



# UNDERSTANDING CHILD RIGHTS IN AUGMENTING CHILD-FRIENDLY REARING PRACTICES CONGREGATED WITH RIGHTS BASED COUNSELLING APPROACH: A CASE STUDY

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*Abstract: Children constitute 39% of the population of India which is quite a major bulk and there is a lot of aspiration and hope to make this country a developed one in coming future. They are our future human resources and therefore getting them ready to face the challenges ahead is one of the visions of the country as a whole. The present study focuses on ensuring each child his/her rights to use the maximum potentialities to thrive. As per the mandate of United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the identification of the child rights is required. Then only the visibility of violation of child rights in families will be clear. Parents being the first custodian of the child and family play an important role in understanding child rights and promote to practice child friendly rearing style. The objectives of this current research are to internalize and sensitize the child rights congregated with rights based counseling approach in enhancing the child's strengths. In this light, the case study of a girl child is discussed. Parental involvement in maintaining child rights and the implication of rights based counseling approach brought positive changes and improved self-esteem, confidence, positivity, self-acceptance, self-respect and resilience in the child. Child rights being part of human rights need to be understood and to be exercised by each child irrespective of class, caste, race, religion, region etc .and genuine care and commitment are solicited from both micro and macro levels to function for the best interest of the children.*

**Key words:** Child rights, Rights based counseling approach, child rearing practice

***“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”***

***— Frederick Douglass, abolitionist and statesman***

India is the second most populous country in the world and we have the highest number of adolescent population. In this context the above mentioned text fits the most. As any country's future and massive progress and development rest on its human resources and children are the future human resources. The citation of the word child creates a picture of innocent, simple, virtuous and pure in our psyche. But the utterance of Child Rights creates quite a neutral and indifferent and apathetic image. Because the concept and importance Child rights are not well understood by adults as they themselves have no clue of those rights. They were even unaware of those deprived rights. In India, there are roughly 35 different definitions of who should be called a child (Rath, 2016). At this juncture United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has defined child, an individual below the age of 18 years which is acceptable globally. There are many government policies and programmes which are working for children. In our country, there are many programmes working for children and their rights, to ensure their safety, protection and overall development. The importance of Rights should be realized in its appropriate way. As per Wikipedia (2019) rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement. These are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The importance of Child Rights become more prominent where the absolute contradiction, the violation of child rights is seen and acceptable in a normal set up. The current status of child rights is clearly manifested from the research studies cited below.

Child rights are the human rights of children and child owns these rights irrespective of class, caste, gender, race, religion and birthplace. UNCRC has drawn four categories of rights of children which are;

- a) Survival rights
- b) Developmental rights
- c) Protection rights
- d) Participation rights

The above categories assemble all types of rights of children to be taken care of across the globe. Child marriage, trafficking for flesh business, child labor and work in hazardous conditions, school dropout, violence against children, sexual abuse and exploitation, discrimination of girl child etc are some of the violations of rights of the children where the above mentioned rights for children are dishonored completely.

It is a myth that child rights violation occurs only in underdeveloped or developing countries rather the developed countries like Australia, Canada and USA fail to safeguard the rights of the children in their countries.

World vision organization has cited following data, 218 million children are working as child laborer around the world. 200million children globally are subjected to any form of violence. Three million people live in poverty in Australia and 731000 of those are children. In United States of America 12% and in Canada 14% of children are living in poverty. Poverty is one of the major causes of violation of child rights.

In a study on Educational rights of the children in context of Independent India **Chahal and Kumar (2017)** had reflected over the pitfalls remaining in the Education system of India which could be the reasons for violation of Childs Educational Rights. After Seventy Years of Independence the children were not able to access their basic Educational Rights and they were in vulnerable state. From different sources it was revealed that India is still lacking in providing the rights to children even after various commissions, laws, rules and regulations came into existence.

**Nagarale (2016)** had emphasized on promoting education, health and safety among children. To bring into mainstream the huge under privileged children, imparting free and compulsory education was a prioritized way. Education endorses equality and opens many options to develop as it is not meant for a privileged few, rather for everyone as a fundamental human right. Illiteracy creates by-product like, poverty, child-delinquency and ultimately deprivation of dignified life.

**Palanichamy (2016)** had put light on different means to oppose any form of child labour. A networking of international NGOs working in this field has to be created for advocacy with various departments to ban child labour. International funding organisations have to identify a contact organization. in each country to help NGOs who are working in this field undertaking activities for the banning of child labour and identify national projects to be implemented in a transparent manner with good stewardship.

**Bhardwaj and Sandhu (2016)** focused on three areas where persistent and ruthless violation of child rights occur like right to education, child labor and child trafficking. Education empowers children to fight against child labor and child trafficking. If people have access to education they can develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights. Education gives people the ability to access information detailing the range of rights that they hold, as well as government's obligations.

A study by **Seth (2013)** tried to explain community intervention efforts to protect vulnerable children at urban and village levels. Mass awareness and survey of their rights and information about government policies, schemes and assistance would ensure proper utilization of these facilities. This vicious circle of inter-generational poverty & exploitation needed to be broke down by taking the help of these child protection systems, community ownership and participation.

**Manuel (2014)** had taken an initiative in a unique way by exploring the possibilities of men in looking after the rights of children by changing their conventional belief system. As a result, men have begun taking a more active role in helping raise their children. Some have committed to educating their daughters and not to force them into early marriages. The males have emerged as more responsible and involved parents in home front.

## RATIONALE

Child and childhood has given the greatest possibilities of something new, unusual and unpredictable. Because the innate potentialities of the child are still not unfolded and one has no clue in which way it will emerge. Provided there has to be enough space, facilities, cohesive environment to have the full bloom. India is home to 472 million children under the age of 18 years, representing 39% of the country's total population. Children are

vulnerable to any kind of abuse and exploitation. They need proper care and protection by adults ensuring to safeguard their rights.

Parents are the primary custodians of the child but they have a belief system that they can treat their child as per their wish. They try to control their child disciplined, obedient, silent, and obliged. This is a severe violation of child rights. It is the result of age old faulty, regressive socialisation process and it will take real efforts to break the chain and to get rid of that belief system. From review of related literature it is found that many research works were done in community, state, national and international levels. There are many areas or domains where children are being exploited but at home also we cannot ensure their rights. To fill this gap the present study promoted the child friendly rearing practice along with rights based counselling approach to enhance mental health of children from micro level to bring greater changes macro levels.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The present research aims to explore the following objectives,

- I. To sensitize the concept of child rights in family.
- II. To internalize the essence of child rights in everyday life.
- III. To congregate the practice of rights based counseling approach with child friendly rearing process for enhancing sound mental health.

### **METHOD OF STUDY**

It is a qualitative paper based on the data gathered over a period of one year from the particular client. As per counselling case study, the research paper was prepared highlighting the improvements shown by the client. The Rights based counselling approach was effective in bringing out change in the client and safeguarding the rights of the child.

### **CASE STUDY**

One girl student of class X was provided counseling service to deal with three difficult areas faced by her. The three areas are, excessively strict father, gender discrimination and need for educational guidance. The whole counseling process went through four stages like attending, exploration, understanding the problem, action, termination and follow-up.

#### **Attending**

After completing the formalities of getting permission from the concerned class teacher about the forthcoming counseling sessions. After establishment of rapport with the student, there was a developed a mutual acceptance between the student. and the researcher. The barriers and inhibitions of the student dropped gradually. She was a short statured cute girl wearing spectacles. She was a calm, quiet and soft spoken girl. As per the framework of rapport building the client was made to talk about the three broad dimensions like, basic information, family background and childhood experiences.

#### **Exploration**

- It was revealed that the parents of the student shared good relationship among themselves and she was very close to her mother who was very loving and affectionate. Her father was strict and was not at all supportive to the girl both in his thoughts and words. He was indeed very interfering by nature and always imposing his interest on her.
- There was always an ongoing explicit comparison between the student and her younger brother in terms of efficiency and capability.
- There was an atmosphere of restricted and routine life. There was no scope for pursuing her hobby which was painting at this point of time along with studies.
- She was feeling very inferior and conscious while talking in public and found difficulty in initiating a conversation.
- There was a continuous comparison by parents regarding the marks secured by her. She was very much pressurized and also was apprehensive about her class X and XII board examination and after that the possibilities of her admission into IITs. She wanted to pursue her career as a software engineer and specifically to be a Microsoft professional.

#### **Understanding the problem**

In this phase the rights based counseling approach was being introduced to the student. The researcher adopted right based approach which promote self-acceptance, self-respect and to lead life with dignity.

#### **Action**

- In a very careful and strategic way, thought restructuring or thought modification of the client was done by the researcher about her own uniqueness. She was also given some tasks to be performed at home for one week, like to note down the instances of comparison in different contexts and the thoughts came to her mind. After a gap of seven days she was told to meet the researcher

- The Strategies were planned mutually with the consent of both the student and researcher. The parental counselling was done in terms of child friendly rearing practices along with the importance of safeguarding rights of the child as law of the land.

### **The changes noticed after counselling**

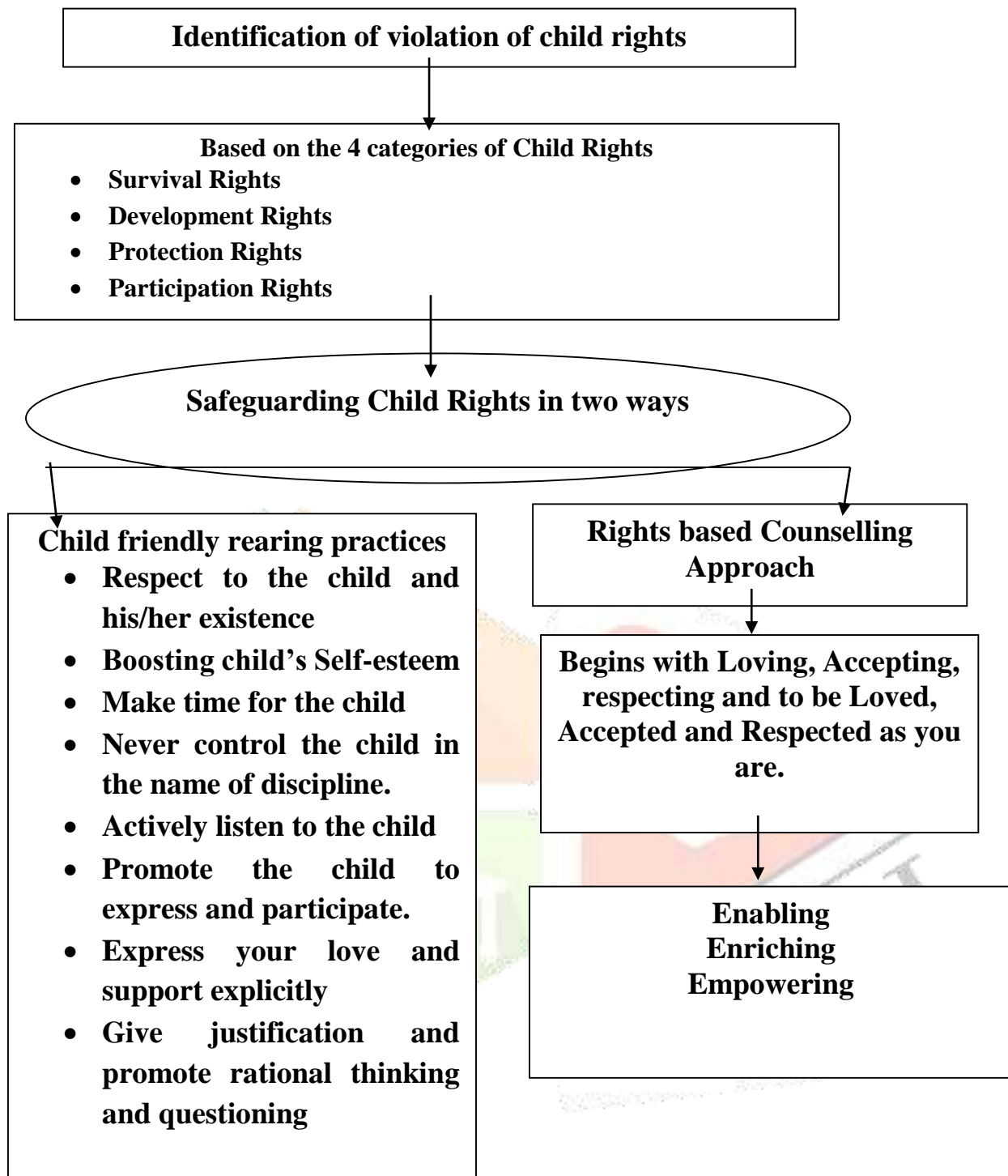
- ❖ The student had a smile and a feeling of contentment on her face.
- ❖ She started mixing with other students besides her own friends.
- ❖ She had taken examination as a challenge and not as a medium to secure marks only.
- ❖ Teachers also gave some positive feedback regarding her class room behavior like; she started participating in class room activities other than studies. Though she was not extra talkative and active but she was trying to come out of her cell. Like she started taking initiative in some other activities too.
- ❖ She participated in senior level debate competition in Hindi and got the 4<sup>th</sup> position.
- ❖ Changes in outward activities were marked. She started going out to some social functions though not all functions but as per her wish and comfort.

### **Termination**

Shedding of inhibitions, taking initiative to mix with people, working hard to secure good marks in examination, getting positive reinforcement from teachers helped the clients to be independent and assertive. She started believing on herself, her worth and promoted to be an achiever in life. These positive changes were noteworthy.



FIG: ALGORITHMIC REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDY



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present research was conducted to create awareness about Rights based Counseling approach and to sensitize the importance of child rights in child friendly rearing practices. Along with Govt policies and schemes from larger domain, initiation and effort from individual level create wonders. Rights based approach is being applied to more than 800 clients from varied age groups and different walks of life.

Counseling is the assistance or help provided by the trained professionals to the persons who are in need of it. It is distinct from the mere help or advice of parents, siblings, elders, friends and significant others in one's life. It is different from giving advice, direction, instruction and imposition rather it is suggestive in nature. The basic guidelines are maintained and followed by the researcher while providing counseling service to the students like adhering to confidentiality, privacy, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, empathy and creating an awareness of "Right to life with dignity". It has developed over a period of over 30 years of practice, teaching and research. Child rights is emphasizing on the best interest of the child as the primary consideration.

Each student is unique in its own way, so as their difficulties. The students are accepted as they are and respected for their own existence. The researcher has adopted four approaches to counselling as per the requirement of Indian society and the age of students as per the requirement of the student, seriousness and urgency of the problem.

In our society, where majority of people are ignorant of the concept of counselling, spreading the awareness and providing counselling service to them, really needs a great deal of effort. The students/children become aware of the value and worth of their lives. Their self-respect increases tremendously as they realize their right to live life in a dignified manner and getting counselling service is their right.

Child rearing practices of parents play a crucial role in resolving their problematic life and ensuring child rights. Friendly, open and free home environment can make miracles in enhancing their mental health. Therefore, parents need to understand their children and they have to give them space for breathing and independence, and at the same time they have to monitor them from a close distance.

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