

Physico-social profile and academic performance of elementary school children in Kashmir valley

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ABSTRACT

A sample of 60 children was selected with the purpose of knowing their psycho-social development and academic performance. The major tools used were interview schedule, interview guide, Sentence Completion Test and Psycho-Social Problem Checklist. The findings of the study revealed that children who were directly affected by the armed conflict faced more problems regarding psycho-social well being as they have lost one of their parents in militancy. Apart from disturbed psycho-social well being, they were not able to remain in touch with their studies due to low income source which created major hindrance in all aspects of their daily living. The findings of the Sentence Completion Test elucidated that children had shown below average to low scores in the entire three categories *i.e.* sociability, self-confidence and ambition. These children were revealing more negative responses as they had gone through traumatic situation which made their lives miserable and always being afraid of new situation which effected their confidence. On the other hand, indirectly affected children possessed high scores in all the applied tests as they were living in congenial families, which helped them to learn and cultivate positive attitude towards themselves. This group of children performed better in academics and showed participative approach in every activity of school and social gathering.

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Children are the most valuable possession and investment of any country. They are the future of our nation. A child should, therefore, be given the best to begin life and it is beauty of the society towards world of tomorrow. In today's world, a child who is not educated is disadvantaged in terms of income, health and opportunity. Elementary schooling gives children a better chance for full healthy and secure future. School may become particularly important in one's life as well as for one's future career. Education represent a state of normalcy during the period of conflict. Children are affected differently by armed conflict. The threats which they face are unique and directly related to their vulnerability. They valued their lives less and may suffer greater psychological setback (Graca, 1996). The destruction of education network represents one of the greatest developmental setback for countries affected by armed conflict. The violence of grief and anxiety suffered by the children during armed conflict has negative effect on their overall personality. As they have lost their loved one's, their emotions and thoughts are affected, their hearts are filled up with terror (Shreedharan, 1997).

Children who grow up living in violence are more likely to turn to violence themselves as a method of problem solving. The violence, grief, and anxiety experienced by children during armed conflict have both short and long term effects on their mental health, quality

of life and subsequent behaviour as adult (Fisher, 1998). Violence violate every right to child, the right to life, the right to be with family, the right to education and of overall development of elementary education has a crucial preventive and rehabilitative part to play in fulfilling the needs and rights of children in conflict and post conflict situation. Children get benefit during armed conflict from friendship and support of school, companion and from leadership and guidance provided by teachers. A teacher can promote peace and guidance and help to council the children who are distressed (Tolfree, 1995).

It has been accepted that healthy environment supports the all-around development of children. Children should therefore be given the best to begin in life as they are the vulnerable members of society and need special protection and assistance. The turmoil in Kashmir valley has an unprecedented impact on people, especially children living there. The lack of physical, congenial and social environment has taken its repeatedly and last hard hit among the children. The present study was focused on children affected by armed conflict in Kashmir. The major areas of study were framed into three objectives, to study the psycho-social problems of children who are directly and indirectly affected by armed conflict, to study the scholastic performance of both these groups and also to find out the relationship between the psycho-social development and academic performance of these two