

Learning Approaches of Adolescents in Conflict Hit Areas

Shazia Manzoor

*Extension and Communication
Institute of Home Science,
University of Kashmir J&K, India*

Abstract—During armed conflict adolescents attend school in far fewer numbers than other children. They may lack opportunities and an appropriate learning environment for their age and circumstances. It is less difficult to maintain educational services during low-intensity conflicts and schooling is likely to continue during periodic lulls in countries where fighting is intermittent or seasonal. Even where services are maintained, however, education will be of lower quality. In addition, fear and disruption make it difficult to create an atmosphere conducive to learning and the morale of both teachers and pupils is likely to be low. Conflict-related targeting of educational facilities (staff and infrastructure) has increased significantly since 2004, resulting in closures of schools and even the collapse of education systems. The inability to attend school, resulting from curfews, sieges or destruction of facilities, and the absence of a regular daily schedule can contribute to instability and make children more vulnerable to different forms of exploitation. It is in this backdrop that the present research was undertaken to study the impact of armed conflict on the learning approaches of intact and disrupted adolescents in Kashmir, to compare adolescent boys and girls in perspective of their learning approaches and to find difference among rural and urban adolescents in their learning approaches. Multistage sampling technique was used to collect data from 800 adolescent boys and girls in the age group of 13-19 years both from rural and urban areas. The students approach to learning scale constructed by Biggs John, Kember David & Leung Doris Y.P. (2001) was used for the purpose. Approach towards learning was found at moderate level among majority of intact-disrupted adolescents, adolescent boys-girls and rural-urban adolescents. Armed conflict has shown moderate impact on adolescents approach towards learning. Such moderate level impact is found on their deep approach to learning and surface approach to learning.

Keywords: Approaches, learning, adolescents, conflict.

Introduction

The effects of armed conflict are devastating. It is no coincidence that conflict-affected states have some of the world's worst indicators for education. Millions of adolescents are being deprived of their only chance for schooling that could transform their lives (UNESCO, 2011). Attacks on schools, teachers, and students in armed conflict areas, can cause children to drop out or go to school less often, force schools to cut their hours, and destroy school buildings and materials. In environments of violence and fear, the quality of adolescents education is severely diminished (Human Rights Watch, 2009). In armed conflict zones, adolescents battling to go to school, shows that 44 per cent of the of the 28.5 million children and adolescents affected live in sub-Saharan Africa, 19 per cent in South and West Asia and 14 per cent in the Arab States. The vast majority i.e. 95 per cent live in low and lower-middle income countries. Girls, who make up 55 per cent of the total, are the worst affected (UN, 2013). Conflict in the state of Jammu & Kashmir has affected thousands of children. Educational institutions were shut down for over three months due to the unrest of 2010 in Kashmir (Singh, 2011). Due to unrest in 2016, schooling could be conducted only for a period of four months in Kashmir valley. Thirty one school buildings were gutted, 17 fully and 14 partially during the five-month-long unrest. The education sector has been badly hit in Kashmir Valley during the five-month-long unrest, causing irreversible loss (Economic Survey Report, 2016).

Review of literature

Diwakar (2015) examined impact of armed conflict on education accumulation and enrolment rates and whether this affect vary by gender. The 2007 Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey data was used in combination with data on civilian deaths documented by the Iraq Body Count database. The results put forward that an increase in conflict is associated with a reduction in education for both genders, though more prominent for boys.

Sirin and Sirin (2015) through their study on educational and mental health needs of Syrian refugee children found that worsening of Syria's education system means that many children landed in refugee camps are already at an educational inconvenience. If there has been a disturbance in their schooling, refugee children will be at the back in all subjects and will need

to grasp while concurrently learning a new lingo and changing to a completely new cultural and social atmosphere. The acquisition of a foreign language is principally difficult for children who have fallen behind in educational handiness due to break in their schooling. Moreover, the emotional trauma experienced by many refugee children may affect their cognitive, emotional, and social growth and increase their scholastic challenges.

Jones and Naylor (2014) surveyed households in Democratic Republic of Congo for non enrolment and drop out for 6 to 17 year olds and it was disclosed that North and south Kivu with fear of offense and conflict being the major cause for drop out for 16 per cent in south Kivu and 8 per cent in north Kivu. This interprets to a sum of roughly 180,000 primary school aged children at present out of school because of fear of violence.

Di maio and Nandi (2013) explored the impact of the Israeli Palestinian conflict on child labor and school attendance of Palestinian children in the West Bank between the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (September 2000) and the end of 2006 and observed that an increase in the number of closure days increases child labor while it reduces school attendance in the West Bank.

Objectives of the study

- Study the impact of armed conflict on learning approaches of intact and disrupted adolescents in Kashmir
- Compare adolescent boys and girls in perspective of their learning approaches
- Find difference among rural and urban adolescents in their learning approach

Material and methods

Multistage sampling technique was used to collect data from 800 adolescent boys and girls in the age group of 13-19 years both from rural and urban areas. The students approach to learning scale constructed by Biggs John, Kember David & Leung Doris Y.P. (2001) was used for the purpose. The tool has 20 items under 2 dimensions. The two dimensions are deep approach and surface approach. The sample group under the study was divided as per affect of conflict (intact-disrupted), as per dwelling (rural-urban) and as per gender (boys-girls). Under the study, the various parameters were evaluated in relation to sample. Content analysis using qualitative approach was done to understand the research study. Data was scrutinized and analyzed keeping the objectives in view. The data was presented in suitable tables and figures in order to determine inherent facts and meanings.

Results and Discussion

Adolescents Approach to Learning

Adolescents adopt different approaches to learning depending upon the perceived objectives of the course they are studying. These approaches are broadly divided into two groups; deep approach to learning and surface approach to learning.

A) Deep Approach to Learning

Moderate deep approach to learning is observed among 88 per cent (f=352) intact adolescents, 90.8 per cent (f=363) disrupted adolescents, 84.2 per cent (f=337) adolescent boys, 94.5 per cent (f=378) adolescent girls, 90.8 per cent (f=363) rural adolescents and 88 per cent (f=352) urban adolescents. Therefore, 89.4 per cent (f=715) adolescents have moderate deep approach to learning, 8.8 per cent (f=70) have high deep approach to learning and only 1.9 per cent (f=15) have low deep approach to learning. Such results show insignificant differences among intact and disrupted adolescents $\chi^2(2,800) = 3.56, p=0.16$ and among rural-urban adolescents $\chi^2(2,800) = 2.29, p=0.31$. While, highly significant differences are visible among adolescent boys and girls $\chi^2(2,800) = 22.53, p=0.00$ in context to this. Deep approach to learning shows positive insignificant correlation among intact-disrupted adolescents $r(800) = 0.67, p=0.059$ and negative insignificant correlation among rural-urban adolescents $r(800) = -0.051, p=0.146$. However, highly significant positive correlation is seen between adolescent boys-girls $r(800) = 1.25, p=0.00$.

Baeten et al (2010) indicated that students in different disciplines differ in the approach to learning they adopt, with students in human sciences in general showing the deepest approach. Moreover, teachers play a role; if they are involved and oriented towards students and changing their conceptions, students are inclined to use a deep approach.

B) Surface Approach to Learning

Surface approach to learning at moderate level is found among 84 per cent (f=336) intact adolescents and 83.5 per cent (f=334) disrupted adolescents. Increased number of adolescent girls i.e. 94.8 per cent (f=379) have moderate surface approach to learning, as compared to 72.8 per cent (f=291) adolescent boys who too have moderate surface approach to learning. In the same way, 80

per cent (f=320) rural adolescents and 87.5 per cent (f=350) urban adolescents also have moderate surface approach to learning. High surface approach to learning is seen among 25.2 per cent (f=101) adolescent boys. While, just 3.8 per cent (f=15) adolescent girls have high surface approach. Hence, 83.8 per cent (f=670) adolescents have moderate surface approach and 14.5 per cent (f=116) have high surface approach and merely 1.8 per cent (f=14) adolescents have low surface approach to learning. With respect to surface approach to learning, insignificant differences are seen among intact-disrupted adolescents $\chi^2 (2,800) = 2.71, p=0.25$. However, highly significant differences are found among adolescent boys-girls $\chi^2 (2,800) = 75.60, p= 0.00$ and significant differences are seen among rural-urban adolescents $\chi^2 (2,800) = 8.38, p=0.01$. Surface approach to learning shows positive insignificant correlation among intact-disrupted adolescents $r (800) = 0.33, p=0.387$; though highly significant positive correlation is seen between adolescent boys and girls $r (800) = 2.80, p=0.00$ and positive significant correlation is observed among rural-urban adolescents $r(800)=1.86, p= 0.01$.

Trigwell et al (2012) studied from the multi-variable analyses that surface approach to learning was the strongest predictor of academic achievement, with self-efficacy and motivation also found to be directly related. In contrast to the correlation results, a deep approach to learning was not related to academic achievement, and teaching quality and conceptions of learning were only indirectly related to achievement.

C) Overall Adolescents Approach to Learning

Overall adolescents approach to learning at moderate rank is seen among 82 per cent (f=328) intact adolescents, 81.8 per cent (f=327) disrupted adolescents, 69.5 per cent (f=278) adolescent boys, 94.2 per cent (f=377) adolescent girls, 78.2 per cent (f=313) rural adolescents and 85.5 per cent (f=342) urban adolescents, even though 26.2 per cent (f=105) adolescent boys have high approach to learning and 81.9 per cent (f=655) adolescents have moderate approach to learning. About 15.1 per cent (f=121) have high approach to learning and only 3 per cent (f=24) have low approach to learning. With reference to overall adolescents approach to learning, insignificant differences are found among intact-disrupted adolescents $\chi^2 (2,800) = 3.07, p=0.21$ While, highly significant differences are seen among adolescent boys and girls $\chi^2 (2,800) = 84.59, p=0.00$ and significant differences are seen among rural-urban adolescents $\chi^2 (2,800) = 8.23, p=0.01$. Overall adolescents approach to learning discloses positive insignificant correlation between intact-disrupted adolescents $r(800)=0.46, p=0.214$. Highly significant positive correlation is seen among adolescent boys-girls $r(800)=2.52, p=0.00$ and significant positive correlation among rural-urban adolescents $r(800)=0.91, p=.010$ are also observable.

Hwang and Chang (2011) described that the advancement of mobile and wireless communication technologies has encouraged an increasing number of studies concerning mobile learning, in which students are able to learn via mobile devices without being limited by space and time; in particular, the students can be situated in a real-world scenario associated with the learning content.

Table 1 Learning approaches of adolescents as per category

Dimensions	Category (N=800)							χ^2 df=2	p-value	r	p-value
	Intact adolescents (N=400)		Disrupted adolescents (N=400)		All Adolescents (N=800)						
	F	%	F	%	F	%					
Deep approach to learning											
High	42	10.5	28	7.0	70	8.8	3.56	0.16	0.67	0.59	
Moderate	352	88.0	363	90.8	715	89.4					
Low	6	1.5	9	2.3	15	1.9					
Surface approach to learning											
High	60	15.0	56	14.0	116	14.5	2.71	0.25	0.33	0.387	
Moderate	336	84.0	334	83.5	670	83.8					
Low	4	1.0	10	2.5	14	1.8					
Overall adolescents approach to learning											
High	64	16.0	57	14.2	121	15.1	3.07	0.21	0.46	0.214	
Moderate	328	82.0	327	81.8	655	81.9					
Low	8	2.0	16	4.0	24	3.0					

Table 2 Learning approaches of adolescents as per Gender

Dimensions	Gender (N=800)							
	Adolescent boys (N=400)		Adolescent girls (N=400)		χ^2 df=2	p-value	r	p-value
	F	%	F	%				
Deep approach to learning								
High	53	13.2	17	4.2	22.53	0.00	1.25	0.00
Moderate	337	84.2	378	94.5				
Low	10	2.5	5	1.2				
Surface approach to learning								
High	101	25.2	15	3.8	75.60	0.00	2.80	0.00
Moderate	291	72.8	379	94.8				
Low	8	2.0	6	1.5				
Overall adolescents approach to learning								
High	105	26.2	16	4.0	84.59	0.00	2.52	0.00
Moderate	278	69.5	377	94.2				
Low	17	4.2	7	1.8				

Table 3 Learning approaches of adolescents as per Dwelling

Dimensions	Dwelling (N=800)							
	Rural adolescents (N=400)		Urban adolescents (N=400)		χ^2 df=2	p-value	r	p-value
	F	%	F	%				
Deep approach to learning								
High	29	7.2	41	10.2	2.29	0.31	-0.51	0.14
Moderate	363	90.8	352	88.0				
Low	8	2.0	7	1.8				
Surface approach to learning								
High	72	18.0	44	11.0	8.38	0.01	0.87	0.01
Moderate	320	80.0	350	87.5				
Low	8	2.0	6	1.5				
Overall adolescents approach to learning								
High	75	18.8	46	11.5	8.23	0.01	0.91	0.01
Moderate	313	78.2	342	85.5				
Low	12	3.0	12	3.0				

Conclusion

Approach towards learning is found at moderate level among majority of intact-disrupted adolescents, rural-urban adolescents and adolescent boys-girls. Armed conflict has shown moderate impact on adolescents approach towards learning. Such moderate level impact is found on their deep approach to learning and surface approach to learning.

References

- [1] Baeten M, Kyndt E, struyven, K. and Dochy, F., (2010). Using student centered learning environments to stimulate deep approaches to learning: factors encouraging or discouraging their effectiveness. *Educational research review*, 5(3):243-260, retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1747938X10000370>.
- [2] Di Maoi, M. and Nandi, K., (2013). The effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on child labor and school attendance in the West Bank. *Journal of development economics*, 100(1):107-116, retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387812000715>

-
- [3] Diwakar, V., (2015). The effect of armed conflict on education: Evidence from Iraq. *The journal of developmental studies*, 51(12):1702-1718, retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2015.1056786>
- [4] Economic Survey Report, (2016). The economic survey 2015. Report: directorate of economicis and statistics, retrieved from <http://www.ecostatjk.nic.in/ecosurvey/Economic20%2016%20PDF.pdf>.
- [5] Human Rights Watch, (2009). Education and conflict. Report: Human Rights Watch retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights/education-and-conflict>.
- [6] Hwang, G. and Chang, H., (2011). A formative assessment-based mobile learning approaches to improving the learning attitudes and achievements of students. *Journal of computers and education*, 6(4):1023-1031, retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131510003519>.
- [7] Jones, A. and Naylor, R., (2014). The quantitative impact of armed conflict on education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Counting the human and financial costs, protect education in Insecurity and Conflict. Report: Education Development Trust, retrieved from <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/~media/EDT/files/research/2014/r-armed-conflict-2014.pdf>
- [8] Singh, A., (2011). Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. Report: National institute of Advanced Studies, retrieved from <http://nias.res.in/publication/conflict-jammu-and-kashmir>
- [9] Sirin, S. and Sirin, R., (2015). The educational and mental health needs of Syrian refugee children. Report: Migration Policy Institute, retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Selcuk_Sirin/publication/287998909_The_Educational_and_Mental_Health_Needs_of_Syrian_Refugee_Children/links/567ccd6c08ae19758384e4bf.pdf
- [10] Trigwell, K. Ashwin, P. and Millan, E., (2012). Evoked prior learning experience and approach to learning as predictors of academic achievement. *British journal of academic psychology*, 83(3):363-378, retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2044-8279.2012.02066.x/full>.
- [11] UNESCO, (2011). The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education. Global monitoring Report: Education for All, UNESCO, retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf>.
- [12] United Nations, (2013). Armed conflict destroys hope of education for millions of world's children. Report: United Nations, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45394#.WTr8JzgZrIU>