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Grievance Redressal Of The Students: A Case Study Of The Schools In Chandigarh And Mohali

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Abstract: *The people under the age of 18 are called the children. The majority children at this age are school going students in India. In developed nations, the supervision of schools is done closely and a check on students complaints is taken care by the parents who are literate and aware of their children' complaints. They bring the complaints to the notice of the management of the schools. In India, The system lags behind and majority of the students' complaints remain unaddressed. The paper, therefore, will deal with the grievances of the government and private schools in Chandigarh and Mohali city.*

1. Introduction:

Grievance is difficult to define; however, dictionary meaning of the word 'grievance' is a real or imagined wrong, a cause for complaint or protest especially for unfair treatment and an official statement of a complaint. Further, Grievance has been defined as an unattended complaint for which the complainant feels a lack of justice and fair play, the dissatisfaction grows and assumes the status of grievance. Grievance always varies from organization to organization and has many definitions. Grievance is used to indicate various forms and stages of a client's dissatisfaction from its service provider. Thus, the grievance can be imagined or real ground of complaint for which one feels oppressive.

Further, it takes that grievance should affect more than one clients of the service providers. India along with other nations had adopted various machineries for the redressal of grievances to the citizens or employees of India. However, perusal of literature revealed that the grievances of children in schools are not given due consideration by these agencies.

2. Objectives:

1. To study the complaints of students in the schools of Chandigarh and Mohali City.
2. To study the grievance redressal mechanism of the students in the schools.

3. Hypothesis:

The grievances of the children remain unaddressed in the schools.

4. Methodology:

The secondary data was taken from the Government documents, websites, and blogs. A random sample of 50 parents was taken from Chandigarh and Mohali city. In depth interviews were taken to know about the problems of children in schools. A random sample of 25 teachers and 5 principals was taken to know the mechanism for redressal of students' complaints. Further, 100 children from various government & private schools were

administered questionnaires to know the complaints of the students and their redressal mechanisms in the school.

5. Major Findings:

The parents were aware about the rights of the children in different schools. However, it depended upon their education level. For instance on one hand, the illiterate parents in government primary schools were aware of only the right to free education for children. On other hand, the parents who were educated knew about the constitutional provisions for children, child labour act and other rights.

Further, interviews with the principals and teachers on being questioned how they think that the children's rights were being protected in the schools gave following arguments:

5.1. Children Have Right To Participate In Schools' Management:

The students are appointed in various positions like class monitor, head boy or head girl in the schools. They are the representatives of the children and bring out the problems of the students in notice to the management of the school.

However, students denied the facts of such provision. The students told the researcher that their participation in the management was very less. The students hardly gave their opinions in front of their teachers. Further, students who were given the position of head boy or girl were those who had excellent academic performance. The average students and below average students were ignored to say anything in the management of the school.

5.2. Complaints Box Have Been Installed:

The teachers and principals told that the complaints box have been installed in the schools. The students sometimes fear to come to teachers and tell their problem. For such a situation, the complaints box has been installed in the schools. The box is opened regularly. The complaints are recorded and tried to solve in an efficient manner. However, no strict action against the miscreants was stated.

Majority students told the researcher that there is no complaint box installed in the school. Some schools which have the provision of complaint box opened the box regularly. The students were afraid of putting complaints in the box. Further, the students didn't put their

complaints in the complaints box since the box would be opened by the school management only. Moreover, if the students put the complaints no action was taken against the teachers.

6. Inspection Of The Schools:

The inspection of the government schools takes place by the District Education Officers. The inspections took place after sending the well informed circulars to the schools. The inspections were more to check infrastructural facilities, teaching pedagogy and records of the schools. In private schools the general supervision is made by the principals or members from the management. In both type of schools, the inspectors didn't bother about the students complaints.

The students in these schools told that the students were made aware of the inspection days. However, the inspectors interact with the students only about their studies and check the notebooks or practical files of the students randomly.

7. Students Problems In The Schools:

7.1. Corporal Punishment:

The students stated that their teachers beat them quite often. Though the girls were not incorporated such punishment by the teachers. In regard to this, the teachers and principals clearly denied the incorporation of corporal punishment in their schools. Further, when the teachers were asked about the corporal punishment majority teachers considered corporal punishment as giving students the physical punishment which includes mainly beating the students.

However, the students pointed out about the rude behavior of some of the teachers and embarrassing them in front of the whole class. The parents in this regard opined that the children needed sometime a strict method to discipline them. The teachers were right at their place. Some parents opined that complaint against teacher may draw attention towards the child and the teacher may give the child low grades to seek a revenge from the child. Further, the students pointed out that the teachers were good only to the intelligent students and the

average and poor students were insulted for their low performance in front of their parents when Parents' Teachers Meetings (PTMs) held.

Hence, it was concluded that PTMs were the means to insult the students in front of their parents. PTMs were held only to discuss the academic record of the students. The problems of students were rarely discussed in such meetings. The complaints against teachers had a negative impact on the students. Further, the parents accept the teachers' behavior (as it may be) in the schools.

Further, the teachers and principals of the schools stated that some parents were the members of schools management and attended the Parents' Teachers' Councils in the schools. However, majority of the parents didn't contact the member parents to ask about the meetings. Moreover, the minutes of these meetings were neither public nor shown to the other parents.

8. Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the majority complaints of the students remain unaddressed in the schools. The major problem of the students was the corporal punishment by the teachers. The corporal punishment was considered only the physical torture and not insulting and embarrassing the children. Every school had one or two teachers who were rude to students and incorporated the punishments. Further, they interact at least 100 students in the school every day.

As suggested by National Commission of Protection of Child Rights to make the schools more accountable towards the students a multi-disciplinary intervention is required. A need for multi-disciplinary inputs and networking is there since no sector of child abuse can be compartmentalized as independent of other sectors. This has to be among psychologists, educationists, school teachers, parents, social workers, lawyers and children where together they are involved to improve their understanding and thereby increase their cooperation and participation in the well-being and participation of the children in the schools.

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