

SELF ESTEEM AMONG CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

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Background:

*Children in conflict with the law are anyone under 18 years of age who comes into contact with the justice system as a result of being suspected or accused of committing an offence. Most children in conflict with the law have committed petty crimes or such minor offences as vagrancy, truancy, begging or alcohol use. Self Esteem is an individual overall positive evaluation to the self. High self-esteem consists of an individual respecting himself and considering himself worthy. Children in conflict with the law have the right to treatment that promotes their sense of dignity and worth, and aims at reintegrating them into society. Relationship between self-esteem and sociological factors of children in conflict with law brings better understanding of the study. **Aim:** To study the Self Esteem among Children in Conflict with Law at government homes. **Methods:** Descriptive Research Design was used. The objective of the study was to find the Self Esteem among the children in conflict with law and to find the significant relation between the study variable and other social factors. The samples of the study were selected by survey method at government homes among the children who are in conflict with law. Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (1965) with reliability of correlations ranging from 0.82 to 0.88 and internal consistency ranging from 0.77 to 0.88, was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and Independent sample 't' test were used for data analysis. **Conclusion:** Self Esteem is satisfaction derived with oneself and this study reveals that only half of the population has high Self Esteem. The social work practices and interventions have to be given for another half of the children in conflict with law to enhance the self-esteem.*

Key Words: *Children in Conflict with Law, Mental Health, Social Factors, Government Homes*

INTRODUCTION

Children in conflict with the law are anyone under 18 years of age who comes into contact with the justice system as a result of being suspected or accused of committing an offence. Most children in conflict with the law have committed petty crimes or such minor offences as vagrancy, truancy, begging or alcohol use. Juvenile Justice Act deals with children of two categories, (i) Children in need of care and protection, (ii) Children in conflict with law. Children with delinquent behaviours are sent to government homes for reformatory process. The child welfare boards direct the children for rehabilitation to the Observation Home, Special Home or Place of Safety based on the severity of the problem. The stay period in correctional settings may hamper their self-identity due to the environmental situations. The stay period has a major impact on the livelihood of the children.

self-esteem refers to individual's perception of one's own self-worth, one's feelings of self-respect and self-confidence and the extent to which the individual holds positive or negative views about self. Self Esteem is an individual overall positive evaluation to the self. High self-esteem consists of an individual respecting himself and considering himself worthy. Children in conflict with law at government homes have chances to develop physical and psychological challenges. This have the possibility to reduce their self image which in turn reflects on their self esteem. According to Articles 37 and 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), children in conflict with the law have the right to treatment that promotes their sense of dignity and worth, takes into account their age and aims at their reintegration into society. Also, placing children in conflict with the law in a closed facility should be a measure of last resort, to be avoided whenever possible. The convention prohibits the imposition of the death penalty and sentences of life imprisonment for offences committed by persons under the age of 18. India, our country functions with commitment to safeguard the rights of children. The Constitution of India recognizes the vulnerabilities faced by juveniles with legally acceptable behaviours or delinquent actions and upholds their right to protection. Association between self-esteem and sociological factors of children in conflict with law brings better understanding of the study.

Review of Literature

Madhavan.et.al., (2014), Access to justice remains a challenge to children, despite various legislations to ensure and protect their rights. Children are particularly vulnerable group, particularly from the marginalised populations. The present workshop focuses on children in conflict with the law, under the Juvenile Justice system. It shall provide a unique platform to share experiences, discussion from leading experts on the status of juveniles in conflict with law, challenges and possible solutions. The department of Justice, Government of India has supported this session. UNDP has supported the Project on Access to Justice for the Marginalized People

Rashid (2016), Based on the self-accounts of children-in-conflict-with-law (CCL) in Indian-held Kashmir (IHK), this article attempts to understand the psychosocial issues of children in conflict zones. The issues of torture and imprisonment are extremely serious concerns of children experiencing an armed conflict. This article studies the lived experiences of Kashmiri children and analyses their self-accounts through an interpretative phenomenological frame. This qualitative investigation explores the meanings and interpretations that the CCL attach to their experiences of torture and incarceration. The exposure to such adversity chronically endangers their social, economic, psychological and physical well-being.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives:

1. To know the sociodemographic factors of children in conflict with law at government homes.
2. To measure the Self Esteem of children in conflict with law at government homes.
3. To find the significant relationship between the sociodemographic factors and Self Esteem of children in conflict with law at government homes.

Hypotheses:

- i) There is a significant difference between places of stay with regards to Self Esteem of children in conflict with law at government homes.
- ii) There is a significant difference between types of family with regards to Self Esteem of children in conflict with law at government homes.
- iii) There is a significant difference between domiciles with regards to Self Esteem of children in conflict with law at government homes.

Universe and Sample for the study

The Universe of the present study consists of 178 children in government homes and is in conflict with law. The researcher included all children between the age group 7 to 18 years by using Census Method from the government homes for this study and the data was collected during the period April 2018 to June 2018.

Research Design:

The aim of the present study was to measure the level of mental health prevailing among children in conflict with laws at government homes in Tamilnadu with regards to socio demographic factors. It also attempted to test the differences of variables upon which hypotheses were formed. Hence for this research, descriptive design was adopted.

Tool:

The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale is a 10 item instrument, to measure self- esteem Rosenberg, M. (1965). Scale Format - Likert type scale, ranging from strongly agree - strongly disagree.

The scale score ranges from 0-30, a higher score denotes higher self-esteem.

Procedure:

The tools were administered on the sample of 178 children with their consents. The data collection was done in single session. Rapport was established with the children, before administrating the tool with the respondents. The children were briefed about the study and then

the researcher administered Self Esteem Scale among children in government homes in Tamilnadu.

Table No.1 Socio Demographic Details

| Demographic variables | N=178 | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Age | | |
| 11-15 yrs | 9 | 5.1 |
| 16-20 yrs | 169 | 94.9 |
| Education qualification | | |
| Illiterate | 1 | 0.6 |
| Primary | 21 | 11.8 |
| Middle | 60 | 33.7 |
| High | 61 | 34.3 |
| Higher | 35 | 19.7 |
| Place of Stay | | |
| Special Home | 52 | 29.2 |
| Observation Home | 126 | 70.8 |
| Status of the family | | |
| Both alive | 99 | 55.6 |
| Father died | 40 | 22.5 |
| Mother died | 9 | 5.1 |
| Living away from parents | 21 | 11.8 |
| Domicile | | |
| Rural | 66 | 37.1 |
| Urban | 112 | 62.9 |
| Type of family | | |
| Joint | 53 | 29.8 |
| Nuclear | 125 | 70.2 |

Table No. 2: Level of Self Esteem

| Level of Self Esteem | | |
|-----------------------------|----|------|
| Low | 82 | 46.1 |
| High | 96 | 53.9 |

Source: Primary data

- ❖ The above table shows that a vast majority 94.9 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 11-15 years, whereas 5.1 percent of them were below 20 years of age.

Hypothesis tested:

H0(1): There is significant difference between independent variable, the place of stay with regards to the self-esteem of the respondents (**Null hypothesis Accepted**)

H1(1): There is no significant difference between the place of stay with regards to the self-esteem of the respondents (**Research Hypothesis Rejected**)

H0(2): There is significant difference between independent variables namely domicile with regards to self-esteem of the respondents (**Null hypothesis Accepted**)

H1(2): There is no significant difference between domicile with regards to the self-esteem of the respondents (**Research Hypothesis Rejected**)

H0(3): There is significant difference between independent variables namely type of family with regards to self esteem of the respondents (**Null hypothesis Accepted**)

H1(3): There is no significant difference between type of family with regards to the self esteem of the respondents (**Research Hypothesis Rejected**)

Discussion:

The analysis results revealed that majority 7 - 18 years of age group who engage themselves in deviant behaviours and become children in conflict with law. Majority of the children living with both parents and from urban context exhibits offensive behaviours, due to lack of care and attention towards them. More children are in Observation Home than Special Home, reveals children in their formative age get engaged in petty cases and opportunities were given by juvenile justice care for reforming those children to get reintegrated with their family and society. Children in more numbers get deviated by peer influence and withdraw their education at high school level and commit offensive and crime behaviours.

Conclusion:

The researcher would like to conclude that, more than half of the population have high self esteem. There is no significant difference between the place of stay, domicile and type of family with regards to the mental health of the respondents. The government homes in Tamil Nadu for Children in Conflict with Law, are empowered to play a constructive role in providing physical and psychological needs of the children. The joint

efforts of public private partnership by the government and nongovernment organizations with the family can guide the children in conflict with law to upgrade their mental health and livelihood. Improving the self esteem of the children, will improve their productivity, which will facilitate them to re-integrate in society with dignity. Introduction of social work methods and interventions will pave path for the holistic wellbeing of the children in conflict with law.

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