

# AWARENESS OF CHILD RIGHTS IN RELATION TO ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILD ABUSE AMONG TEENAGERS

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## Abstract

Child Rights encompass the freedom of children in their civil and cultural rights as well as special protection measures. The present study investigated the awareness of teenagers in Child Rights and their attitude towards Child Abuse. Survey method was adopted for collecting data. 125 College constituted the sample. The tools used were Test of Awareness on Child Rights and Scale of Attitude towards Child Abuse. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between extent of Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among teenagers. There is no significant difference in the relationship of the variables with respect to gender.

**Keywords:** Child rights, Child abuse, Attitude towards Child Abuse, Awareness of teenagers, Child care, Child welfare

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## Introduction

Every human being is bestowed with rights as a member of society. Protecting and promoting the wellbeing and interests of human beings depend on rights provided to them by society and the State. Child Rights was defined universally by the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child as minimum entitlement and freedom that should be accorded to all persons below the age of 18 regardless of race, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability<sup>1</sup>. It focuses on special protection and care to minors including their right to association with both parents as well as basic needs for food, education and healthcare. The Indian Constitution accords rights to children as citizens of the country and with special status. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights was set up in the year 2006 through an Act of Parliament. Articles that deal with Child Rights are Right to Equality (A.14), Right against Discrimination (A.15), Right to be protected from being abused (A.39,e), Right to Nutrition and standard of living and improved health (A.47), etc. The *'Right of the Child'* is an expression of the interconnection of all rights that ensure human dignity of the child, for the complete

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. Res. 44/25, Annex, U.N.GAO, 44th Session, Supp. No.49, at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989)

and harmonious development of its personality including social, economic, civil and political rights of them.

## Need and Significance of the Study

Childhood is the most innocent stage in human life. It is the building stage of one's life. Issues related to child care, welfare and development have always been engaging the attention of the society. Children continue to face some of the harshest conditions anywhere in the world with high illnesses, malnutrition rates, child labor and forced begging. Awareness and practices of child rights among nation builders are abysmally poor and gender and type of institution do not have bearing on awareness but to some practices<sup>2</sup>. Many of the schools did not have awareness of standards relating to protection of children set by National Commission of India<sup>3</sup>. Even though promoting child rights is a governmental priority in India, children continue to face challenges in attaining these rights. Child Abuse and neglect has become an important societal concern with significant

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<sup>2</sup> Usha Ajithkumar, Awareness of Child Rights and their practices among the Secondary School Teachers of greater Mumbai in relation to their gender and type of institution, Conference: Asian Criminological Society 5th Annual Conference on Access to Justice for the Marginalised in Asia: A Human Rights Perspective, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences*, Mumbai, (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Manvi Bhargava & Ahamad Tauffiqu, Awareness of Child Rights among the parents, school and the children in Chandigarh district with special reference to National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, *International Journal of Applied Research*: 1(6): 74-78 (2015).

ramifications for the affected children, their families and the society at large. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines Child Abuse as any recent act or set of acts on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of potential harm<sup>4</sup>.

When the failure to supervise, protect and providing care for a child rises to a certain level of negligent treatment, it may meet the criteria for violation of criminal codes and can be prosecuted. WHO defines Child Abuse as all forms of physical/emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust and power. Children are coerced to engage in unlawful activity or other illegal sexual activities in cases of child abuse. Victims of emotional abuse display aggressive and inadaptible behaviors. In addition they are unable to form secure attachments with family members and peers<sup>5</sup>. These point out the seriousness of Child Abuse as a social

issue and the need for an awareness on Child Rights for young people especially teenagers to work across the broad spectrum of child wellbeing, development and health.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers with respect to total sample and subsample based on gender.
2. To find out the difference in the relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers based on gender.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There exists significant relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers with respect to total sample and subsample based on gender.
2. There exists significant difference in the relationship of Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers based on gender.

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<sup>4</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway, About CAPTA: A Legislative History, Factsheets, (2019).

<sup>5</sup> Runyan, D., Wattam, C., Ikeda, R., Hassan, F., & Ramiro, Child Abuse and neglect by parents and other caregivers. In World Report on Violence and Health. Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L.L., Mercy, C.A. (eds). World Health Organisation, Geneva, 57-86 (2002).

## Methodology

Normative Survey method was used for the study. A sample of 125 College students (45 males & 80 females) belonging to Thiruvananthapuram district was selected. Tools used for the study were Test of Awareness on Child Rights which included 25 items based on four categories of Child Rights namely Right to Survival, Right to

Development, Right to Protection and Right to Participation; and Scale of Attitude towards Child Abuse which included 30 items on a Likert Scale including aspects like neglect and physical/emotional/sexual/psychological abuses. Statistical techniques employed were Pearson's Product Moment Co-efficient of Correlation and Fischer's 't' test for the significant difference between two correlation coefficients.

## Analysis and Interpretations

**Table 1:** *Important statistical constants of the variables Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse (N-125)*

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Awareness of Child Rights	22.976	24	23	5.75	2.245	-1.559
Attitude towards Child Abuse	138.312	139	144	5.835	3.197	-1.402

The mean scores of Awareness of Child Rights are 22.976, median value 24 and the mode 23. Standard deviation is 5.75. The mean scores of Attitude towards Child Abuse are 138.312, median value 139 and the mode 144. Standard deviation is 5.835.

**Table 2:** *Data and result of Correlation Analysis for total sample and subsamples*

Sample	Size	r	Significance of r	SEr	Shared Variance
Total sample	125	0.4551	5.669	0.071	20.7
Male	45	0.465	3.435	0.119	21.62
Female	80	0.430	4.630	0.091	18.49

The Coefficient of Correlation obtained between the variables for the total sample is 0.4551. Significance of 'r' obtained is 5.669 and SEr is 0.071. At 0.01 level of significance

the Confidence Interval was 0.281 to 0.575. The results indicate there exists significant and positive relationship between the variables for the total sample. The obtained 'r' has a shared

variance of 20.7. This indicates that 20.7 % of the variation in Awareness of Child Rights is attributed to Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers.

The Coefficient of Correlation obtained between the variables for the male sample is 0.465. Significance of 'r' obtained is 3.435 and SEr is 0.119. The results indicate there exists significant and positive relationship between the variables for male sample. The obtained 'r' has a shared variance of 21.6. This indicates that 21.6 % of the variation in Awareness of Child Rights is attributed to Attitude towards Child Abuse among Male Teenagers.

The Coefficient of Correlation obtained between the variables for the female sample is

0.4551. Significance of 'r' obtained is 0.091 and SEr is 0.091. The results indicate there exists significant and positive relationship between the variables. The obtained 'r' has a shared variance of 18.49. This indicates that 18.49 % of the variation in Awareness of Child Rights is attributed to Attitude towards Child Abuse among Female Teenagers.

Hence Hypothesis 1 which states that 'There exists significant relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers with respect to total sample and subsample based on gender' is substantiated.

**Table 3:** Comparison of Correlation Coefficients of Male and Female Teenagers

Sample	N	r	Z value	Level of Significance
Male	45	0.465		
Female	80	0.430	0.45	NS

The Z value obtained is 0.45 which is less than table value of 2.58 at 0.01 level. This indicates that male and female sample do not differ significantly. It shows that there exists no significant difference between male and female teenagers in their Awareness of Child

Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse. Hence Hypothesis 2 which states that 'There exists significant difference in the relationship of Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers based on gender' is substantiated.

### Major Findings of the study

1. There exists significant and positive relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among Teenagers with respect to total sample ( $r = 0.4551$ ) and subsample based on gender.
2. There exists no significant difference between male and female teenagers in their Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Awareness of Child Rights and Attitude towards Child Abuse among the Teenagers studied. Teenagers who are aware of Child Rights tend to refrain from child Abuse. The results also shows that there is no significant difference in the relationship with regard to gender.

### Implications of the Study

As child abuse is a serious problem that harms the child in many ways, it is rewarding to observe that our youth are mostly aware of its fatalities. Youth are responsible for children's wellbeing and safety, there is a need to increase awareness of this responsibility to all other societal groups, particularly the media, neighbors and workforce irrespective of their caste, creed and color or age. There is considerable potential for analyzing differences on different samples and investigating the feasibility of interventions like community education campaigns. As noted if the state fails to protect its children, it is defaulting its moral and legal obligations to its people. Survival and development are not just basic needs of children but fundamental human rights. So all children should have the means and opportunity to develop to their full