Situating occupational injustices experienced by children with disabilities in rural India within sociocultural, economic, and systemic conditions

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2
3   **Abstract**
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5   This paper contributes to diversifying and situating understandings of occupational
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8   injustices through presenting findings from the knowledge generation phase of a participatory
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10 action research (PAR) project that utilized participatory filmmaking with children with
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12 disabilities in rural South India as co-researchers. Centering on situations of occupational
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15 injustices generated through a participatory analysis conducted with the child co-researchers, a
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17 critical theoretical analysis, informed by critical occupational science and critical disability
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19 perspectives, was carried out. This theoretical analysis of data generated through the
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22 participatory filmmaking process, as well as data generated with parents of children with
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24 disabilities, community members, and service providers, was used to elucidate forces shaping
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26 and perpetuating occupational injustices within the study context. Findings address the complex
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28 layers of sociocultural, economic, and systemic forces shaping occupational injustices, as well as
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31 ways contested responsibility and individualization of issues limited collective action. This paper
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33 illustrates the contributions that can be made through critical participatory approaches to
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35 enhancing understanding of the production and perpetuation of occupational injustices in ways
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38 that contribute to nuanced understanding of diverse human occupations. As well, issues of
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40 occupational injustice related to occupational marginalization, restricted occupational
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42 possibilities, occupational degradation, and non-sanctioned occupations are fore fronted.
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47 ***Key Words*:** youth participatory action research, participatory filmmaking, critical disability
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49 theory, occupation-based social transformation, social justice
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Within occupation-based scholarship, perspectives of children[1] with disabilities,

particularly those from the Global South, remain at the margins, given the dominance of

Western, middle-class, Anglophonic, adult, female, able-bodied perspectives (Hocking, 2012;

Magalhães, Farias, Rivas-Quarneti, Alvarez, & Malfitano, 2019; Phelan & Kinsella, 2014).

Through critically attending to the perspectives of children with disabilities from the Global

South and situating their experiences of occupational injustices through participatory action

research (PAR), this article aims to add to more diverse understandings of the situated nature of

occupation and occupational injustices. In turn, such situated, diverse understandings are crucial

to inform social transformation efforts, particularly to guard against re-inscribing and

heightening injustices through continued imposition of knowledge and strategies generated in

Western contexts (Buckingham, 2011; Hammell, 2011; Magalhães et al., 2019).

The potential of critically informed participatory methodologies to diversify situated

understandings of occupational injustices is illustrated through presenting findings from the

knowledge generation phase of a PAR project. This project employed participatory filmmaking

with a group of children with disabilities from a rural village in Southern India as co-researchers

to engage child co-researches and various stakeholders in a process aimed at deepening

understanding of contextual forces shaping and perpetuating the occupational injustices

prioritized by the children. The knowledge generated through the creation and dissemination of

the short film informed identification of key action strategies for social transformation, with

details regarding the methodological process and action steps taken in this on-going work

reported elsewhere (█████████████████████████████████).

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[1] [1] The term 'children' is used to refer to all individuals below the age of 18 years (United Nations, 1989). We acknowledge that the definitions for terms children and youth are approached differently within different contexts, and addressing this debate is beyond the scope of this paper.

Based on the central premise that participation in occupation is central to human well-being (Wilcock, 1998), a key thread of occupational science scholarship has focused on explicating individual and social implications of situations in which individuals and collectives face barriers to enact the right to occupation or face exploitation or oppression through occupation, often framing such situations as occupational injustices (Durocher, Rappolt, & Gibson, 2014; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Townsend & Wilcock, 2004). Critical occupational science scholarship has deepened examination of such injustices, through attending to how injustices are shaped and perpetuated through socio-political, cultural, economic, and other forces (Bailliard, 2016; Kinsella & Durocher, 2016; Laliberte Rudman, 2013). In addition to attending to how social power relations are embodied and enacted through such forces in ways that perpetuate axes of privilege and disadvantage in relation to occupation (Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, 2013), critical occupational science scholarship has increasingly embodied a transformative intent to combine research and action (Farias, Laliberte Rudman, Magalhães, & Gastaldo, 2017).

Growing attention to an emancipatory agenda has been accompanied by heightened awareness of the centrality of ethical and culturally safe approaches to occupation-based transformative work. Occupation-based scholars have engaged in critical reflexivity regarding boundaries of knowledge production with increasing awareness of the need to avoid colonizing effects, partly through attending to diverse perspectives on occupation and occupational injustices from varied positionalities (Benjamin-Thomas & Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Magalhães et al., 2019; Murthi & Hammell, 2020; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). In turn, scholarship has begun to generate more diverse understandings through critically situating occupational injustices experienced by social groups from diverse geographical and

cultural backgrounds (Benjamin-Thomas & Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Farias, Laliberte Rudman, & Magalhães, 2016; Galvaan et al., 2015; Rivas-Quarneti, Movilla-Fernández, & Magalhães, 2018).

Children with disabilities are a social group embodying heterogeneous experiences of occupational injustices, with previous research demonstrating diverse ways these children can be denied opportunities for occupation in play, school, home and broader community contexts (AlHeresh, Bryant & Holm, 2013; Law et al., 1999; Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, & Anaby, 2014). The exclusion of children with disabilities from occupation, particularly amongst those living in situations of poverty, is often greater within communities in the Global South, given the complicated legacies of colonial forces (Rahman, Ali, & Kahn, 2019) where "they are often condemned to a poor start in life and deprived of opportunities to participate in society" (Parnes et al., 2009, p. 1176), and may experience increased violence and mortality rates (Njelesani et al., 2018; Parnes et al., 2009). This article adds an occupational perspective to scholarship attending to the injustices faced by children with disabilities within rural India (Anees, 2014; Singh & Ghai, 2009), a context where British colonial rule has had immense influence on social structures, institutions, and village systems (Rahman et al., 2019).

Research Approach <u>and</u>~~&~~ Methodology

We carried out a three-phased PAR, that included a preparatory, participatory research and action phase, utilizing participatory filmmaking, a methodology rooted within Freire's (1993) work on consciousness raising to involve community members in creating videos to document, explore, and critically engage with social issues (███████████████████ ███████████████████████ Gubrium & Harper, 2013). In addition, we integrate principles and practices from Youth PAR (YPAR) <mark>in order to optimize the engagement of child</mark>

co-researchers in examining issues of injustices in relation to their everyday experiences and determining relevant actions (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Rodríguez & Brown 2009). Children with disabilities were included as co-researchers in all phases of our research process. The collaborative process of developing and disseminating the short film with the child co-researchers provided a means to facilitate shared dialogue and mark out areas and actions for social transformation addressing occupational injustices. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant institutions. Detailed descriptions of various steps in this the PAR process, as well as the negotiation of ethical and pragmatic issues have been described elsewhere (██████████ ████████████████).

Participants

  Child Co-Researchers. Working with support from a community health department of a medical college and hospital in Southern India, a village was selected based on this department's records regarding the number of children with disabilities. This village had a population of just under 5,000 people in approximately 1,000 houses, with one public elementary and high school. In addition to being identified by a local health care provider or community member as experiencing some form of impairment, inclusion criteria for child co-researchers included having the cognitive skills necessary to participate in the research process; the ability to communicate verbally in Tamil or non-verbally with or without an assistive device; and interest in using a camera for sharing their experiences. The child co-researchers included six male children with disabilities, aged between 10-17 years, some of them formally diagnosed with an impairment (visual impairment, intellectual disability, speech and hearing impairment) and some without a diagnosis.

Secondary Participants. Secondary participants encompassed two groups, the first group included parents and service providers (four teachers, eight parents, six health care providers, and six special educators), who participated in group discussions (or individual interviews when preferred) about the occupational experiences of children with disabilities. The second group included parents, doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, and occupational and physiotherapy students, who participated in discussions during eight screenings of the short film. Data from secondary participants addressed factors shaping the occupational injustices and community issues raised by the child co-researchers. As well, dialogue regarding ways forward, that involved various stakeholders from dissemination meetings becoming members of action teams to implement solutions generated through the PAR, occurred following screenings.

Data Generation

A participant driven, dialogic group process (Gubrium & Harper, 2013) was used with child co-researchers to generate and conduct participatory analysis of visual and verbal data regarding barriers and supports to desired occupational participation at home, school, and community. During approximately 35 group meetings, child co-researchers engaged in the process of film making and engaged in shared dialogue regarding their everyday lives and occupation-based issues they deemed as priorities for social transformation. This dialogic process occurred in Tamil and was supported through the use of visuals such as culturally relevant drawings of occupations and videos captured by the children. As well, drew upon the SHOWeD approach (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000) that stimulated dialogue pertaining to the following questions: What do you *see* here? What is really *happening* here? How does this relate to *our* lives? *Why* does this problem, concern, or strength *exist*? What can we *do* about it? This

dialogic group process supported child co-researchers in generating relevant themes and content

for their short film to be shared (██████████████████).

Data among secondary participants was generated through a total of five one-on-one

interviews with parents, three group meetings with different service providers (i.e., teachers,

special educators, health care providers) and eight dissemination meetings where the short film

was showcased. All meetings and discussions were audio recorded, and those conducted in

Tamil were translated to English by the first author with the support of a local retired

schoolteacher from a neighbouring community.

Data Analysis

Detailed reporting of the participatory thematic analysis results, carried out with child co-

researchers during the process of creating the short film, are provided elsewhere (██████

██), and the short film is publicly available ██████████. Within this paper, we focus on

results generated through a subsequent theoretical analysis of all transcribed (and translated) data

from co-researchers and secondary participants. This analysis was carried out by the first author

to further explicate power relations and contextual forces shaping and perpetuating the

occupational injustices prioritized by the child co-researchers. In addition to being informed by a

critical occupational science perspective (Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Njelesani et al., 2013),

critical disability perspectives (Devlin & Pothier, 2006; Goodley 2013; Hosking, 2008;

Meekosha & Dowse, 2007; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009) were utilized to draw attention to

disability related assumptions, as well as dominant languages and images associated with

disability. Analysis encompassed repeated rounds of theoretically informed coding (Miles,

Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), along with on-going collaborative dialogue between the first and

second author.

Researcher Positioning

This project was carried out as a part of the first author's PhD thesis. Her interests in collaborating with children with disabilities are rooted within her experiences as a pediatric occupational therapist in rural India. She was often a witness to situations of injustices that children with disabilities experienced in everyday life. Having completed her undergraduate education at the same local institution that supported this research, she was familiar with the local language, research context, and had an established relationship with the local institution. She spent eight months in India carrying out this project, but collaborations with co-investigators from the local institute were initiated many months prior to entering the field. Reflexive dialogue with researchers from the local setting and those from outside the setting provided an on-going means for the first author to navigate her positionality, as well as interrogate her initial assumptions and emerging analytic insights regarding the occupations of children with disabilities in context of rural India.

Findings

To establish the underpinnings for the theoretical analysis, a brief summary of themes generated through the participatory thematic analysis are first presented, which specifically focuses on occupational injustices in the lives of the children and at the community level that the child co-researchers highlighted as problematic and presented within the short film (see Table 1 for example quotes). Following which, results of the theoretical analysis that situates these occupational injustices are focused on in greater detail.

Participatory Thematic Analysis: Prioritized Occupational Injustices by Child Co-Researchers

Occupational Injustices in the Lives of Children with Disabilities. Child co-researchers described occupations they engaged in that were important to them, such as playing

local games and music with friends, worshiping in the temple, attending school and community

events, and doing chores at home, which provided enjoyment, connection, and a sense of

inclusion. At the same time, they discussed several barriers to occupation that were challenging

to navigate and described situations of occupational injustices by pointing to experiences of

marginalization, particularly in school but also within their homes and communities.

Within the context of school, child co-researchers described restricted opportunities to

engage in extracurricular activities, such as participating in cultural programs at school functions

and sports activities, and negative assessments of their academic capabilities. The children

framed these exclusions and assessments as resulting from intentional acts of teachers, connected

to perceptions of their impairments and needs. These experiences affected the emotional, and in

turn, educational experiences of child co-researchers. Overall, despite these experiences of

marginalization, child co-researchers also expressed that school was a source of enjoyment and

that they desired the opportunity to study.

Child co-researchers also indicated that experiences of marginalization extended into

their homes and communities. At homes, occupational marginalization was often linked to their

poor academic performance. Additionally, resistance from parents to support their child's

occupational participation was situated, by the child co-researchers, within parents' attempts to

protect them from violence or child trafficking prevalent within their community. Within

community settings, child co-researchers described being denied opportunities for participation

in games with other children, often being assigned to the role of onlooker rather than players or

teammates.

Occupational Injustices at the Community Level. Child co-researchers also spoke of

larger community issues that not only impacted their own occupations but those of the broader

community. In particular, they described occupational issues related to substance abuse and inter-related forms of violence, including community fights and teasing and bullying among children, as well as environmental issues related to occupational degradation and sustainability.

Certain occupational practices, namely substance abuse, were positioned by child co-researchers as contributing to violence prevalent within their communities, including domestic violence, fights within the community, and bullying and teasing. These various forms of violence were integrated into occupational patterns in the community.

Substance abuse by adult men, perpetuated by poor household economic conditions, was pointed to by child co-researchers as a predominant factor contributing to fights within households between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Child co-researchers not only shared personal experiences of household violence, but also shared how adults' patterns of occupational engagement in substance use became engrained among children in the community who consumed locally made alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Child co-researchers pointed to parents as role models from whom children learned about substance use and spoke to being exposed to these substances during local festivals. Additionally, child co-researchers connected substance use by children to other occupational practices such as improper garbage disposal within the community, as children experimented with these substances by picking up empty bottles to take a sip or using fallen cigarette butts. Child co-researchers prioritized these occupational patterns as requiring change and situated substance abuse as a systemic issue contributed to by government-run businesses of selling substances, improper garbage disposal practices, and entrenched patterns across generations.

Child co-researchers also shared that fights in the community at large were common, with violence being a key means to address conflicts and manage power relations. In some instances,

fights amongst children were said to become a community issue, as parents were drawn in to protect and stand up for their children. Child co-researchers also pointed to the presence of a gang culture and conflicts within their community, specifically among young college going students. Additionally, community fights were also positioned as informed by caste differences, present amongst people from different areas in the village.

Within the community context in which adults engaged in various forms of violence, teasing and bullying among the children was also common during various forms of occupational engagement. Child co-researchers described experiences of being teased by peers, because of their impairment, the use of assistive devices, or when they performed occupations in ways perceived as outside the normative standards in their community. Teasing was often described as escalating into bullying, where children with disabilities were intimidated as well as mistreated by other children both physically and verbally. In addition to bullying contributing to physical fights amongst the children, children with disabilities were marginalized from opportunities to participate in desired occupations because of teasing and bullying. Child co-researchers situated teasing and bullying not only within the broader context in which violence was a common part of daily interactions, but also within their observations that children who were different, be that in relation to height or skin colour, were often discriminated against. Such issues of teasing and bullying were situated as an issue experienced throughout the life course, with language used by adults viewed as not only permitting but also modelling these behaviours.

Garbage accumulation within village public spaces, such as the local streets, rivers, temples, and public wells, was also an important concern for child co-researchers. The occupational issue of improper garbage disposal was seen by child co-researchers as not only affecting livestock, plants, and the health of community members, but also impacting

==occupational engagement of community members in leisure activities such as playing in fields or swimming.== Improper garbage disposal practices were inter-related with substance abuse, with substance use contributing to garbage accumulation in public spaces and improper garbage disposal contributing to substance use among children. Overall, the issue of garbage accumulation was situated as socio-political and systemic. Certain practices such as festivals amplified disposal of garbage in public spaces, and systemic constraints related to irregularity of garbage collecting vehicles did not allow community members to properly dispose garbage.

Child co-researchers also identified issues related to occupational degradation in relation to deforestation activities, again pointing to consequences for flora, fauna, as well as for occupational engagement. Reasons for deforestation were linked to occupations, such as the use of wood for building houses and cooking and needs related to space for housing and ensuring safety of electric wires. ==While child co-researchers acknowledged varied reasons contributing to deforestation, some of which they framed as necessary, they expressed concern regarding the consequences of deforestation, connecting it to, for example, water shortages as well less useable outdoor spaces for occupations.==

Theoretical Analysis: Deepening Understanding of the Situated Nature of Inter-Related Occupational Injustices

The theoretical analysis presented within this section explicates complex intersections of socio-cultural, economic, and systematic forces shaping and perpetuating the inter-related occupational injustices prioritized by child co-researchers, namely taken-for-granted notions of 'disability' within the socio-cultural context, economic constraints, and systemic forces. In addition, ways that issues of contested responsibility and individualization of occupational

injustices within a community context marked by violence, substance abuse, and

disempowerment, contributed to limited social action are discussed.

Intersecting Sociocultural, Economic, and Systemic Forces shaping Occupational

Injustices. Sociocultural beliefs associated with disability, within this South Indian rural context,

often stigmatized and discredited children with disabilities, with stigmatizing attributes

extending to their family members. Specifically, particular sociocultural understandings of

'disability' informed ways in which children with disabilities were positioned by family and

community members, which contributed to the shaping of occupational injustices within homes,

schools, and the community. Disability was not only expressed as being 'not normal,' but also, in

many instances, the existence of a child with a disability was considered to be an outcome of sin.

A social worker described, "The family who has got a special child, in the community, or in the

house, they think it is a curse or an outcome of sin, so they don't end up looking at the child as

normal or can be compared to the others…" An occupational therapist also pointed out, "And

even the other members in the community, they just think about some superstitious beliefs

…because of maybe 'his father is not good' or 'his grandfather is not good' … 'I don't know

what kind of thing his mom did.' These negative attitudes towards children with disabilities

(Anees, 2014; Singh & Ghai, 2009) and their perceived positions within society as dis-citizens

(Devlin & Pothier, 2006) and of lower status and lacking abilities (Wolbring & Ghai, 2015)

contributed to parents not disclosing, denying, or delaying the acceptance of supports for their

child. A parent shared, "Some people are not aware of his difficulty, and to some people who ask

we will explain, that because of a specific problem he has been asked to wear glasses. Apart

from our family members not many people know about it. Even if people come and tell us that

he is struggling to find things when walking, we still don't tell them anything." This resistance in

taking on a disabled identity was also seen among children with disabilities. Child co-researchers rarely identified themselves as having a 'disability' and often situated the issues they experienced related to stigma and violence among larger issues of discrimination experienced by many children within their community based on differences in attributes such as skin colour or gender.

In turn, these understandings of disability contributed to, and were drawn on to justify, social isolation, differential care, and occupational marginalization of children with disabilities within their homes and communities. An occupational therapist shared, "… children with disabilities are kind of isolated from the family as well as the same age group people, and mostly they are treated like untouchables." Within home environments, parents were described as sometimes providing less care to a child with disabilities when compared to children without disabilities. A community health doctor described, "These mothers feel that only if there is a very morbid stage, like they end up in a seizure, or end up having pneumonia, which is not settling in one or two weeks, they come [to the hospital], they don't come otherwise. Only for a normal child, parents come even if the kids have a one-day fever. If the child has a disability, they wait, and they are willing to wait even for like almost ten days…. The sense of neglect is there in the family…." Neglect was also described in instances where children with disabilities were denied basic resources like food and hygiene. A social worker shared, "Some families I have seen, they don't want to even give three meals because to be frank the mother says, 'anyways he will be passing stools if he has been over fed, so let him at least starve for one or two times…'" The neglect of children with disabilities was sometimes seen as being pushed to the extreme of "better dead than disabled" (Gupta & Singal, 2004, p. 23) as explained by a social

worker, "If we ask very deeply, they [parents] will be alike 'it's okay sir, if they die, let them die, that's all'…."

Situations of neglect and occupational marginalization were also shaped by sociocultural notions of perceived 'incapability' of children with disabilities, notions that shaped social relations and practices (Meekosha & Dowse, 2007; Singal, 2010), as reflected in issues raised by child co-researchers when speaking about their school experiences. For example, Karthi shared, "… If I volunteer myself for something, they [teachers] say, 'we don't want you' and call others. They used to say, 'you will not do it well'…." Similar concerns were articulated by a government appointed special educator, who shared, "When we are able to get their [children with disabilities] talents out, the teachers are surprised." Furthermore, within larger community contexts, teasing and bullying of children with disabilities were often taken-for-granted and situated as permissible, being enacted by both children as well as adults. The village community health aide put it this way, "Like if they [children with disabilities] can't see, or if they can't play, or play in a different way, or they can't speak properly, what do the other children do? They tease and make fun and bully them." Together, these socio-culturally shaped issues of stigma created situations of neglect and violence, and positioned children with disabilities as 'incapable,' leading to limits on occupational possibilities (Laliberte Rudman, 2010) and creating situations of occupational injustices.

Issues of stigma led to devaluing and labelling children with disabilities as the 'problem' (Watson, 2012; Vehmas & Watson, 2014). In turn, families turned to solutions aimed at 'fixing the child,' given the various consequences associated with having a disability. Within this rural context, parents turned to not only biomedical forms of treatment in search of a cure but visited traditional healers in search of "medical magical remedies" as stated by a social worker, as a

means to 'cure' their child. A special educator claimed, "Children who are hyperactive, generally get traditional medicine, which include giving them a burn, poking one ear hole to wear an earring, and the traditional doctor goes to their house and gives them counselling and gets them to do this." This pursuit for cure is ongoing as an occupational therapist explained, "They [parents] try different methods, like go to different traditional healers, they don't stick on to one, they keep going."

In some instances, attitudes and experiences of stigma combined with a lack of available resources and the impossibility of 'curing' led to the institutionalization of children with disabilities, an approach established through a historical colonial emphasis on a charitable care model (Buckingham, 2011). For some parents, within existing structures, admission of their children into a residential facility for children with disabilities became the best available option, given restricted options for home support with limited resources and concerns regarding safety. The father of Kumaran and Arun, who were living in a residential hostel for children with disabilities, shared, "For them living in the hostel is only good… It is very difficult for us to even manage them even for ten days when they come home… I think they are doing well. They are safe there and I am satisfied." Within a context of chronic poverty, parents were often not in a position to prioritize the occupational needs of children with disabilities, even when children voiced experiences of physical and occupational restrictions in institutions. For example, Kumaran described, "They lock us inside the hostel and don't let us out… They have the keys. If we come out, they will hit us… We only play ball, nothing else. We have to sit quiet, if not, they will hit us."

Economic constraints experienced by families of children with disabilities from a lower socio-economic status also shaped occupational possibilities for children. Specifically, when

parents needed to prioritize ways to meet basic needs such as providing food for the family, the occupational needs and wants of the child with a disability were often positioned by parents as a luxury. For instance, a parent shared: "He [child with disability] is very interested in music, and he has been asking since he was young, but we are the ones not in a position to join him for classes. If the cost was cheaper, we would have somehow struggled and joined him, but it is hard to look after the first child as well as the second…"

Moreover, economic constraints intersected within the broader context of violence pervasive in the community and led parents to set further limits on the occupational participation of children with disabilities outside of the home. Parents not only wanted to protect their child from getting hurt within this context, but also wanted to avoid associated financial consequences. For instance, Shivam described, "So when I am sitting quietly in school, they come and say, 'hey glasses, grandma glasses come and fight with me if you have courage'!! They simply annoy me…they will also hit me, and I will also get angry and hit them back and then a fight will begin." Parents incurred additional costs when their child was hurt, for which they may not have sufficient finances. A nurse shared, "… They [parents] don't want anything to happen to the child as it is kind of an extra burden… like if they go out of their house and something they hit or fall or something happens, then it's like an extra charge for them with additional medical issues …" This concern was further described by a parent, "He very often breaks his glass frame, at least once in six months, and the frame and lenses costs… It is because of playing with the kids only all these issues come, and if we tell him to stop, he won't listen… But it is hard for us."

Within an Indian context, a legacy of British colonial rule is the continued persistence of English-speaking private schools as the most socially valued form of education, with such schools often differentially available along class and economic lines (Byrne, Clarke, & Rahman,

2018). Within this study, the limited economic capacities of families often meant that the

children with disabilities were systematically denied this form of schooling due to their

additional medical expenses. In one example, Shivam's mother explained why he had been

moved from an English speaking school, "Due to his surgery, we had to spend a lot of money,

and we could only afford a Tamil school…." In turn, systemic issues related to insufficient

human and material resources with rural public-school systems shaped marginalization and

bounded occupational possibilities for children with disabilities.

Although government policies mandated inclusion of children with disabilities in schools,

their realities embodied experiences of exclusion. Schools lacked necessary resources to support

full participation of children with disabilities, leading to systemic barriers. As one example,

insufficient resources were directed towards teacher training addressing working with children

with disabilities. A public-school teacher shared, "They give general training to us but not

special training to deal with these children. If they give us special training, it will be good for

us..." Additionally, the government-appointed special educators articulated that they themselves

lacked sufficient training to be able to transfer skills to teachers. A special educator described,

"First, there are trainings at the state level and then people who get the training come to the

district level and train staff at the district level… if he has heard 75% of the information, only

25% will get shared to staff in the next level, and by the time it reaches us at the block level only

5% of the information is transferred. We at the block level are not able to use this information to

conduct a five-day training with the teachers…" The lack of training for teachers and others

working in the school was identified as a lapse in the system by a social worker, "The

government yearly produces a lot of projects and schemes, but if you really ask the local district

academic officers, they doesn't know anything; if you ask the school teachers and head

mistress/master, they don't know about integrating a special child within the school… It is only

there in paper that they can integrate special children…."

Moreover, the lack of human and other resources within the public school system,

sometimes resulted in relegating children with disabilities to segregated schools and residential

institutions. A special educator described, "The teachers keep telling us to put him in a special

school. So if we ask them 'then why do you have this education/training?' they say that 'we have

so many children and we cannot do any individual care for them, so you are there for that

purpose only. You can see and take care of them.'" In addition, with only a handful of special

educators to provide services across multiple villages, schools were visited only on a monthly

basis and it was difficult to maintain continuity of support. A teacher shared, "Once a month,

they [special educators] come for half an hour to spend with the child. But 30 minutes isn't

sufficient… If there is no chance of bringing them daily, it is better for us to send the children to

the special school." Overall, physical inclusion in schools, rather than inclusion within school

activities, was considered sufficient, and a teacher claimed, "Helping those children mix [within

the same physical space] with other children is a great thing, and that is all we can do."

Additionally, participants emphasized that policies and systems pertaining to children

with disabilities primarily addressed only the needs of people from urban and privileged

backgrounds. For instance, obtaining government benefits demanded a high degree of formal

documentation of disability, and financial contributions could sometimes be required given

embedded corruption. A social worker shared, "… the government's support through the

physically challenged pension, even to get that pension she [mother of a child with disabilities]

has to spend a lot… and also there is bribing and a lot of corruption…They need a lot of

certificates, and age proof and medical certificates, which are not that easy for anybody to

get…they really struggle a lot." She further described, "…when we compare the rural and urban, the accessibility, resources, and things, availability of aids and appliances, any training, and any institutions or anything, that is really very, very, very, much restricted in the rural areas." As such, disability is one among the multiple axes of oppression (Devlin & Pothier, 2006), and the occupational injustices faced by children with disabilities from rural backgrounds in this study appeared to result from intersections of having a disability, residing in a rural community, and being from a low socio-economic background.

Contested Responsibility and Individualization. Like children, secondary participants also highlighted occupations, particularly related to schooling and vocational training, as important for children with disabilities, and expressed concerns regarding situations of occupational injustice. For example, secondary participants expressed concerns that experiences of occupational injustices within schools often led to children with disabilities dropping out of school, leading to future mental health implications, and perpetuating an entrenched cycle of poverty. Given uncertainty about their children's success within school, vocational training opportunities, were considered as important by parents as well as service providers, but were also described as neglected by governments. However, the contested attributions of responsibility and individualization of issues, through placing the blame on particular types of individuals such as teachers, parents, or children, obscured larger systemic barriers that shaped situations of occupational injustices and worked against collective action.

As one example, parents of children with disabilities were problematized by service providers as the reason for the injustices experienced by children with disabilities. Parents were often framed as failing to provide occupational experiences for their children with disabilities. An occupational therapist shared, "They [parents] don't train them [children with disabilities]

and they don't take them to school, and even play activities, because of that they are isolated

from the normal group." Similarly, a social worker shared, "Very rarely, the parents realize that

the child has to be taken out and needs to be exposed to the sunlight and needs to engage with the

other siblings and things like that…" Thereby, parents were often blamed by service providers

for limiting occupational possibilities for their children with disabilities even when other

contextual factors contributed to such situations.

Children with disabilities were also seen as the 'problem' by teachers, community

members, and parents, with their experiences of occupational injustices located in their

impairments or behaviours. For instance, a teacher explicitly positioned children with disabilities

as incapable of good academic performance, and shared, "They aren't able to keep up with the

schoolwork." In a similar manner, a parent situated the problem in a child's behaviour and lack

of abilities: "They [community members] say that 'he doesn't study, and he also spoils the other

children who study' and they say that 'your child doesn't study well'. To help them study we

[parents] are struggling, working hard and buying food and everything for them, but he is not

able to study." Teachers, parents, and community members tended to blame the child for failing

to succeed, without always acknowledging the various contextual barriers limiting opportunities

for success.

Interestingly, it appears that viewing the short film produced by the child co-researchers

led various audience members to question their beliefs about the capabilities and potential

contributions of children with disabilities. For example, adults within the community expressed

amazement that children with disabilities positioned themselves as social actors and contributing

members of the community within the short film. A social worker shared, "One thing I realized

was that these children are aware of the mature issues that are happening in life with adults like

alcohol, tobacco, and they have their own thing by sharing how the father beats the mother and why… Small immature and mature issues were shared. I have realized that even they know about all that because it is happening in their house…"

Parents, service providers, as well as child co-researchers, often blamed teachers for the occupational injustices faced by children with disabilities within schools. Specifically, teachers were seen as having a lack of knowledge and skills related to working with children with disabilities. Karthi shared, "They [teachers] are the ones who need to make the children study properly. Some teachers don't teach properly at all. But they say the students don't study well and hit them…" Teachers were problematized for not taking ownership or responsibility of working with children with disabilities in schools. A special educator claimed, "There are no teachers who will admit these mild, moderate, severe children and say, I will take care." Additionally, teachers were blamed for 'othering' children with disabilities and blaming them for the mistakes of other children. A special educator described, "Even if other kids do anything, they will put the blame on these children. They say, 'because of him, the whole class is disturbed.'" The teaching approaches used by teachers were also situated as needing change, as articulated by a special educator, "The children who don't pay attention to them, pay attention to us…They say that these kids don't obey them. Why don't they obey them? It is because of their approach or their teaching method…" Furthermore, teachers' behaviours were positioned as leading to school drop out of children with disabilities. Another parent described, "He then went [to school] for ten days, and after that only all these issues happened, that is, the teacher hit him and shouted at him because he wasn't able to learn English… and then he said he didn't want to go." In spite of systemic barriers that prevented teachers from fully including children with

disabilities in school activities, blame was placed on teachers for shaping occupational injustices through their attitudes, incapacities, and acts of neglect and punishment.

Discussion

This research responds to calls for transformative occupation-based research (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2016; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Laliberte Rudman, 2014; Laliberte Rudman et al., 2019) by working with children with disabilities from rural Southern India as co-researchers in identifying, situating, and addressing situations of occupational injustices. As well, this work contributes to methodological expansions within occupational science (Bailliard, 2015; Laliberte Rudman, 2012; Magalhães et al., 2019) by utilizing participatory filmmaking as a research methodology to work towards inclusive research practices with children with disabilities (███████████████████). Diverse perspectives from children with disabilities, along with perspectives from their parents, service providers, and community members, further facilitated situated understandings of occupational injustices.

Adding to occupational science scholarship expanding beyond individualistic perspectives, the findings support a conceptualization of occupational choice as a socio-political rather than an individual phenomenon (Galvaan, 2015). For example, all parents of child co-researchers were from low-income backgrounds, and were disadvantaged in terms of lacking educational and other occupational opportunities. In turn, they longed for their children to have better access to education as means to transform their situations of poverty. However, commensurate with Buckingham's (2011) analysis of barriers to educational opportunities for children with disabilities in India, our findings illustrate ways socio-political systems often failed to support the full inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, often pushing children with disabilities to drop out of school and, in turn, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Thereby, socio-

politically shaped patterns of occupational 'choice' of children with disabilities further

perpetuated social inequalities (Galvaan, 2015). Additionally, occupational 'choices' of children

and adults related to engaging in substance abuse and violence were engrained within family and

cultural practices, shaped through structural violence associated with the legacy of colonialism

(Byrne et al., 2018) and continued persistence of socio-economic inequalities through which

everyday violence is reproduced within on-going structurally shaped marginalization (Rylko-

Bauer & Farmer, 2016). Engaging in substance abuse and violence were expressed as

"predictable occupational choices" (Galvaan, 2015, p. 46) for the young and old people of this

community, and were situated as taken-for-granted, immutable ways of doing even when

considered as problematic. As such, these findings emphasize the importance of participatory

methodologies for raising consciousness of broader structural and systemic forces to shift away

from individualizing the blame for the persistence of such non-sanctioned occupations, and

raising collective and occupational consciousness (Ramungondo, 2015) of the legacy of

colonialism and on-going forces of structural violence in order to move towards more just and

inclusive societies (Byrne et al., 2018; Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016).

In addition, child co-researchers challenged dominant understandings on occupation that

tend to positively link it to health and well-being, contributing to scholarship addressing 'non-

sanctioned' occupations (Kiepek, Phelan, & Magalhães, 2014). Specifically, occupations

associated with violence, substance abuse, garbage disposal, and deforestation, were positioned

as negatively affecting other occupational possibilities, social cohesion, health, and well-being.

As well, occupations were described as contributing to occupational degradation, and child co-

researchers pointed to the need to promote occupational sustainability by proposing solutions

that pointed to occupations that managed and restored the "health of land, water, air and food for

everyone" (Townsend, 2015, p. 395). Overall, child co-researchers not only highlighted non-sanctioned and damaging occupations that often remain silenced or obscured within their communities and within the occupational science scholarship (Kiepek, Beagan, Laliberte Rudman, & Phelan, 2018), but situated these from a non-Western perspective as resulting in occupational injustices impacting the community as a whole rather than solely as issues of individual autonomy. As such, these findings illustrate the importance of attending to non-sanctioned occupations as collective occupations "engaged in by individuals, groups, communities, and/or societies in everyday contexts" and how "these may reflect an intention towards social cohesion or dysfunction, and/or advancement of or aversion to a common good" (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015, p. 10).

The findings from this PAR highlighted, in detail, occupational issues that have been previously brought forth by adolescents with disabilities from an urban and rural Central Indian context (Gulati, Paterson, Medves, & Luce-Kapler, 2011) and an urban South Indian context (Kembhavi, 2009). In this study, child co-researchers not only acknowledged similar issues, but also, along with secondary participants, situated them within contextual forces. For instance, adolescents with disabilities from Gulati and colleagues (2011) pointed to family members as a barrier to their leisure occupations. In this project, child co-researchers and secondary participants situated such parental resistance within issues of violence prevalent within their communities, highlighting how parents limited their occupational possibilities, especially in leisure, as a means of protection. As another example, the teasing and bullying of children with disabilities during play was highlighted in studies by Gulati and colleagues (2011) and Kembhavi (2009). This PAR also addresses such experiences and explicates contextual

contributors as well as the emotional and occupational impacts teasing and bullying have on children experiencing this violence.

Key factors shaping the occupational experiences of children with disabilities were related to the social construction of disability and their attributed disabled identity (Phelan & Kinsella, 2014), which the children involved within this PAR did not explicitly take on. This absence of addressing disability within conversations among child co-researchers was also seen within Phelan and Kinsella 's (2014) work who articulated that children with disabilities tended to discuss aspects of their lives that were similar to lives of other children. Within the South Indian rural context of this PAR, as highlighted by parents and service providers, there was an embedded cultural striving for normalcy, informed by both sociocultural and biomedical conceptualizations of disability. Parents took up various actions as means to 'fix' the impairments of children with disabilities, within a context in which the stigma of disability extended from individuals to families. Through engaging in a participatory process, children with disabilities spoke of and enacted alternative identities they embraced as occupational beings, social actors, and active citizens of their community. Their expression of alternative identities through the disseminated short film sparked dialogue that challenged some of the taken-for-granted assumptions related to the capabilities and positioning of children with disabilities held by the audience members.

In relation to conducting research on occupation and disability outside of a Western, individualistic perspective, this PAR was carried out within a community that embodied a collectivist way of being and doing. In turn, child co-researchers preferred to carry out a group video project rather than work on individual videos (█████████████████). This collectivist way of being was also made apparent by adolescents with disabilities within Gulati

and colleagues' (2011) work who, "wanted to be known for their achievements and contribution to the group effort rather than be romanticized for individual performances" (p. 75). A collectivist worldview also informed issues identified as problematic by child co-researchers, which were predominantly community issues rather than solely individually experienced occupational injustices. Additionally, disability related experiences of occupational injustices that children shared were not as much about their independence, but rather, their needs for inclusion within occupations alongside their peers and to contribute to their communities. Such findings work against a long-standing prioritization of independence as a marker of success, well-being, and quality of life that pervades theories of occupation informed by Western epistemology (Hammell, 2011). As noted by Buckingham (2011), the development of approaches to support people with disabilities within the Global South needs to shift away from dominant Western narratives of disability and conceptualizations of stigma and be based on "understanding of the historical and cultural specific of the disability experience" (p. 421). As such, there is a need within occupational science to further attend to historical and contemporary constructions of disability within diverse contexts and to unpack how these constructions, embedded in systems and social relations, shape occupational possibilities for people with disabilities.

The findings of this PAR also illustrate the potential of a critical occupational lens to inform participatory approaches aimed at deepening understanding and raising consciousness of hegemonic power relations shaping everyday life (Ramugondo, 2015). Drawing on a critical occupational perspective to analyze data generated with child co-researchers and secondary participants enabled attention to ways in which occupational injustices were embedded in and perpetuated through contextual forces, such as socioeconomic conditions, systemic corruption,

and contested responsibility. Moreover, the findings support the need to further embrace

decolonizing theoretical and methodological approaches in occupational science so as to attend

not only to historical and on-going legacies of colonialism, but also to work with communities

based on their strengths and in ways aligned with ways of doing, being, belonging and becoming

embedded within communities (Baillard, 2016; Ramugondo, 2015; Rivas-Quarneti et al., 2018).

Although the critical occupational science perspective created avenues for unpacking the

situated nature of occupational injustices that children with disabilities and their communities

faced, critical disability perspectives strengthened this analysis. Working against individualized,

often biomedical, conceptualizations of disability dominant in occupation-based scholarship

(Hammell, 2015), taking up critical disability perspectives enabled consideration of disability as

socially, politically, and culturally shaped and perpetuated. For instance, taking up this

perspective illustrated how the meaning of disability, and how children with disabilities were

subsequently viewed and related to within the study context, was shaped through cultural and

religious influences with stigma extending to family members.

Overall, this research took up the argument that participatory methodologies need critical

underpinning along with a commitment for enacting social transformation, and that these

three interacting elements cannot be viewed as independent or utilized independently (Farias et

al., 2017). For example, without grounding in a critical perspective, there is the potential even

within PAR to reduce collective, socio-politically shaped, issues of injustices to individual

attributes, which in turn, may lead to efforts of 'fixing' individuals rather than addressing

systemic forces shaping such injustices (Farias et al., 2016). Additionally, a lack of commitment

to enacting social transformation dilutes the promise of PAR to span the knowledge

generation to action continuum (Benjamin-Thomas, Corrado et al., 2018).

Strengths and Limitations

There were indeed several strengths and boundaries to this work. First, the first author's familiarity with the local language, culture, and the geographic context where this project was carried out supported relationship building with ~~the~~ child co-researchers as well as their extended community, which was an essential part of the PAR process. Additionally, all meetings with child co-researchers and with some secondary participants were carried out in ~~Tamil~~the local language, ~~to support~~which facilitated better participation ~~of child co-researchers and participants~~, ~~and~~and was translated to English for analysis and dissemination. Although there may have been information lost within this process (Temple & Young, 2004), the first author's consistent involvement in leading data collection as well as conducting the translation process, allowed for better contextualization of information during the theoretical analysis process. ~~Furthermore, Lastly,~~In terms of crystallization and contextualization of generated information, this research drew upon multiple types of participants including children with disabilities, parents/caregivers, and service providers, to gain diverse understandings of contextual features and influences. Lastly, ~~.~~

~~First,~~ girls with disabilities were not identified within this village by health care providers or community members to be involved within this project, and their additional perspectives would have enabled insights into the gendered nature of occupational injustices. ~~Additionally, all meetings with child co-researchers and with some secondary participants were carried out in Tamil and was translated to English for analysis and dissemination. Although there may have been information lost within this process (Temple & Young, 2004), the first author's consistent involvement in leading data collection as well as conducting the translation process, allowed for better contextualization of information during the theoretical analysis process.~~

Conclusion

In conclusion, Tthis paper presents findings from the knowledge generation phase of a PAR that utilized participatory filmmaking as a research methodology to involve children with disabilities as co-researchers, and provides a critically informed analysis of the situated nature of occupational injustices experienced by children with disabilities and their extended communities in a rural village in Southern India., The findingsthat points to not only the complex intersecting layers of sociocultural, economic, and systemic forces shaping occupational injustices but also to ways that contested responsibility and individualization of issues limited collective action. This paper also illustrates the potential of a PAR process with children , informed by YPAR, to generate understandings of occupation that extend beyond the doings and meanings of people who are Western, Anglophonic, and middle class, and place occupational injustices prioritized by child co-researchers at the centre of community dialogue and our subsequent theoretical analysis.

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Table 1. Example Quotes: Participatory Thematic Analysis

Occupational Injustices in the Lives of Children with Disabilities		
Marginalization in School	*Marginalization at Home*	*Marginalization in Community*
"They don't include me in school cultural programs, like in dancing. They say, 'your glasses will fall off when you dance as you have to jump up and down when dancing, they don't include me in anything! … They don't include me as well as in competitions like running, jumping, and others…" - Shivam	"At home, they marginalize you and don't treat you well if you don't go to school." - Karthi	"If I make a small mistake while playing with the other boys, they treat me like my hands don't work and my mouth does not work, they say, 'we don't want you' and ask me to leave…But if they do the same mistake, they won't say anything, but if I ask them why, they will come to hit me…I will usually be sitting, and everyone used to give their things to me to watch and take care." - Karthi

Occupational Injustices at the Community Level			
Substance Abuse and Household Violence	*Teasing and Bullying among Children*	*Fights within Communities*	*Occupational Degradation*
"When they are fully drunk, they fight with their wives and children at home, they vomit and also ask the mother and children to clean up and then they also break things at home…" - Sanjith	"They keep calling me 'glasses, grandma glasses, cooking batter to make idlis [round shaped rice cake]'… and they never call me [name], that is by using my name." - Shivam	"Once someone tells me, 'you don't talk to me,' and puts me aside, we [brother and I] will go away sad, and that is why the parents get into a fight with each other close to home." - Sanjith	"People eat in the shop and then just throw garbage right there and leave… chocolate wrappers, fruit skins, chicken legs and packets… If we go via this [name] road, there is garbage collected like a mountain." -Sanjith "… Because of cutting down trees, we don't get rain that much, and we don't get enough water. Even in my house we get water only once every two days…" - Karthi

Note. Karthi, Sanjith, Shivam, Arun, Kumaran, and Velu (pseudonyms) refer to child co-researchers.

Abstract

This paper contributes to diversifying and situating understandings of occupational injustices through presenting findings from the knowledge generation phase of a participatory action research (PAR) project that utilized participatory filmmaking with children with disabilities in rural South India as co-researchers. Centering on situations of occupational injustices generated through a participatory analysis conducted with the child co-researchers, a critical theoretical analysis, informed by critical occupational science and critical disability perspectives, was carried out. This theoretical analysis of data generated through the participatory filmmaking process, as well as data generated with parents of children with disabilities, community members, and service providers, was used to elucidate forces shaping and perpetuating occupational injustices within the study context. Findings address the complex layers of sociocultural, economic, and systemic forces shaping occupational injustices, as well as ways contested responsibility and individualization of issues limited collective action. This paper illustrates the contributions that can be made through critical participatory approaches to enhancing understanding of the production and perpetuation of occupational injustices in ways that contribute to nuanced understanding of diverse human occupations. As well, issues of occupational injustice related to occupational marginalization, restricted occupational possibilities, occupational degradation, and non-sanctioned occupations are fore fronted.

*Key Words***:** youth participatory action research, participatory filmmaking, critical disability theory, occupation-based social transformation, social justice

Within occupation-based scholarship, perspectives of children[1] with disabilities,

particularly those from the Global South, remain at the margins, given the dominance of

Western, middle-class, Anglophonic, adult, female, able-bodied perspectives (Hocking, 2012;

Magalhães, Farias, Rivas-Quarneti, Alvarez, & Malfitano, 2019; Phelan & Kinsella, 2014).

Through critically attending to the perspectives of children with disabilities from the Global

South and situating their experiences of occupational injustices through participatory action

research (PAR), this article aims to add to more diverse understandings of the situated nature of

occupation and occupational injustices. In turn, such situated, diverse understandings are crucial

to inform social transformation efforts, particularly to guard against re-inscribing and

heightening injustices through continued imposition of knowledge and strategies generated in

Western contexts (Buckingham, 2011; Hammell, 2011; Magalhães et al., 2019).

The potential of critically informed participatory methodologies to diversify situated

understandings of occupational injustices is illustrated through presenting findings from the

knowledge generation phase of a PAR project. This project employed participatory filmmaking

with a group of children with disabilities from a rural village in Southern India as co-researchers

to engage child co-researches and various stakeholders in a process aimed at deepening

understanding of contextual forces shaping and perpetuating the occupational injustices

prioritized by the children. The knowledge generated through the creation and dissemination of

the short film informed identification of key action strategies for social transformation, with

details regarding the methodological process and action steps taken in this on-going work

reported elsewhere (█████████████████████████████).

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[1] [1] The term 'children' is used to refer to all individuals below the age of 18 years (United Nations, 1989). We acknowledge that the definitions for terms children and youth are approached differently within different contexts, and addressing this debate is beyond the scope of this paper.

Based on the central premise that participation in occupation is central to human well-being (Wilcock, 1998), a key thread of occupational science scholarship has focused on explicating individual and social implications of situations in which individuals and collectives face barriers to enact the right to occupation or face exploitation or oppression through occupation, often framing such situations as occupational injustices (Durocher, Rappolt, & Gibson, 2014; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Townsend & Wilcock, 2004). Critical occupational science scholarship has deepened examination of such injustices, through attending to how injustices are shaped and perpetuated through socio-political, cultural, economic, and other forces (Bailliard, 2016; Kinsella & Durocher, 2016; Laliberte Rudman, 2013). In addition to attending to how social power relations are embodied and enacted through such forces in ways that perpetuate axes of privilege and disadvantage in relation to occupation (Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, 2013), critical occupational science scholarship has increasingly embodied a transformative intent to combine research and action (Farias, Laliberte Rudman, Magalhães, & Gastaldo, 2017).

Growing attention to an emancipatory agenda has been accompanied by heightened awareness of the centrality of ethical and culturally safe approaches to occupation-based transformative work. Occupation-based scholars have engaged in critical reflexivity regarding boundaries of knowledge production with increasing awareness of the need to avoid colonizing effects, partly through attending to diverse perspectives on occupation and occupational injustices from varied positionalities (Benjamin-Thomas & Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Magalhães et al., 2019; Murthi & Hammell, 2020; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). In turn, scholarship has begun to generate more diverse understandings through critically situating occupational injustices experienced by social groups from diverse geographical and

cultural backgrounds (Benjamin-Thomas & Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Farias, Laliberte Rudman,

& Magalhães, 2016; Galvaan et al., 2015; Rivas-Quarneti, Movilla-Fernández, & Magalhães,

2018).

Children with disabilities are a social group embodying heterogeneous experiences of

occupational injustices, with previous research demonstrating diverse ways these children can be

denied opportunities for occupation in play, school, home and broader community contexts

(AlHeresh, Bryant & Holm, 2013; Law et al., 1999; Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, &

Anaby, 2014). The exclusion of children with disabilities from occupation, particularly amongst

those living in situations of poverty, is often greater within communities in the Global South,

given the complicated legacies of colonial forces (Rahman, Ali, & Kahn, 2019) where "they are

often condemned to a poor start in life and deprived of opportunities to participate in society"

(Parnes et al., 2009, p. 1176), and may experience increased violence and mortality rates

(Njelesani et al., 2018; Parnes et al., 2009). This article adds an occupational perspective to

scholarship attending to the injustices faced by children with disabilities within rural India

(Anees, 2014; Singh & Ghai, 2009), a context where British colonial rule has had immense

influence on social structures, institutions, and village systems (Rahman et al., 2019).

Research Approach and Methodology

We carried out a three-phased PAR, that included a preparatory, participatory research

and action phase, utilizing participatory filmmaking, a methodology rooted within Freire's

(1993) work on consciousness raising to involve community members in creating videos to

document, explore, and critically engage with social issues (█████████████████

████████████████████ Gubrium & Harper, 2013). In addition, we integrate

principles and practices from Youth PAR (YPAR) in order to optimize the engagement of child

co-researchers in examining issues of injustices in relation to their everyday experiences and

determining relevant actions (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Rodríguez & Brown 2009). Children

with disabilities were included as co-researchers in all phases of our research process. The

collaborative process of developing and disseminating the short film with the child co-

researchers provided a means to facilitate shared dialogue and mark out areas and actions for

social transformation addressing occupational injustices. Ethical approval was obtained from

relevant institutions. Detailed descriptions of various steps in this the PAR process, as well as the

negotiation of ethical and pragmatic issues have been described elsewhere (███████████

████████████████████████).

Participants

Child Co-Researchers. Working with support from a community health department of a

medical college and hospital in Southern India, a village was selected based on this department's

records regarding the number of children with disabilities. This village had a population of just

under 5,000 people in approximately 1,000 houses, with one public elementary and high school.

In addition to being identified by a local health care provider or community member as

experiencing some form of impairment, inclusion criteria for child co-researchers included

having the cognitive skills necessary to participate in the research process; the ability to

communicate verbally in Tamil or non-verbally with or without an assistive device; and interest

in using a camera for sharing their experiences. The child co-researchers included six male

children with disabilities, aged between 10-17 years, some of them formally diagnosed with an

impairment (visual impairment, intellectual disability, speech and hearing impairment) and some

without a diagnosis.

Secondary Participants. Secondary participants encompassed two groups, the first group included parents and service providers (four teachers, eight parents, six health care providers, and six special educators), who participated in group discussions (or individual interviews when preferred) about the occupational experiences of children with disabilities. The second group included parents, doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, and occupational and physiotherapy students, who participated in discussions during eight screenings of the short film. Data from secondary participants addressed factors shaping the occupational injustices and community issues raised by the child co-researchers. As well, dialogue regarding ways forward, that involved various stakeholders from dissemination meetings becoming members of action teams to implement solutions generated through the PAR, occurred following screenings.

Data Generation

A participant driven, dialogic group process (Gubrium & Harper, 2013) was used with child co-researchers to generate and conduct participatory analysis of visual and verbal data regarding barriers and supports to desired occupational participation at home, school, and community. During approximately 35 group meetings, child co-researchers engaged in the process of film making and engaged in shared dialogue regarding their everyday lives and occupation-based issues they deemed as priorities for social transformation. This dialogic process occurred in Tamil and was supported through the use of visuals such as culturally relevant drawings of occupations and videos captured by the children. As well, drew upon the SHOWeD approach (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000) that stimulated dialogue pertaining to the following questions: What do you *see* here? What is really *happening* here? How does this relate to *our* lives? *Why* does this problem, concern, or strength *exist*? What can we *do* about it? This

dialogic group process supported child co-researchers in generating relevant themes and content

for their short film to be shared (███████████████████████).

Data among secondary participants was generated through a total of five one-on-one

interviews with parents, three group meetings with different service providers (i.e., teachers,

special educators, health care providers) and eight dissemination meetings where the short film

was showcased. All meetings and discussions were audio recorded, and those conducted in

Tamil were translated to English by the first author with the support of a local retired

schoolteacher from a neighbouring community.

Data Analysis

Detailed reporting of the participatory thematic analysis results, carried out with child co-

researchers during the process of creating the short film, are provided elsewhere (███████

███), and the short film is publicly available ███████████. Within this paper, we focus on

results generated through a subsequent theoretical analysis of all transcribed (and translated) data

from co-researchers and secondary participants. This analysis was carried out by the first author

to further explicate power relations and contextual forces shaping and perpetuating the

occupational injustices prioritized by the child co-researchers. In addition to being informed by a

critical occupational science perspective (Laliberte Rudman, 2018; Njelesani et al., 2013),

critical disability perspectives (Devlin & Pothier, 2006; Goodley 2013; Hosking, 2008;

Meekosha & Dowse, 2007; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009) were utilized to draw attention to

disability related assumptions, as well as dominant languages and images associated with

disability. Analysis encompassed repeated rounds of theoretically informed coding (Miles,

Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), along with on-going collaborative dialogue between the first and

second author.

Researcher Positioning

This project was carried out as a part of the first author's PhD thesis. Her interests in collaborating with children with disabilities are rooted within her experiences as a pediatric occupational therapist in rural India. She was often a witness to situations of injustices that children with disabilities experienced in everyday life. Having completed her undergraduate education at the same local institution that supported this research, she was familiar with the local language, research context, and had an established relationship with the local institution. She spent eight months in India carrying out this project, but collaborations with co-investigators from the local institute were initiated many months prior to entering the field. Reflexive dialogue with researchers from the local setting and those from outside the setting provided an on-going means for the first author to navigate her positionality, as well as interrogate her initial assumptions and emerging analytic insights regarding the occupations of children with disabilities in context of rural India.

Findings

To establish the underpinnings for the theoretical analysis, a brief summary of themes generated through the participatory thematic analysis are first presented, which specifically focuses on occupational injustices in the lives of the children and at the community level that the child co-researchers highlighted as problematic and presented within the short film (see Table 1 for example quotes). Following which, results of the theoretical analysis that situates these occupational injustices are focused on in greater detail.

Participatory Thematic Analysis: Prioritized Occupational Injustices by Child Co-Researchers

Occupational Injustices in the Lives of Children with Disabilities. Child co-researchers described occupations they engaged in that were important to them, such as playing

local games and music with friends, worshiping in the temple, attending school and community events, and doing chores at home, which provided enjoyment, connection, and a sense of inclusion. At the same time, they discussed several barriers to occupation that were challenging to navigate and described situations of occupational injustices by pointing to experiences of marginalization, particularly in school but also within their homes and communities.

Within the context of school, child co-researchers described restricted opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, such as participating in cultural programs at school functions and sports activities, and negative assessments of their academic capabilities. The children framed these exclusions and assessments as resulting from intentional acts of teachers, connected to perceptions of their impairments and needs. These experiences affected the emotional, and in turn, educational experiences of child co-researchers. Overall, despite these experiences of marginalization, child co-researchers also expressed that school was a source of enjoyment and that they desired the opportunity to study.

Child co-researchers also indicated that experiences of marginalization extended into their homes and communities. At homes, occupational marginalization was often linked to their poor academic performance. Additionally, resistance from parents to support their child's occupational participation was situated, by the child co-researchers, within parents' attempts to protect them from violence or child trafficking prevalent within their community. Within community settings, child co-researchers described being denied opportunities for participation in games with other children, often being assigned to the role of onlooker rather than players or teammates.

Occupational Injustices at the Community Level. Child co-researchers also spoke of larger community issues that not only impacted their own occupations but those of the broader

community. In particular, they described occupational issues related to substance abuse and

inter-related forms of violence, including community fights and teasing and bullying among

children, as well as environmental issues related to occupational degradation and sustainability.

Certain occupational practices, namely substance abuse, were positioned by child co-

researchers as contributing to violence prevalent within their communities, including domestic

violence, fights within the community, and bullying and teasing. These various forms of violence

were integrated into occupational patterns in the community.

Substance abuse by adult men, perpetuated by poor household economic conditions, was

pointed to by child co-researchers as a predominant factor contributing to fights within

households between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Child co-researchers not only

shared personal experiences of household violence, but also shared how adults' patterns of

occupational engagement in substance use became engrained among children in the community

who consumed locally made alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Child co-researchers pointed to

parents as role models from whom children learned about substance use and spoke to being

exposed to these substances during local festivals. Additionally, child co-researchers connected

substance use by children to other occupational practices such as improper garbage disposal

within the community, as children experimented with these substances by picking up empty

bottles to take a sip or using fallen cigarette butts. Child co-researchers prioritized these

occupational patterns as requiring change and situated substance abuse as a systemic issue

contributed to by government-run businesses of selling substances, improper garbage disposal

practices, and entrenched patterns across generations.

Child co-researchers also shared that fights in the community at large were common, with

violence being a key means to address conflicts and manage power relations. In some instances,

fights amongst children were said to become a community issue, as parents were drawn in to protect and stand up for their children. Child co-researchers also pointed to the presence of a gang culture and conflicts within their community, specifically among young college going students. Additionally, community fights were also positioned as informed by caste differences, present amongst people from different areas in the village.

Within the community context in which adults engaged in various forms of violence, teasing and bullying among the children was also common during various forms of occupational engagement. Child co-researchers described experiences of being teased by peers, because of their impairment, the use of assistive devices, or when they performed occupations in ways perceived as outside the normative standards in their community. Teasing was often described as escalating into bullying, where children with disabilities were intimidated as well as mistreated by other children both physically and verbally. In addition to bullying contributing to physical fights amongst the children, children with disabilities were marginalized from opportunities to participate in desired occupations because of teasing and bullying. Child co-researchers situated teasing and bullying not only within the broader context in which violence was a common part of daily interactions, but also within their observations that children who were different, be that in relation to height or skin colour, were often discriminated against. Such issues of teasing and bullying were situated as an issue experienced throughout the life course, with language used by adults viewed as not only permitting but also modelling these behaviours.

Garbage accumulation within village public spaces, such as the local streets, rivers, temples, and public wells, was also an important concern for child co-researchers. The occupational issue of improper garbage disposal was seen by child co-researchers as not only affecting livestock, plants, and the health of community members, but also impacting

occupational engagement of community members in leisure activities such as playing in fields or

swimming. Improper garbage disposal practices were inter-related with substance abuse, with

substance use contributing to garbage accumulation in public spaces and improper garbage

disposal contributing to substance use among children. Overall, the issue of garbage

accumulation was situated as socio-political and systemic. Certain practices such as festivals

amplified disposal of garbage in public spaces, and systemic constraints related to irregularity of

garbage collecting vehicles did not allow community members to properly dispose garbage.

Child co-researchers also identified issues related to occupational degradation in relation

to deforestation activities, again pointing to consequences for flora, fauna, as well as for

occupational engagement. Reasons for deforestation were linked to occupations, such as the use

of wood for building houses and cooking and needs related to space for housing and ensuring

safety of electric wires. While child co-researchers acknowledged varied reasons contributing to

deforestation, some of which they framed as necessary, they expressed concern regarding the

consequences of deforestation, connecting it to, for example, water shortages as well less useable

outdoor spaces for occupations.

Theoretical Analysis: Deepening Understanding of the Situated Nature of Inter-Related Occupational Injustices

The theoretical analysis presented within this section explicates complex intersections of

socio-cultural, economic, and systematic forces shaping and perpetuating the inter-related

occupational injustices prioritized by child co-researchers, namely taken-for-granted notions of

'disability' within the socio-cultural context, economic constraints, and systemic forces. In

addition, ways that issues of contested responsibility and individualization of occupational

injustices within a community context marked by violence, substance abuse, and

disempowerment, contributed to limited social action are discussed.

Intersecting Sociocultural, Economic, and Systemic Forces shaping Occupational

Injustices. Sociocultural beliefs associated with disability, within this South Indian rural context,

often stigmatized and discredited children with disabilities, with stigmatizing attributes

extending to their family members. Specifically, particular sociocultural understandings of

'disability' informed ways in which children with disabilities were positioned by family and

community members, which contributed to the shaping of occupational injustices within homes,

schools, and the community. Disability was not only expressed as being 'not normal,' but also, in

many instances, the existence of a child with a disability was considered to be an outcome of sin.

A social worker described, "The family who has got a special child, in the community, or in the

house, they think it is a curse or an outcome of sin, so they don't end up looking at the child as

normal or can be compared to the others…" An occupational therapist also pointed out, "And

even the other members in the community, they just think about some superstitious beliefs

…because of maybe 'his father is not good' or 'his grandfather is not good' … 'I don't know

what kind of thing his mom did.' These negative attitudes towards children with disabilities

(Anees, 2014; Singh & Ghai, 2009) and their perceived positions within society as dis-citizens

(Devlin & Pothier, 2006) and of lower status and lacking abilities (Wolbring & Ghai, 2015)

contributed to parents not disclosing, denying, or delaying the acceptance of supports for their

child. A parent shared, "Some people are not aware of his difficulty, and to some people who ask

we will explain, that because of a specific problem he has been asked to wear glasses. Apart

from our family members not many people know about it. Even if people come and tell us that

he is struggling to find things when walking, we still don't tell them anything." This resistance in

taking on a disabled identity was also seen among children with disabilities. Child co-researchers

rarely identified themselves as having a 'disability' and often situated the issues they

experienced related to stigma and violence among larger issues of discrimination experienced by

many children within their community based on differences in attributes such as skin colour or

gender.

In turn, these understandings of disability contributed to, and were drawn on to justify,

social isolation, differential care, and occupational marginalization of children with disabilities

within their homes and communities. An occupational therapist shared, "… children with

disabilities are kind of isolated from the family as well as the same age group people, and mostly

they are treated like untouchables." Within home environments, parents were described as

sometimes providing less care to a child with disabilities when compared to children without

disabilities. A community health doctor described, "These mothers feel that only if there is a

very morbid stage, like they end up in a seizure, or end up having pneumonia, which is not

settling in one or two weeks, they come [to the hospital], they don't come otherwise. Only for a

normal child, parents come even if the kids have a one-day fever. If the child has a disability,

they wait, and they are willing to wait even for like almost ten days…. The sense of neglect is

there in the family…." Neglect was also described in instances where children with disabilities

were denied basic resources like food and hygiene. A social worker shared, "Some families I

have seen, they don't want to even give three meals because to be frank the mother says,

'anyways he will be passing stools if he has been over fed, so let him at least starve for one or

two times…'" The neglect of children with disabilities was sometimes seen as being pushed to

the extreme of "better dead than disabled" (Gupta & Singal, 2004, p. 23) as explained by a social

worker, "If we ask very deeply, they [parents] will be alike 'it's okay sir, if they die, let them die, that's all'…."

Situations of neglect and occupational marginalization were also shaped by sociocultural notions of perceived 'incapability' of children with disabilities, notions that shaped social relations and practices (Meekosha & Dowse, 2007; Singal, 2010), as reflected in issues raised by child co-researchers when speaking about their school experiences. For example, Karthi shared, "… If I volunteer myself for something, they [teachers] say, 'we don't want you' and call others. They used to say, 'you will not do it well'…." Similar concerns were articulated by a government appointed special educator, who shared, "When we are able to get their [children with disabilities] talents out, the teachers are surprised." Furthermore, within larger community contexts, teasing and bullying of children with disabilities were often taken-for-granted and situated as permissible, being enacted by both children as well as adults. The village community health aide put it this way, "Like if they [children with disabilities] can't see, or if they can't play, or play in a different way, or they can't speak properly, what do the other children do? They tease and make fun and bully them." Together, these socio-culturally shaped issues of stigma created situations of neglect and violence, and positioned children with disabilities as 'incapable,' leading to limits on occupational possibilities (Laliberte Rudman, 2010) and creating situations of occupational injustices.

Issues of stigma led to devaluing and labelling children with disabilities as the 'problem' (Watson, 2012; Vehmas & Watson, 2014). In turn, families turned to solutions aimed at 'fixing the child,' given the various consequences associated with having a disability. Within this rural context, parents turned to not only biomedical forms of treatment in search of a cure but visited traditional healers in search of "medical magical remedies" as stated by a social worker, as a

means to 'cure' their child. A special educator claimed, "Children who are hyperactive, generally get traditional medicine, which include giving them a burn, poking one ear hole to wear an earring, and the traditional doctor goes to their house and gives them counselling and gets them to do this." This pursuit for cure is ongoing as an occupational therapist explained, "They [parents] try different methods, like go to different traditional healers, they don't stick on to one, they keep going."

In some instances, attitudes and experiences of stigma combined with a lack of available resources and the impossibility of 'curing' led to the institutionalization of children with disabilities, an approach established through a historical colonial emphasis on a charitable care model (Buckingham, 2011). For some parents, within existing structures, admission of their children into a residential facility for children with disabilities became the best available option, given restricted options for home support with limited resources and concerns regarding safety. The father of Kumaran and Arun, who were living in a residential hostel for children with disabilities, shared, "For them living in the hostel is only good… It is very difficult for us to even manage them even for ten days when they come home… I think they are doing well. They are safe there and I am satisfied." Within a context of chronic poverty, parents were often not in a position to prioritize the occupational needs of children with disabilities, even when children voiced experiences of physical and occupational restrictions in institutions. For example, Kumaran described, "They lock us inside the hostel and don't let us out… They have the keys. If we come out, they will hit us… We only play ball, nothing else. We have to sit quiet, if not, they will hit us."

Economic constraints experienced by families of children with disabilities from a lower socio-economic status also shaped occupational possibilities for children. Specifically, when

parents needed to prioritize ways to meet basic needs such as providing food for the family, the occupational needs and wants of the child with a disability were often positioned by parents as a luxury. For instance, a parent shared: "He [child with disability] is very interested in music, and he has been asking since he was young, but we are the ones not in a position to join him for classes. If the cost was cheaper, we would have somehow struggled and joined him, but it is hard to look after the first child as well as the second…"

Moreover, economic constraints intersected within the broader context of violence pervasive in the community and led parents to set further limits on the occupational participation of children with disabilities outside of the home. Parents not only wanted to protect their child from getting hurt within this context, but also wanted to avoid associated financial consequences. For instance, Shivam described, "So when I am sitting quietly in school, they come and say, 'hey glasses, grandma glasses come and fight with me if you have courage'!! They simply annoy me…they will also hit me, and I will also get angry and hit them back and then a fight will begin." Parents incurred additional costs when their child was hurt, for which they may not have sufficient finances. A nurse shared, "… They [parents] don't want anything to happen to the child as it is kind of an extra burden… like if they go out of their house and something they hit or fall or something happens, then it's like an extra charge for them with additional medical issues …" This concern was further described by a parent, "He very often breaks his glass frame, at least once in six months, and the frame and lenses costs… It is because of playing with the kids only all these issues come, and if we tell him to stop, he won't listen… But it is hard for us."

Within an Indian context, a legacy of British colonial rule is the continued persistence of English-speaking private schools as the most socially valued form of education, with such schools often differentially available along class and economic lines (Byrne, Clarke, & Rahman,

2018). Within this study, the limited economic capacities of families often meant that the

children with disabilities were systematically denied this form of schooling due to their

additional medical expenses. In one example, Shivam's mother explained why he had been

moved from an English speaking school, "Due to his surgery, we had to spend a lot of money,

and we could only afford a Tamil school…." In turn, systemic issues related to insufficient

human and material resources with rural public-school systems shaped marginalization and

bounded occupational possibilities for children with disabilities.

Although government policies mandated inclusion of children with disabilities in schools,

their realities embodied experiences of exclusion. Schools lacked necessary resources to support

full participation of children with disabilities, leading to systemic barriers. As one example,

insufficient resources were directed towards teacher training addressing working with children

with disabilities. A public-school teacher shared, "They give general training to us but not

special training to deal with these children. If they give us special training, it will be good for

us..." Additionally, the government-appointed special educators articulated that they themselves

lacked sufficient training to be able to transfer skills to teachers. A special educator described,

"First, there are trainings at the state level and then people who get the training come to the

district level and train staff at the district level… if he has heard 75% of the information, only

25% will get shared to staff in the next level, and by the time it reaches us at the block level only

5% of the information is transferred. We at the block level are not able to use this information to

conduct a five-day training with the teachers…" The lack of training for teachers and others

working in the school was identified as a lapse in the system by a social worker, "The

government yearly produces a lot of projects and schemes, but if you really ask the local district

academic officers, they doesn't know anything; if you ask the school teachers and head

mistress/master, they don't know about integrating a special child within the school… It is only there in paper that they can integrate special children…."

Moreover, the lack of human and other resources within the public school system, sometimes resulted in relegating children with disabilities to segregated schools and residential institutions. A special educator described, "The teachers keep telling us to put him in a special school. So if we ask them 'then why do you have this education/training?' they say that 'we have so many children and we cannot do any individual care for them, so you are there for that purpose only. You can see and take care of them.'" In addition, with only a handful of special educators to provide services across multiple villages, schools were visited only on a monthly basis and it was difficult to maintain continuity of support. A teacher shared, "Once a month, they [special educators] come for half an hour to spend with the child. But 30 minutes isn't sufficient… If there is no chance of bringing them daily, it is better for us to send the children to the special school." Overall, physical inclusion in schools, rather than inclusion within school activities, was considered sufficient, and a teacher claimed, "Helping those children mix [within the same physical space] with other children is a great thing, and that is all we can do."

Additionally, participants emphasized that policies and systems pertaining to children with disabilities primarily addressed only the needs of people from urban and privileged backgrounds. For instance, obtaining government benefits demanded a high degree of formal documentation of disability, and financial contributions could sometimes be required given embedded corruption. A social worker shared, "… the government's support through the physically challenged pension, even to get that pension she [mother of a child with disabilities] has to spend a lot… and also there is bribing and a lot of corruption…They need a lot of certificates, and age proof and medical certificates, which are not that easy for anybody to

get…they really struggle a lot." She further described, "…when we compare the rural and urban, the accessibility, resources, and things, availability of aids and appliances, any training, and any institutions or anything, that is really very, very, very, much restricted in the rural areas." As such, disability is one among the multiple axes of oppression (Devlin & Pothier, 2006), and the occupational injustices faced by children with disabilities from rural backgrounds in this study appeared to result from intersections of having a disability, residing in a rural community, and being from a low socio-economic background.

Contested Responsibility and Individualization. Like children, secondary participants also highlighted occupations, particularly related to schooling and vocational training, as important for children with disabilities, and expressed concerns regarding situations of occupational injustice. For example, secondary participants expressed concerns that experiences of occupational injustices within schools often led to children with disabilities dropping out of school, leading to future mental health implications, and perpetuating an entrenched cycle of poverty. Given uncertainty about their children's success within school, vocational training opportunities, were considered as important by parents as well as service providers, but were also described as neglected by governments. However, the contested attributions of responsibility and individualization of issues, through placing the blame on particular types of individuals such as teachers, parents, or children, obscured larger systemic barriers that shaped situations of occupational injustices and worked against collective action.

As one example, parents of children with disabilities were problematized by service providers as the reason for the injustices experienced by children with disabilities. Parents were often framed as failing to provide occupational experiences for their children with disabilities. An occupational therapist shared, "They [parents] don't train them [children with disabilities]

and they don't take them to school, and even play activities, because of that they are isolated from the normal group." Similarly, a social worker shared, "Very rarely, the parents realize that the child has to be taken out and needs to be exposed to the sunlight and needs to engage with the other siblings and things like that…" Thereby, parents were often blamed by service providers for limiting occupational possibilities for their children with disabilities even when other contextual factors contributed to such situations.

Children with disabilities were also seen as the 'problem' by teachers, community members, and parents, with their experiences of occupational injustices located in their impairments or behaviours. For instance, a teacher explicitly positioned children with disabilities as incapable of good academic performance, and shared, "They aren't able to keep up with the schoolwork." In a similar manner, a parent situated the problem in a child's behaviour and lack of abilities: "They [community members] say that 'he doesn't study, and he also spoils the other children who study' and they say that 'your child doesn't study well'. To help them study we [parents] are struggling, working hard and buying food and everything for them, but he is not able to study." Teachers, parents, and community members tended to blame the child for failing to succeed, without always acknowledging the various contextual barriers limiting opportunities for success.

Interestingly, it appears that viewing the short film produced by the child co-researchers led various audience members to question their beliefs about the capabilities and potential contributions of children with disabilities. For example, adults within the community expressed amazement that children with disabilities positioned themselves as social actors and contributing members of the community within the short film. A social worker shared, "One thing I realized was that these children are aware of the mature issues that are happening in life with adults like

alcohol, tobacco, and they have their own thing by sharing how the father beats the mother and why… Small immature and mature issues were shared. I have realized that even they know about all that because it is happening in their house…"

Parents, service providers, as well as child co-researchers, often blamed teachers for the occupational injustices faced by children with disabilities within schools. Specifically, teachers were seen as having a lack of knowledge and skills related to working with children with disabilities. Karthi shared, "They [teachers] are the ones who need to make the children study properly. Some teachers don't teach properly at all. But they say the students don't study well and hit them…" Teachers were problematized for not taking ownership or responsibility of working with children with disabilities in schools. A special educator claimed, "There are no teachers who will admit these mild, moderate, severe children and say, I will take care." Additionally, teachers were blamed for 'othering' children with disabilities and blaming them for the mistakes of other children. A special educator described, "Even if other kids do anything, they will put the blame on these children. They say, 'because of him, the whole class is disturbed.'" The teaching approaches used by teachers were also situated as needing change, as articulated by a special educator, "The children who don't pay attention to them, pay attention to us…They say that these kids don't obey them. Why don't they obey them? It is because of their approach or their teaching method…" Furthermore, teachers' behaviours were positioned as leading to school drop out of children with disabilities. Another parent described, "He then went [to school] for ten days, and after that only all these issues happened, that is, the teacher hit him and shouted at him because he wasn't able to learn English… and then he said he didn't want to go." In spite of systemic barriers that prevented teachers from fully including children with

disabilities in school activities, blame was placed on teachers for shaping occupational injustices

through their attitudes, incapacities, and acts of neglect and punishment.

Discussion

This research responds to calls for transformative occupation-based research (Farias &

Laliberte Rudman, 2016; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Laliberte Rudman, 2014; Laliberte

Rudman et al., 2019) by working with children with disabilities from rural Southern India as co-

researchers in identifying, situating, and addressing situations of occupational injustices. As well,

this work contributes to methodological expansions within occupational science (Bailliard, 2015;

Laliberte Rudman, 2012; Magalhães et al., 2019) by utilizing participatory filmmaking as a

research methodology to work towards inclusive research practices with children with

disabilities (   ). Diverse perspectives from children with disabilities,

along with perspectives from their parents, service providers, and community members, further

facilitated situated understandings of occupational injustices.

Adding to occupational science scholarship expanding beyond individualistic

perspectives, the findings support a conceptualization of occupational choice as a socio-political

rather than an individual phenomenon (Galvaan, 2015). For example, all parents of child co-

researchers were from low-income backgrounds, and were disadvantaged in terms of lacking

educational and other occupational opportunities. In turn, they longed for their children to have

better access to education as means to transform their situations of poverty. However,

commensurate with Buckingham's (2011) analysis of barriers to educational opportunities for

children with disabilities in India, our findings illustrate ways socio-political systems often failed

to support the full inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, often pushing children with

disabilities to drop out of school and, in turn, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Thereby, socio-

politically shaped patterns of occupational 'choice' of children with disabilities further

perpetuated social inequalities (Galvaan, 2015). Additionally, occupational 'choices' of children

and adults related to engaging in substance abuse and violence were engrained within family and

cultural practices, shaped through structural violence associated with the legacy of colonialism

(Byrne et al., 2018) and continued persistence of socio-economic inequalities through which

everyday violence is reproduced within on-going structurally shaped marginalization (Rylko-

Bauer & Farmer, 2016). Engaging in substance abuse and violence were expressed as

"predictable occupational choices" (Galvaan, 2015, p. 46) for the young and old people of this

community, and were situated as taken-for-granted, immutable ways of doing even when

considered as problematic. As such, these findings emphasize the importance of participatory

methodologies for raising consciousness of broader structural and systemic forces to shift away

from individualizing the blame for the persistence of such non-sanctioned occupations, and

raising collective and occupational consciousness (Ramungondo, 2015) of the legacy of

colonialism and on-going forces of structural violence in order to move towards more just and

inclusive societies (Byrne et al., 2018; Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016).

In addition, child co-researchers challenged dominant understandings on occupation that

tend to positively link it to health and well-being, contributing to scholarship addressing 'non-

sanctioned' occupations (Kiepek, Phelan, & Magalhães, 2014). Specifically, occupations

associated with violence, substance abuse, garbage disposal, and deforestation, were positioned

as negatively affecting other occupational possibilities, social cohesion, health, and well-being.

As well, occupations were described as contributing to occupational degradation, and child co-

researchers pointed to the need to promote occupational sustainability by proposing solutions

that pointed to occupations that managed and restored the "health of land, water, air and food for

everyone" (Townsend, 2015, p. 395). Overall, child co-researchers not only highlighted non-sanctioned and damaging occupations that often remain silenced or obscured within their communities and within the occupational science scholarship (Kiepek, Beagan, Laliberte Rudman, & Phelan, 2018), but situated these from a non-Western perspective as resulting in occupational injustices impacting the community as a whole rather than solely as issues of individual autonomy. As such, these findings illustrate the importance of attending to non-sanctioned occupations as collective occupations "engaged in by individuals, groups, communities, and/or societies in everyday contexts" and how "these may reflect an intention towards social cohesion or dysfunction, and/or advancement of or aversion to a common good" (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015, p. 10).

The findings from this PAR highlighted, in detail, occupational issues that have been previously brought forth by adolescents with disabilities from an urban and rural Central Indian context (Gulati, Paterson, Medves, & Luce-Kapler, 2011) and an urban South Indian context (Kembhavi, 2009). In this study, child co-researchers not only acknowledged similar issues, but also, along with secondary participants, situated them within contextual forces. For instance, adolescents with disabilities from Gulati and colleagues (2011) pointed to family members as a barrier to their leisure occupations. In this project, child co-researchers and secondary participants situated such parental resistance within issues of violence prevalent within their communities, highlighting how parents limited their occupational possibilities, especially in leisure, as a means of protection. As another example, the teasing and bullying of children with disabilities during play was highlighted in studies by Gulati and colleagues (2011) and Kembhavi (2009). This PAR also addresses such experiences and explicates contextual

contributors as well as the emotional and occupational impacts teasing and bullying have on children experiencing this violence.

Key factors shaping the occupational experiences of children with disabilities were related to the social construction of disability and their attributed disabled identity (Phelan & Kinsella, 2014), which the children involved within this PAR did not explicitly take on. This absence of addressing disability within conversations among child co-researchers was also seen within Phelan and Kinsella 's (2014) work who articulated that children with disabilities tended to discuss aspects of their lives that were similar to lives of other children. Within the South Indian rural context of this PAR, as highlighted by parents and service providers, there was an embedded cultural striving for normalcy, informed by both sociocultural and biomedical conceptualizations of disability. Parents took up various actions as means to 'fix' the impairments of children with disabilities, within a context in which the stigma of disability extended from individuals to families. Through engaging in a participatory process, children with disabilities spoke of and enacted alternative identities they embraced as occupational beings, social actors, and active citizens of their community. Their expression of alternative identities through the disseminated short film sparked dialogue that challenged some of the taken-for-granted assumptions related to the capabilities and positioning of children with disabilities held by the audience members.

In relation to conducting research on occupation and disability outside of a Western, individualistic perspective, this PAR was carried out within a community that embodied a collectivist way of being and doing. In turn, child co-researchers preferred to carry out a group video project rather than work on individual videos (███████████████████). This collectivist way of being was also made apparent by adolescents with disabilities within Gulati

and colleagues' (2011) work who, "wanted to be known for their achievements and contribution to the group effort rather than be romanticized for individual performances" (p. 75). A collectivist worldview also informed issues identified as problematic by child co-researchers, which were predominantly community issues rather than solely individually experienced occupational injustices. Additionally, disability related experiences of occupational injustices that children shared were not as much about their independence, but rather, their needs for inclusion within occupations alongside their peers and to contribute to their communities. Such findings work against a long-standing prioritization of independence as a marker of success, well-being, and quality of life that pervades theories of occupation informed by Western epistemology (Hammell, 2011). As noted by Buckingham (2011), the development of approaches to support people with disabilities within the Global South needs to shift away from dominant Western narratives of disability and conceptualizations of stigma and be based on "understanding of the historical and cultural specific of the disability experience" (p. 421). As such, there is a need within occupational science to further attend to historical and contemporary constructions of disability within diverse contexts and to unpack how these constructions, embedded in systems and social relations, shape occupational possibilities for people with disabilities.

The findings of this PAR also illustrate the potential of a critical occupational lens to inform participatory approaches aimed at deepening understanding and raising consciousness of hegemonic power relations shaping everyday life (Ramugondo, 2015). Drawing on a critical occupational perspective to analyze data generated with child co-researchers and secondary participants enabled attention to ways in which occupational injustices were embedded in and perpetuated through contextual forces, such as socioeconomic conditions, systemic corruption,

and contested responsibility. Moreover, the findings support the need to further embrace

decolonizing theoretical and methodological approaches in occupational science so as to attend

not only to historical and on-going legacies of colonialism, but also to work with communities

based on their strengths and in ways aligned with ways of doing, being, belonging and becoming

embedded within communities (Baillard, 2016; Ramugondo, 2015; Rivas-Quarneti et al., 2018).

Although the critical occupational science perspective created avenues for unpacking the

situated nature of occupational injustices that children with disabilities and their communities

faced, critical disability perspectives strengthened this analysis. Working against individualized,

often biomedical, conceptualizations of disability dominant in occupation-based scholarship

(Hammell, 2015), taking up critical disability perspectives enabled consideration of disability as

socially, politically, and culturally shaped and perpetuated. For instance, taking up this

perspective illustrated how the meaning of disability, and how children with disabilities were

subsequently viewed and related to within the study context, was shaped through cultural and

religious influences with stigma extending to family members.

Overall, this research took up the argument that participatory methodologies need critical

underpinning along with a commitment for enacting social transformation, and that these

three interacting elements cannot be viewed as independent or utilized independently (Farias et

al., 2017). For example, without grounding in a critical perspective, there is the potential even

within PAR to reduce collective, socio-politically shaped, issues of injustices to individual

attributes, which in turn, may lead to efforts of 'fixing' individuals rather than addressing

systemic forces shaping such injustices (Farias et al., 2016). Additionally, a lack of commitment

to enacting social transformation dilutes the promise of PAR to span the knowledge

generation to action continuum (Benjamin-Thomas, Corrado et al., 2018).

Strengths and Limitations

There were indeed several strengths and boundaries to this work. First, the first author's familiarity with the local language, culture, and the geographic context where this project was carried out supported relationship building with child co-researchers as well as their extended community, which was an essential part of the PAR process. Additionally, all meetings with child co-researchers and with some secondary participants were carried out in the local language, which facilitated better participation, and was translated to English for analysis and dissemination. Although there may have been information lost within this process (Temple & Young, 2004), the first author's consistent involvement in leading data collection as well as conducting the translation process, allowed for better contextualization of information during the theoretical analysis process. In terms of crystallization and contextualization of generated information, this research drew upon multiple types of participants including children with disabilities, parents/caregivers, and service providers, to gain diverse understandings of contextual features and influences. Lastly, girls with disabilities were not identified within this village by health care providers or community members to be involved within this project, and their additional perspectives would have enabled insights into the gendered nature of occupational injustices.

Conclusion

This paper presents findings from the knowledge generation phase of a PAR that utilized participatory filmmaking as a research methodology to involve children with disabilities as co-researchers, and provides a critically informed analysis of the situated nature of occupational injustices experienced by children with disabilities and their extended communities in a rural village in Southern India. The findings point to not only the complex intersecting layers of

sociocultural, economic, and systemic forces shaping occupational injustices but also to ways

that contested responsibility and individualization of issues limited collective action. This paper

also illustrates the potential of a PAR process with children to generate understandings of

occupation that extend beyond the doings and meanings of people who are Western,

Anglophonic, and middle class, and place occupational injustices prioritized by child co-

researchers at the centre of community dialogue and our subsequent theoretical analysis.

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