

Child Abuse



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Hosted by

Voice of Teachers

No. 15-257G, 3rd Cross Street, S S Nagar, Nagercoil
Parvathipuram, Peruvilai Post, Kanyakumari District
Tamil Nadu, South India - 629 003.

Published by

John Publications

Nagercoil, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu
www.johnfoundation.com

Index

Sl. No.	Chapter	Page No.
1	Role of Teacher Educators in protecting Children from Abuse <i>Princy Star, E. & Rexlin Jose, G.</i>	1
2	Rights of Children with Learning Difficulties <i>B. Prema Latha & S. Praveen Kumar</i>	21
3	Impact of Child Abuse <i>A. Sarala & Merlin Sasikala, J., E.</i>	32
4	Science of Seeing and Signs of Receiving: Convergence on Child Rights <i>Cyriac Philip Alexander</i>	46
5	Child Abuse <i>G. Narayanamoorthi & J.E. Merlinsasikala</i>	54
6	Vistas of Emotional Processing: Inquiring Through Wellness Components <i>Ashok Alex Philip</i>	75
7	Child Abuse - Gender Perspective <i>M.Saraswathi, J.E.Merlin Sasikala, & T.Ravichandran</i>	86

✓ 8	Life Skill Education for Higher Secondary Students	<i>R.T. Jegatheeswari</i>	119
✓ 9	Role of Teachers in Mitigating Emotional Abuse among School Students	<i>J. Prija Phyllis & S. Praveen Kumar</i>	132
10	Rights of Mentally Challenged Children	<i>S.Vijila</i>	139
✓ 11	Digital Abuse: Keeping Your Teen Safe Online	<i>Deepa, R., P.</i>	151

Rights of Children with Learning Difficulties

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Introduction

Today a new model of thinking is breaking grounds where learning difficulty is seen as an integral part of society. Ensuring that children with learning difficulties receive the education to which they are entitled might be one of the most difficult situations of parents. Some children struggle in school, with issues ranging from concentration, language and learning difficulties. Whatever the situation, these children are still entitled an education. Every child has the right to be born well and wholesome family life. The sound development of a child in terms of physical, mental, emotional and social growth is the essential right of every child. Children

can express their claim to these rights without any hesitation. Right to education is also a fundamental right, and these factors have been placed on world agenda tables. The UN General Assembly has adopted these rights as universal claims, and any form of discrimination/ violence against children can attract penal action against offenders.

Child Rights

In India, a child has the right to be protected from neglect, exploitation, and abuse at home and elsewhere. Children have the right to be protected from the incidence of abuse, exploitation, trafficking, child labour, and harmful traditional practices to name a few.

Survival rights include a child's right to life and essential needs like nutrition, shelter, living standards and medical services. (Article 23 and 24) include access to medical care, nutrition, protection from harmful habits and safe working environments under the right to health. These articles also mention access to special care and support for the children with special needs.

A child's development rights include a right to education, play and leisure, access to cultural activities, information as well as freedom of thought, conscience and religion. A right to education is paramount in this regard as it helps children maintain discipline and enhance life skills while finding a safe and healthy environment to nurture physiological development. This environment can only be achieved with the inclusion of freedom from violence, abuse or neglect. Article 27(2) states that parents have the primary responsibility to secure the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

Protection rights exist as safeguard against child abuse, neglect and exploitation. They also include care for refugee children, a child-friendly justice system as well as rehabilitation for child victims of abuse. Those who have lost their families must be cared for by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language. They also must be protected from ill-treatment, and sexual or physical violence, including violence as a means of discipline. This also considers the sale of children along with prostitution and pornography of children. Children

must be protected from armed conflict, and governments must protect children from working in difficult or dangerous conditions that compromise their health or access to education or play. The justice system must not permit death or life sentences, as well as sentences with adult prisoners. Participation rights address a child's freedom to express opinions and speak on matters affecting their own lives. They also must be free to join associations and assemble peacefully. As they mature, the children must be permitted to participate in social activities. Children diverse the right to express their opinion freely without any fear of contempt and have their voices heard when adults are deciding on their behalf.

Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties are factors outside of learning differences or difficulties that might affect a student's ability to achieve at the same rate as their peers. Factors such as absenteeism, ineffective instruction, inadequate exposure to necessary curricula, socio-economic status and personal or family trauma may all impact upon a student's ability to effectively engage with learning

activities and meet academic expectations. This may lead to difficulties for the student in meeting the expected learning targets for their age or years of schooling.

Learning difficulties is a general term meaning that a child or adult has difficulty learning in a typical manner because the brain has trouble processing. A learning difficulty is not an indication of intelligence level .but it means the child will have trouble learning in the same way others may do and may have trouble performing certain types of tasks. Difficulties in any one of the areas will certainly interfere with the acquisition of the written form of language (Johnson and Myklebust, 1967). Learning difficulties may affect individuals differently at different stages of life - early childhood, elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood (Ysseldyke et al. 2006).

The learning difficulties are commonly prevalent in every classroom and constitute approximately 15 percent of school population in India. Those pupils experiencing difficulties with learning to read and write respond to planned, targeted instruction, provided that

intervention is early enough to avoid the impact of negative effects of failure (Tindal and Hasbrouck, 1991).

Rights of Academic Challenged Children

Academic challenged is nothing but the chronic difficulties in learning to read, write, spell, or calculate. Though their causes and nature are still not fully understood, presence of learning difficulty does not indicate subnormal intelligence; but it is thought that these are neurologically based difficulty in processing language or figures. These difficulties can be overcome by special learning strategies or with extra effort and tutoring on the part of parents and teachers. Learning difficulties may be diagnosed through testing, observation, interview and other techniques which could be easily used by the teachers and parents. Children usually show early signs of learning difficulties; if the signs are left unrecognized, it may result not only in poor classroom performance but also in low self-esteem and disruptive behavior. There are certain rights which are applicable or which shall be granted to the children with learning difficulties. Article 21 of the CRP states that, persons without any exception whatsoever and without

distinction or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, state of wealth, birth or any other situation applying either to the difficulty person himself or herself or to his or her family.

Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse

Children are entitled to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, including from economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse, sale, trafficking and any similar practices prejudicial to the child's welfare. Children with learning difficulties have been reported as being significantly more likely to be the victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse than their peers without difficulties. The powerlessness, social isolation and stigma faced by children with learning difficulties make them highly vulnerable to violence and exploitation in their own homes, as well as in care centres, institutions or on the street. Also they may face problems such as school bullying which is a form of abuse. Such children need protection from violence, exploitation and fear and may require learning assistance from people including caretakers, attendants, family

members, peers or anyone who enjoys a position of trust and power.

Participation and Access to Opportunities

Children with learning difficulties, like all other children, have a right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them as stated in Article 70. All too often, however, there is a reluctance to recognize the competence of children with learning difficulties to contribute effectively to decision making processes. This can be compounded by attitudes of caretakers, teachers and even parents, who may underestimate the ability of certain children to contribute a valid opinion. Changing such views about the ability of these children to participate or to benefit from support in participating in discussion and decision-making concerning their lives is critical. It represents a major challenge to prevailing attitudes and preconceptions in all countries, one that must be addressed through training as well as through wider efforts to shift public beliefs and attitudes.

Right to Education

The child's right to education is enshrined in human rights treaties, including articles 28 and 29 of the

CRC. A critical implication is the requirement for primary education to be compulsory and available free to all; and secondary education to be available and accessible to every child, with the provision of financial assistance when needed. The CRPD builds upon this principle and makes recommendations about access to lifelong learning opportunities. In many parts of the world, however, the majority of children with learning difficulties are still far from enjoying access to any kind of school, let alone to regular education. Children with learning difficulties can be satisfactorily educated in all schools by giving support tailored to their individual needs, often through an individual educational programme.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the right of children with learning difficulties. The rights plan to satisfy the essential needs for good development of the child, such as the access to an appropriate alimentation, to necessary care, to education, etc. The children thus have the right to live and to develop suitably physically and intellectually. There is also a significant need to improve the livelihoods of children who face all sorts of problems or challenges in

learning, including the physically and intellectually challenged. In this vein, a more comprehensive system of social security for children with learning difficulties is the need of the hour.

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