

Comparative Analysis of Children Rights Violations at Elementary Level

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Abstract

This comparative study analyses the consequences of children rights violations in public sector schools at elementary level and how they affect the academic performance of the students studying in the rural and urban set up of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) institutions in Capital Territory Islamabad. The purpose of the research is to analyze the main rights which are being violated and evaluate how these violations are affecting the academic performance of the children. The target population of the study includes the heads, teachers and elementary students of all the institutions working under Federal Directorate of Islamabad both in rural and urban areas. For the purpose of comparison, the sample of the population was segregated between the rural and urban areas which compared the academic performance of elementary students as it is generally perceived that the institutions located in rural areas observe more violations of rights including corporal punishment, mistreatment, unhealthy environment, lack of educational amenities and appropriate infrastructure compared with the institutions located in Urban areas. The findings of the study affirm the notion that the institutions in rural areas tend to hold more ratio of these infringements as compared to the urban areas which is also reflected in the result Grade Point Average (GPA) that showed the substantial evidences of the decline in the academic performance of students enrolled there. The study is significant as it paves the path towards the institutional reforms which are needed so these institutions could be made conducive and safe for the children to study.

Key Words: Children Rights Infringements, Elementary Institutions, Academic Performance, comparative analysis.

Introduction

Children are that essence of educational system which cannot be paralleled to any other asset Yamasaki (2002), hence, it is the responsibility of the society to provide the individualized

care and attention to prepare them for the future challenges of life. Pakistani social set up observes violations of human rights as much as any other developing country (Sadruddin, 2011) which also influenced the educational set up where frequent infringements of right are observed and considered a usual practice. Being an underdeveloped country, Pakistan needs to focus on the educational reforms as it is numerated to be the pivotal factor by many countries for the progress of a country both in economic and social areas, Kiblawi (2014). For this purpose, the government of Pakistan needs to upgrade the institutions according to the “Minimum Standards of Education*” UNICEF (2010) as they hold the majority of student enrollment. According to a survey steered by “the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE)” together with “the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration”, the institutions located in the FDE Islamabad are deficit of teachers and infrastructural facilities which include lack of furniture, technology, drinking water, toilets, transport (Abbasi, 2015). This is not only against the minimum standards for educational setup determined by UNICEF but it also draws adverse implications on the performance of students.

The elementary level of education is the foundation of the academic and personality development in a child. Any kind of maltreatment can have everlasting effects on their cognitive development; hence the environment of elementary school should be clear of any form of ill-treatment. Children in Pakistan are in more vulnerable state and exposed to the account of physical and corporal punishment (Gulrez, 2005), which demands immediate attention. There is a dire need to banish the practice of maltreatment and provision of infrastructural facilities in the Pakistani government institutions following the footstep of countries like France, Norway, Australia and Poland (Larzelere, 1999). Although many national and international educationists have condemned this practice but according to Naz, Khan, Daraz, Hussain, Khan (2011), the excessive use of corporal punishment has been the most prominent factor in Pakistan which has reflected adverse consequences over the psychological development and academic results of students. Pakistani Government have anticipated judicially to address this problem by taking legislative measures and reforming budgetary allocation to improve the state of these institutions but the practical implications have been so far ineffective. Hence, the study becomes more imperative to highlight the areas where more attention is required for the government to take immediate steps.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This section deals with the philosophical foundation which provides the initial point for the researcher to start his study. This research is exploratory in nature which has adopted the “Hierarchy of Needs” model by Maslow, 1998, to determine the state of rights which are being desecrated in the institutions at elementary level. All the basic rights of children have been sub categorized according to the steps of needs arranged in the hierarchical ladder determined by Maslow. Though the sequence of the ladder was not followed but all the rights/ needs have been grouped in six dimensions (*Table 1*). Each dimension has further included a number of items depicting a basic need/ right which is being violated in the schools. Altogether 85 items have been included in six dimensions which were catered in three questionnaires separately served to the students, teachers and heads of the institutions. The detail is listed in the following table:

Table 1

<i>DIMENSIONS OF QUESTIONNAIRE</i>							
<i>Rights</i>	<i>Components</i>	<i>Heads</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Total Items</i>		
<i>Physiological Rights</i>	<i>Food</i>	1	}	-	}	10	
	<i>water</i>	1		2			1
	<i>basic infrastructure facilities</i>	1		2			-
				1			1
<i>Love and Belongingness Rights</i>	<i>Parents</i>	-	2	5	7		
<i>Esteem Rights</i>	<i>From others (Achievements, Status, Prestige, Independence, Appreciation, Dominance)</i>	3	2	7	12		
<i>Actualization Rights</i>	<i>Self realization (Realizing personal potential seeking personal growth / self fulfillment)</i>	2	2	2	6		
<i>Safety / Security Rights</i>	<i>Corporal Punishment</i>	6	}	4	}	35	
	<i>Bullying</i>	3		3			3
	<i>Sexual Abuse</i>	5		3			1
	<i>Physical security</i>	3		3			1
<i>Educational Rights</i>	<i>Appropriate teachers</i>	3	}	4	}	15	
	<i>Educational Facilities</i>	2		2			3
SUM TOTAL		30	30	25	85		

Statement of the Problem

Being the future of the country, it is imperative to safeguard the rights and ensure the protection of children in any set up. Pakistan holds the circumstances where the manipulation of children rights has been a general practice in many areas ranging from child labor to sexual abuse. Similarly, in educational set up, the provision of educational facilities and protection of their rights has never been given due consideration especially at elementary level and government setup which results in the mass use of corporal punishment, neglect and ill-treatment on part of teachers bullies and even non-teaching staff for the unnecessary disciplinary purpose and handling behavior issues.

Owing to such massive use of corporal punishment and inadequate learning environment, majority of the students drop out before reaching the secondary level in Pakistan (UNESCO,

2013). According to the Education Code (2006), the violation of children rights at school which includes physical retributions, is strictly prohibited, yet it is still widely practiced especially in the institutions located in rural areas. The main aim of the study is to compare the physical state of the institutions located in rural and urban areas in terms physical environment and the state of rights being violated. The general presumption of the researcher was that the institutions located in rural areas hold fewer facilities and administer more physical punishment that results in the decline of academic performance which coincide the findings.

Objectives of Study

The study attains the subsequent listed objectives;

- i) To investigate the major causes of children's rights infringement at elementary level;
- ii) To evaluate the effects of Children Rights Desecrations on the achievements of students.

Research Questions

- i) What are the basic rights which are being violated at elementary level schools?
- ii) How do the reprimands affect the academic performance of the students?

Significance of the Study

The present study can prove valuable in determining the focused areas which the institutions and government can reform to avoid the children rights violations so the learning environment could be made more conducive for the children to study. It will further provide the data needed by the policy makers and the FDE setup to develop a systematic process of institutional reforms and plan budgetary allocations to improve the physical environment of the institutions to bring them up according to the "Minimum Standards of Education" determined by UNICEF.

Methodology

Population and Sample

All the heads, teachers and elementary level students of the institutions located in Federal Directorate of Education Islamabad were the target population of the study. The sample of the study included 7220 students of 5th and 8th grade, 6978 elementary teachers and 361 male and female heads of academic session 2014-15 in FDE.

Research Tool

Based on the "Hierarchical Model of Needs" (Maslow, 1943) as a theoretical framework three questionnaires were separately formulated which were served to the sample population. The rights/ needs of the children were listed in two group PEASE and PLEASE. The first group listed five dimensions of needs (*Physiological, Esteem, Actualization, Security and Educational*) the other enumerated six dimensions (*Physiological, Love and Belongingness, Esteem, Actualization, Security/Safety and Educational*). Total 85 items were catered in three questionnaires of Head Teacher, Students and Teachers, each Right having various items which were grouped into multiple components (*Table 1*).

Source of Data

The detail regarding the *FDE* educational institutions (Urban & Rural) and their result GPA was acquired from FDE Census Report and Result Gazette 2014-15. After the preliminary testing the questionnaires were served to the respondents.

Coefficient of Reliability

According to *Chronbach's Alpha*, the lowest standard value of coefficient reliability is .60 and the reliability of the instrument is .90 which is sufficient as per standard scale. Initially the research instrument was pilot tested on 10% of population which was not included in the main sample of the study.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS 22, the frequencies of each item were calculated and Chi Square was applied to compare the statements collected through rural and urban respondents and cross tabulation. Combined scores were calculated on each item and t-test was applied to find out the mean variance between urban and rural samples. For the scrutiny of academic performance, the GPA at elementary level (board classes 5th and 8th) was taken from the result gazettes. The data was charted analyzed and deduced in the light of the research objectives. Results, deductions and recommendations were drawn in the light of analyzed data.

Results

The results are presented according to main themes mentioned in form of six dimensions of the research tool. The information gathered through the questionnaires was analyzed according to the theoretical framework of the research tool. Complete results are shown in the tables given below. The tables present t-values on the combined score of Children Rights Violation scale between students belonging to urban and rural areas and the effects of such violations on the academic results of the students.

Table 2

Mean, Standard deviation, and t-values on the composite score of Children Rights Violation scale between students belong to urban and rural area (N =722)

Scale	Urban (n =238)		Rural (n =484)		t(720)	p	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
<i>Children Rights Violation</i>	81.73	16.32	89.50	15.22	-6.60	.000	-10.40	-5.52

Table 3
Area Wise Comparative Analysis of Children Rights Violations which Affects the Performance (Urban & Rural) Academic performance of Students All (N=706)

Rights	GPA	Sig. (2-tailed) P-value
Physiological Rights	-.124**	.001
Love and Belongingness Rights	-.135***	.000
Esteem Rights	-.079*	.036
Actualization Rights	-.062	.097
Safety Rights	-.152***	.000
Educational Rights	-.091*	.015
Students total rights	-.129**	.001

*p<.05; **<.01; ***<.001

Table 3.1
Academic performance of Students (Urban) N=238

Rights	GPA	Sig. (2-tailed) P-value
Physiological Rights	.067	.302
Love and Belongingness Rights	.128*	.048
Esteem Rights	.143*	.027
Actualization Rights	.243**	.000
Safety Rights	.108	.097
Educational Rights	.239**	.000
Students total rights	.179**	.006

*p<.05; **<.01; ***<.001

Table 3.2
Academic performance of Students (Rural) N=468

Rights	GPA	Sig. (2-tailed) P-value
Physiological Rights	-.106*	.022
Love and Belongingness Rights	-.144**	.002
Esteem Rights	-.093*	.044
Actualization Rights	-.072	.119
Safety Rights	-.132**	.004
Educational Rights	-.108*	.020
Students total rights	-.130**	.0050

* $p < .05$; ** $< .01$; *** $< .001$

The above tables show the mean variance between urban and rural area's students of government school in Islamabad on the combined score of Children Rights Defilement (*Table 2*). Figures evidently confirm that the students belonging to rural area have higher mean score on Children Rights Defilement as compared to the students belonging to urban area. The mean variance on the composite score of Children Rights Violation scale i.e. 7.96 is highly significant as $p < .001$. Similarly, the mean difference between urban and rural area's students on the composite score for violation of *physiological, Love and Belongingness, Esteem, Actualization, Safety and Educational Rights* also indicate that the ratio of these violations exist at a higher rate in rural areas as compared to the Urban areas.

The comparative analysis of result GPA between the rural and Urban Area students also indicate the clear decline in the performance of students studying in the rural areas which again reaffirms the presumption of the researcher that the infringements of children rights have negative impact on the academic performance of the students.

Discussion

The results of the research on the violation of children rights at elementary level in FDE, Islamabad schools, over all indicate the clear traces of the desecration both in rural and urban areas which is in line with the findings of Malik (2011), who also affirmed that in the third world countries like Pakistan, children are being subject to various exploitations both at homes and in schools, though, the ratio of this desecration is more prevalent in rural areas as compared to the urban areas. The study also sustains the view of Abbasi (2015), who also highlighted the infrastructural deficiencies and lack of teaching staff in the government institutions located in Islamabad Territory that proves the learning environment as being inadequate for students especially in rural areas, which is not in accordance with the minimum standards of education. Moreover, the prevalence of corporal punishment has also been found more in practice in rural areas institutions which coincide with the findings of the research by Parvez and Mogwanja (2006).

The other aim of research dealt with the implications of children rights infringement on the academic performance of the children. The results of the study are affirmative of the research by Sadruddin (2011), who also concluded that the use of physical punishment may result in the decline of academic performance.

Conclusions

Based on the results and findings of the study, the conducted research significantly concludes that the violations of children rights at elementary level in FDE Schools, Islamabad substantially exist, which require immediate attention of government. Moreover, the infrastructure and the availability of table office equipment is also deficit in these institutions, especially in rural areas. It has also been further concluded that the institutions located in rural areas observe more practice of physical punishment as compared to the institutions located in urban areas which reflects adverse implications on academic performance of the students, hence, there is a dire need to reform the institutional and educational structure of the government schools found in FDE, Islamabad.

Recommendations

The researcher strongly recommends that the policy makers and the government should implement the institutional reforms in FDE setup to meet the minimum standards of education determined by UNICEF and the focal point of such reforms should be rural areas which are more neglected. For this purpose, the budgetary allocations can be enhanced by the government. There is an immediate requirement of the curriculum modification and teacher training to provide sufficient guidelines to the teacher in handling small children according to their cognitive abilities. The government should pay immediate attention towards the legal reforms for education to restraint the use of corporal punishment against the children. The community and Parent Teacher Associations can play an active role in highlighting the issues of violence to reprimand the abusers.

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