

Awareness of rights among rural adolescent girls of Jammu District

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Abstract

The present study was carried out among the adolescent girls of Jammu District of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, in order to know their awareness regarding rights. A sample of 60 rural adolescent girls of Jammu district was selected, using random sampling technique from Government schools of Jammu district. Interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection. Majority of the respondents were 15-18 years of age, studying 9-12th standard and belonging to nuclear families. Majority of the respondents believe that they have rights, and most of them have heard about rights, mostly from Television. They rated their knowledge about rights as moderate to low. Majority of them believe that Right to Education should be given to girls. Few of them emphasize on the Right to protection and participation. Majority of the respondents believe that parents grant rights to children and parents also protect these rights. Majority of the respondents knew the correct voting age. Most of the respondents did not have accounts on Social Networking Sites. Only few respondents know about HIV-AIDS. Majority of the respondents knew about child labour. Most of the respondents said that Government should provide education to them and some of them thought that food, clothing, money and shelter should be given to child labourers. Majority of the respondents said that when they are in danger, they would inform their parents, some of them said that they would inform police and some of them said that they would walk away from danger.

Keywords: crown fracture, dental trauma, permanent teeth

1. Introduction

Adolescence, a vital stage of growth and development, marks the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is characterized by rapid physical, changes resulting in sexual, psychosocial and behavioral maturation. It is also the stage when young people extend their relationships beyond parents and family and are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world in general. Adolescence is the period from 11 to 19 years of age

(http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp11/wg11_adol dev.pdf).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable, majority is attained earlier”. The rights were recognized after the 1st World War, with the adoption of the declaration of Geneva in 1929. The UN General assembly adopted the convention and opened it for signature on 20 Nov. 1989. It came into force on 2 Sept. 1990, after it was ratified by the require number of nations. Currently, 193 countries are party to it. The CRC sets out these rights in 54 articles and two optional protocols. Adolescents’ up to 18 years old are holders of all rights enshrined in the convention. They are entitled to special protection measures and according to their evolving capacities, they can progressively exercise their rights (Sarada and Rajani, 2009) [7].

In 1992, India became signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), thereby committing to the international definition of child rights and to the realization of those rights for all children in India. The CRC groups child rights into three categories: survival and development rights (which consist of rights to food, shelter,

clean water, education, health care, leisure, cultural activities, and information about rights), protection rights (namely protection from all forms of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and cruelty), and participation rights (freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural, and political life; right to information; and freedom of association). (CRC, General comment no. 4, 2003)

The constitution of India has granted equal rights to the boys and girls. According to article 14 – ‘The State shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of laws within the territory of India’. And Article 15 states – ‘State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them’. But today, it seems that there is a wide gulf between theory and practice. The women in India have always been considered subordinate to men. Girls in India are enjoying the rights equal to boys, but in reality, the girl child in India has been suffering since long paast. Not only in earlier times but even now a days, girl have to face discrimination and injustice.

Discrimination against the girl child starts the moment she enters into the mother’s womb. The child is exposed to gender differences since birth and in recent times even before birth, in the form of sex – determination tests leading to foeticide and female infanticide. The home which is supposed to be the most secure place, where the girls are most exposed to violence. If a girl child opens her eyes in any way, she is killed after her birth by different cruel methods in some parts of the country. Thus the very important ‘right to life’ is denied to women.

Education is considered as means of development of personality and awareness. Education is one of the most important human rights but the position of girl’s education in India is not at all satisfactory. Young girls may be bought up to believe that they are suited only to certain professions or in some cases to serve as wives and mothers. Despite an improvement in the literacy rate after independence, there continues to be large gap between the literacy levels of boys and girls. Due to large percentage of uneducated women in India, they are not even aware of their basic human rights and can never fight for them.

According to the World Bank report, malnutrition is the major cause of female infertility. The presence of excessive malnutrition among female children as compared to male children is basically due to differences in the intra – family allocation of food between the male and female children. Normally, the male members are fed before the female members of the family. It has been confirmed by various studies that the girl’s diet is inferior to the boy’s diet both in quality and quantity. Boys are given more nutritive foods like milk, eggs, butter, ghee, fruits, and vegetables as compared to girls. Due to this inferior quality diet, girls are more vulnerable to infections and diseases. The reason again is that families spend less on medication for girls than for boys.

Child marriage has been traditionally prevalent in India and continues to this date. Discrimination against the girl begins even before their birth and continues as they grow. According to the Hindu Marriage Act and other laws, a girl cannot be married until she has reached the age of 18 at least. But the girl in India is taken as a burden on the family. Sometimes the marriages are settled even before the birth of the child. In South India, marriages between cousins are common as they believe that a girl is secured as she has been married within the clan. The impact of child marriage is widowhood, education deprivation, lack of independence to select the life partner, lack of economic independence, low health/nutritional levels as a result of early/frequent pregnancies in an unprepared psychological state of young bride. However, the Indian boys have to suffer less due to male dominated society.

1.1 Objectives

1. To assess the awareness about rights among adolescent girls of Jammu.
2. To suggest strategies to improve the awareness about rights among adolescent girls.

2. Research Methodology

Locale: - The study was conducted among adolescents belonging to rural area of Jammu District.

Sample: - Sample size: - Sixty adolescent girls living in different areas of Jammu District were selected for this study.

2.1 Criteria for sample selection

Age – Only those adolescent girls who were in the age group of 11-18 years were selected.

Educational level – Only those adolescents who were studying from class 6th to 12th formed the sample.

In school- Only school going adolescent were selected.

Type of school - The sample was selected from the Government Schools of Jammu province.

2.2 Sampling technique

Multistage sampling technique was used for the identification of sample from the rural areas of Jammu District. A list of schools located in Jammu was prepared and from this list school were randomly selected from rural area. From these schools, adolescents’ girls were identified fulfilling the criteria for sample selection.

2.3 Tool used

Interview Schedule for Adolescent girls was prepared to collect information about the awareness of rights among them.

2.4 Data collection

After the selection of the sample and finalization of tools, the data was collected from the adolescents of the rural area of Jammu District through school visits

2.5 Data analysis

Data obtained by the use of various tools was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3. Results

Table 1: Background information of the respondents

Background variables age (in yrs)	Adolescents girls (n=60) F %	
	11-14	19
15-18	41	68.33
Education		
5 th to 8 th	18	30
9 th to 12 th	42	70
Type of family		
Joint	25	41.66
Nuclear	35	58.33

Table no 1 shows the background information of the respondents. It depicts that majority of the respondents i.e. 68.33% were in the age group of 15-18yrs and 31.66% were in the age group of 11-14yrs. 70% of the girls were studying from 9th – 12th standards and 30% were studying from 5th to 8th standards. Majority of the respondents i.e. 58.33% belong to nuclear families and 41.66% belong to joint families.

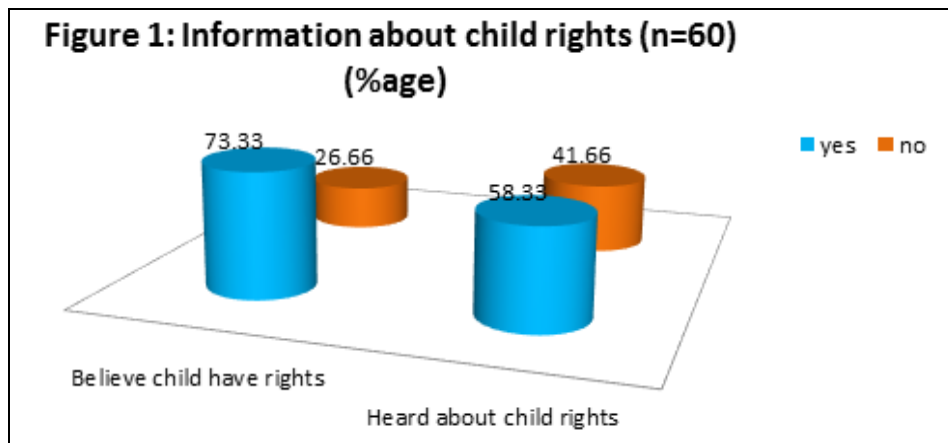


Fig 1: reveals that majority of the girls (73.33%) believe that children have rights and 26.66% believe that children do not have rights. 58.33% of the girls had heard about child rights but 41.66% had not heard about child rights.

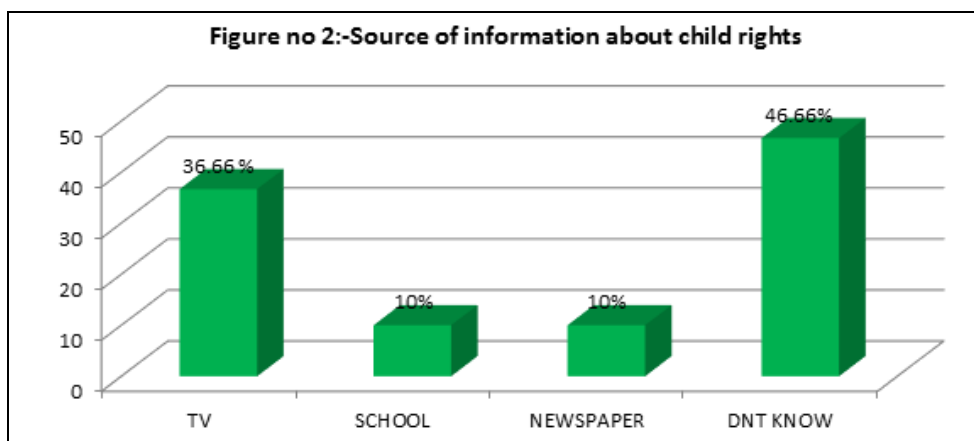


Fig 2: shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 46.66% had not heard about child rights but 36.66% of the respondents had heard about rights from Television and 10% of the girls, each, knew about rights from newspaper and school. Although they believe that adolescents have rights yet most of them had not heard about them anywhere.

Table 2: Knowledge of girls about child rights

Rate your knowledge about rights	Adolescents girls(n=60)	F %
Low	28	46.66
Moderate	32	53.33
High	0	0

Table 2 shows that 53.33% respondents have rated their knowledge about rights as moderate and 46.66% respondents have rated their knowledge as low.

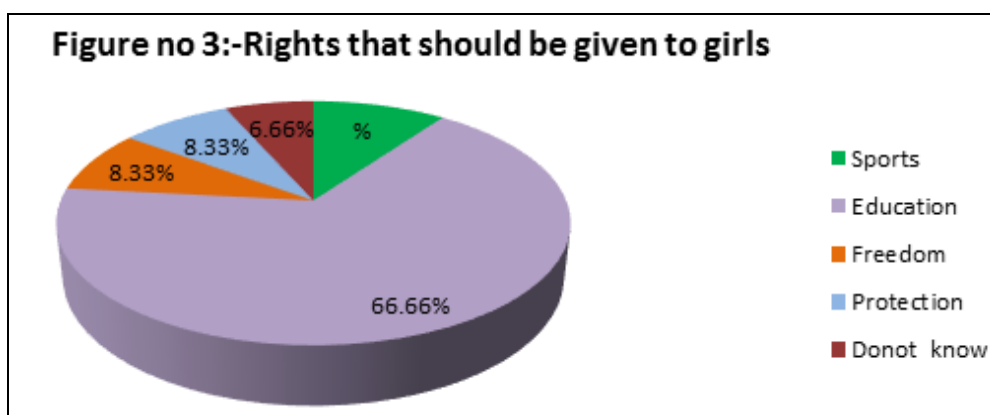


Fig 3: indicates that 66.66% of the respondent believe that Education rights should be given to girls, 10% respondents believe that Right to Participation should be given, 8.33% respondents, each, believe that freedom and protection should be given to girls, and 6.66% do not know what rights should be given to girls.

Table 3: knowledge about granting and protection of rights

Items	Parents N %	Teacher N %	Government N %	Don't know N %
Who grants Rights?	33 55	10 16.66	7 11.66	13 21.66
Who protect Rights?	30 50	12 20	8 13.33	17 28.33

*multiple response

Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 55% believe that parents grants rights to them, 16.66% believe that teachers grant rights to them, 11.66% believe that Government grant rights and 21.66% said they did not know who grant

rights. 50% respondents believe that parents protect their rights, 20% respondents believe that teacher protect girls right, 13.33% respondents believe that Government protect rights and 28.33% do not know who protect their rights.

Table 4: Information about child rights

Items	Adolescent girls (n=60) yes no	
Know any organization that's protects child rights	-	60
Would you like to learn more about child rights?	60	-

Table 4 depicts that all the respondents said that they do not know any organization that protect child rights and all of them

said they would like to learn more about rights.

Table 5: Knowledge regarding awareness of child rights

Items	Adolescent girls (n=60) Yes no F % F %	
Know the voting age	46 76.66	14 23.33
Have account on Social Networking Sites	4 6.66	56 93.33
Believe girl are married at an early age	- -	60 100
Take proper vaccination	52 86.66	8 13.33
Know about HIV/AIDS	1 1.66	59 98.33

Table 5 reveals that 76.66% respondents knew the voting age. Only 6.66% girls have accounts on Social Networking Sites. All respondents believe that girls are married at an early age. The table further reveals that 86.66% respondents said that they take proper vaccinations when required. Majority of the respondents i.e. 98.33% did not know about HIV/AIDS.

Table 6: Knowledge about child labour

Items	Yes N %	No N %
Know about child labour	37 61.66	23 38.33
Know any law that prohibits child labour?	- -	60 100

Table no 6 depicts that majority 61.66% respondents knew about child labour, but all of them do not know about any law that prohibits child labour.

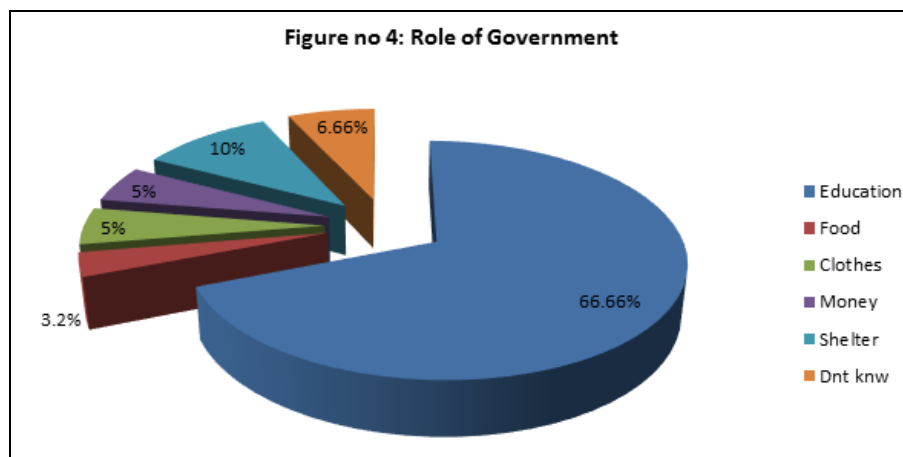


Fig 4: reveals that majority of the respondents 66.66 % said Government should provide education to them, 6.66% respondents said that they should provide food and 5% each said that clothes and money should be given to them and 10% said they should provide home and 6.66% did not know what should be done by the Government.

Table 7: Reaction of girls when they find themselves in danger

Items	Inform police F %	Inform Parents F %	Walk away F %
First reaction when you are in danger	3 5	47 78.33	10 16.66

Table 7 reveals that 78.33% respondents said that they would inform parents when they are in danger, and 5% respondents said that they would inform police and 16.66% said that they would walk away from the danger.

4. Conclusion

Situation of adolescents, especially girls, in India is still far from better. Indian society is still largely male dominated, and women are often looked down upon. Contribution of Indian Government to realization of child rights is lacking, as can be seen from the recent increased incidents of rape and brutalism, and the lack of stringent laws for child protection, survival and development. This study was carried out among adolescent girls to know their awareness about rights. Majority of the respondents were in age group of 15-18yrs and studying in 9 to 12th standard. Majority of them belong to nuclear families. Most of the respondents believe children have rights but have moderate knowledge about rights. Majority of the respondents said educational rights should be given to children but a few also said that right to freedom, protection, participate in sports should also be given. The proportion of adolescent boys participating in any kind of sports was higher as compared to adolescent girls who participated were in household activities (Das, 2006) ^[4]. Majority of the respondents are aware about the exact voting age and child labour and believed that girls should not be married at an early age. One of the study also reveals that majority of the girls should not marry at an early age and know the legal age (Halder, 2004) ^[6]. Most of the respondents said that Government should provide education to them and also provide food, clothing, money and home. Maximum respondents said that when they are in danger they would inform parents and rest said that they would inform police and a few said that they would walk away from danger. A study from rural area of Orissa finds that majority of the respondents do not favour any measure to punish the offenders, only few people favor the lodging the FIR with the police.

5. Suggestion

Girls should be made aware about their rights and speak up when they are humiliated anyone or violate their rights from others. Awareness campaign should be organized for not only girls but also for boys and parents. Parents should also be made aware about adolescent girls rights, as should be community, teachers, police and others who work with them. The boys should be sensitize about the need to protect and respect the rights of the adolescents' girls from the beginning, so that this become ingrained in their day to day behavior. There is also need for proper training of police to deal with crime against girls. Normally the attitude of police towards violence against girls is unsympathetic.

The school dropout rates among girls are high. The reasons are the negative attitude of parents, poverty, child marriage etc. A little support and encouragement should be provided for education of girls. Priority should be given to enhance the situation of girls by parental counseling. Government should also make policies especially for girls and should check that those policies are properly implemented. Government should ensure that girls are provided health education, nutrition by organizing workshops, seminars etc.

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