informed and responsible future citizens.

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