Children in Society

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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**Introduction**

Rights of children should be one of the major concerns of the policy maker, the school administration, and the society in general. Children build the future of a nation. However, there are many problems facing children today. Child labour, silencing of children and poor learning opportunities in schools are some of the pressing issues. Moreover, adults impose their decisions on children. There is lack of recognition of rights of street children and absence of any holistic policy plan to address these problems. The era of information has further complicated the situation by increasing the ambiguities of children. Although steps are being taken at the international, national and societal level to address problems of children, the situation is far from ideal. There is, first, a need to recognize the rights of children legal, social and affective spheres, and, then, there is a need to effectively ensure these rights.

**New Places for Children: Voice, Rights and Decision-Making**

In this chapter, the author discusses the ambiguity associated with childhood, how silencing of children further complicates ambiguity, what steps have been taken so far to reduce or share this ambiguity and finally what can be done to address this issue. The writer explores how the changing nature of places affect this ambiguity.

The author explains that childhood ambiguity is now increasingly being recognized. This recognition is happening at a global level as well as in the UK. The author suggests that by allowing children to speak, their ambiguity can be shared. In this regard, both virtual places and physical spaces are being created for them where they can speak for themselves. Although thee steps are unprecedented, the author recognizes the limitations of these steps. Moreover, neither article 12 of the UN, nor video-interviewing claim to resolve the ambiguities; these steps are aimed at sharing these ambiguities by providing them with platforms to express themselves. State, as well as court personnel, acknowledge childhood ambiguities, not to resolve or avoid them, but rather to share them.

Important to note in this chapter is the author's use of examples which are mostly related to media technologies such as TV and video-recorders. The author carefully explores both the positive and the negative impacts of these technologies on children; they may increase or decrease the ambiguities. The writer has chosen TV and other media technologies because they change the nature of the place. Another important point to note is that the author carefully divides the nature of paces into two types: physical and cultural. Cultural spaces include hierarchies of age and power. In the age of uncertainty, TV is changing families, ITC changing classrooms and video changing courts. However, the far-reaching consequences of these changes on ambiguities cannot be predicted with certainty as such, the author admits.

**The Two Worlds of School**

The author begins this chapter with a poem that is a children’s version of “Battle Hymn of the Republic" with an underlying theme that explains children's desire to break their silence as well as the rules created by their elders. Then the author shed some light on the history of schools. He argues that there are two different worlds in the school. One is the formal world, regulated by the teachers. The other is the world controlled and regulated by the children themselves. The author regards the latter more important.

A Japanese writer's experience in fourth grade is described in this chapter. He suggests that the problems facing schools should be seen from the perspective of the children. He appeals to the adults that they should stop believing children should do only what their elders tell them to do. He believes that were it not for the patience of the students, the Japanese schools would not have survived. In order to further substantiate this argument, he quotes Jiro (1999). According to Jiro, schools have always taken advantage of the patience of children and tried to control them when, in fact, children deserved a far better education system.

In this chapter, the author reviews a great quantity of research on the subject of schools and concludes that children are neither innocent angels nor rebellious monsters. On the one hand, they are creative, inventive, loyal and generous, and have the ability to socialize and form a group. On the other hand, they have the capacity to become aggressive, cruel, racist and sexist. Both these positive and negative traits are learned by students in school in the world they themselves regulate. However, it must be noted that the author undermines the role of formal teaching in helping students learn. Also, even in the informal realm is controlled to some extent by the teachers.

**The Lack of Recognition of the Rights of Children in Street Situations. An Approach from the Theoretical Proposal of Axel Honneth**

In this essay, published in the International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology in 2018, the authors use the theory of recognition of Axel Honneth to explore the status of recognition of rights of street children. The strength of Honneth Model is that it takes into account not only the legal sphere but also effective and social sphere when exploring the status of rights of street children. The authors conclude despite interventions by the policymakers and civil society in the legal sphere, the rights of street children are not secured. They attribute this failure to the policymakers' ignorance towards the remaining two spheres.

The scope of this essay is limited to the rights of street children only. However, Honneth model has been used effectively to know the status of the rights. For complete social integration, the authors argue, recognition of children's rights in all the three spheres, i.e. legal, effective and social, is a pre-requisite. The analysis of these three spheres shows that children are vulnerable in all the three spheres.

The holistic approach of these authors seem only rational because the children in street situations face multiple problems, and therefore, intervention is required in multiple domains. One important contribution of the authors with regards to the rights of street children is that they highlight new dimensions of children’s subordination: general contempt, lack of appreciation from the society, inadequate legal recognition- all these in addition to the economic subordination of street children.

The authors finally call upon both the civil society and the State to consider all the three spheres to fight against the injustices to street children. Taking Mexico as a case study, the authors further substantiate their argument that a lack of social recognition is a great contradiction in the social structure of Mexico. Consequently, despite initiative by the government in the legal sphere, Mexico is far from securing street children's rights. The authors' suggestions are logical because a partial or reductionist approach will never work to solve a multifaceted problem.

**Who gets the ‘gift of time’ in Australia? Exploring delayed primary school entry**

In this article, published in the Australian Review of Public Affairs in 2011, Ben Edwards, who is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, observes that there is an increasing trend in the developed world of delaying enrolment of children in primary schools for a year. The rationale behind this practice is the belief that by going a year late to school, children get the ‘gift of time' and therefore develop cognitive and emotional skills that their peers who go early to schools lack. This article aims at filling the gap and lack of research regarding this phenomenon. Data from Longitudinal Study of Australian Children is heavily borrowed and it is estimated that 14.5% per cent of all school entrants in the year 2005 had been delayed at least one year. One of the most significant factors in delayed admissions is the state and territory policies regarding entry age. The research finds other factors as insignificant. Another important finding is that most like to be delayed are children who are less able to remain persistent at tasks. Moreover, more boys have delayed entrants than girls. Delayed entry is more prevalent in English speaking families, particularly those living in non-metropolitan areas.

The article uses tables, graphs and pie-charts to elucidate the data acquired through extensive research. Moreover, regional analysis is also done. In 2009, the government took steps to ensure that children must spend a certain number of years in education. This is in preference to setting entry policies. This contributes to delayed entries. Even if the government intends to introduce a defined age for new entrants, it will never be possible without carefully considering the response of parents to such steps. The evidence from New South Wales puts things into perspective: when the government lowered the entry age, the average entry age increased rather than decreasing. The author does not discuss the impact of late entry at length. One obvious impact can be an increase in the costs of childcare. This area is indeed less explored and this research brings forth many new findings.

**Conclusion**

The future of the nation depends on the upbringing of children. It is the responsibility of the government, parents and society to recognize and protect children's rights. Children should not be silenced/ Adults in schools should not take it for granted that they are entitled to be obeyed by their students. Efforts should be made to lessen the ambiguities faced by children in the ever-changing information and digital landscape. More research should be conducted on the issues pertaining to children, particularly the growing tendency of parents to send their children late to schools in order to arrive at sound conclusions as to whether late or early admissions to schools are better. Since the problems facing children are multi-faceted, therefore the solution should also be holistic that encompasses legal, social and affective spheres.

**Reference List**

**Essential Readings**

New Places for Children: Voice, Rights and Decision-Making

The Two Worlds of School

**Scholarly Research Papers**

Edwards, B. (2014). Who gets the ‘gift of time’ in Australia? Exploring delayed primary school entry. *Australian Review of Public Affairs*.

Romero, Y. H., Romero, Y. H., & Lugo, J. A. (2018). The Lack of Recognition of the Rights of Children in Street Situations. An Approach from the Theoretical Proposal of Axel Honneth. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*.