Implementation of Children’s rights and materiality: can a ’good enough’ childhood be measured by material wealth?

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The diversity of childhoods and distribution of wealth throughout the globe provokes discussions of implementation of Children’s rights, and further what constitutes as a ‘good enough’ childhood. In addition, what is considered as a ‘good enough’ in global North is not necessary achievable in global South. The same implies between social and economical classes. Furthermore, can a ‘good enough’ childhood be measured with material wealth, and if yes, how much material wealth is implied and who are setting the standard?

Poverty lines that are defined in global North are incompatible with reality in global South. Studies that are concerning the ‘child’s best interest’ have been performed in the last 50 years in global North mostly by white male middle-class professionals within white middle class children. Idealising white middle class childhood further contributes to marginalisation of certain groups because of their class, ethnicity and/or gender.

This presentation will address the complexity of defining a ‘good enough’ childhood in terms of material wealth. It further underlines the necessity to gain variety to the understandings of childhood in global North. The presentation is based on findings of comprehensive literature review for ongoing PhD project that is exploring understandings of ‘good enough’ childhood. A systematic review method was used to study the literature that illuminated the necessity to gain variety to the traditional knowledge regime for the concept ‘good enough’ childhood in global North. The central research question that guides the study is: how marginalised girls that live in institutionalised settings in India perceive ‘good enough’ childhood.

The literature review pointed out that the girls that live in institutionalised settings in India are lacking material wealth, are identified as underclass and have limited access in their society. However, the literature was focusing on the negative outcomes, rather than how marginalised girls that live in institutionalised settings view ‘good enough’ childhood.

The project aims to strengthen the concepts of childhood in global North. Therefore, it is essential to explore the perspectives of the marginalised girls’ from global South in aims to widen the discourse of ‘good enough’ childhood in global North.

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