

## Children as research subjects: A needs assessment and issues for framing national guidelines for Asian education researchers

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Ethical guidelines for the conduct of research on animals, humans, etc., are well known. Research involving children too has guidelines such as the Federal Regulations for Protection of Human subjects, the British Codes, etc. But in Sri Lanka the cultural context is not the same with regard to children and adults. For this purpose the existing common practices should be identified and fine-tuned in the light of the present rights-based thinking and the currently emerging debates on Asian values. Fresh issues necessary for formulating national guidelines should also be considered when necessary.

In this study the available research reports on the education of children in Sri Lanka are analysed for the level of participation and evaluated for the type of participation using Hart's ladder. Research in education of children so far shows no evidence of child participation or the presence of accepted norms for it. This study identifies existing gaps based on the current western models. Issues relevant to formulating national guidelines are identified and discussed based on participatory education research using a set of model guidelines designed for primary school children. The issues addressed include the degree of risk, age-relevance, waivers, responsibility of implementation, disclosure risks, research grants and the possible impact of Asian values on them.

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