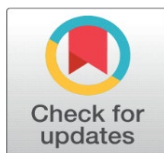
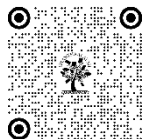


EMPOWERING THE YOUTH: THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN PROMOTING CHILD RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Print media in Bhopal is essential to public education and child rights advocacy. Child rights concerns such as child maltreatment, marriage, work and education are covered by the media through surveys, interviews and content analysis. Print media effectively promotes awareness and initiates policy discussions, empowering youth and fostering informed and involved communities despite limited resources and low public engagement. This demonstrates how crucial NGOs and print media resources are to Bhopal's awareness and development.

Keywords: Child Right, Print Media, Social Change, Public Awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Child rights refer to the fundamental freedoms and entitlements that all children (individuals under the age of 18) are inherently entitled to, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, language, or any other status. These rights are designed to ensure that children are protected, provided for, and given opportunities for development, while also respecting their individuality and dignity. Child rights are guided primarily by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which outlines the key principles of child rights, as Right to Survival, Right to Development, Right to Protection and Right to Participation.

Promoting child rights is about ensuring that all children have the opportunity to thrive, reach their potential, and grow into responsible, healthy adults who contribute positively to their communities and society at large. Promoting child rights helps safeguard children from abuse, neglect, trafficking, child labor, and other forms of exploitation and violence. Also, confirms that children are raised in a safe environment, whether at home, school, or in the community, protecting them from physical, emotional, and psychological harm. Promoting child rights aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against children based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or socioeconomic status, ensuring equal

opportunities for all children. Ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities or from marginalized communities, have access to quality education is a fundamental aspect of promoting child rights.

The role of media in social change and education is extensively studied within the framework of communication theories. McCombs and Shaw (1972), suggests that media can influence the public agenda by highlighting certain issues in Agenda-Setting Theory. Also, Goffman (1974) posits that the way media frames an issue significantly impacts audience perception. These theories underpin the understanding of how print media in Bhopal can shape public perceptions and awareness regarding child rights. Media campaigns often focus on specific child rights issues, such as the right to education or protection from child marriage, and mobilize public opinion. By highlighting violations of child rights, print media can influence policymakers to create or amend laws that protect children. On the other hand with Investigative journalism, Investigative reports expose instances of child rights violations, such as unsafe orphanages, exploitative labor practices, or inadequate education facilities. Featuring stories written by or about children gives them a platform to express their views and experiences, which can be powerful in driving change. Stories of children overcoming adversity can inspire action and empathy among readers. Sharing success stories of programs or individuals working to improve child welfare encourages replication of those efforts. By repeatedly addressing issues like gender discrimination, child marriage, and corporal punishment, print media can contribute to changing societal attitudes.

1.1. PROMOTING CHILD RIGHTS IN PRINT MEDIA

Print media serves as a powerful tool in the promotion of child rights, fostering an informed and proactive society that advocates for the well-being of children. Print media plays a crucial role in promoting child rights by raising awareness, educating the public, advocating for policy changes, and holding authorities accountable. Print media helps in educating the public about existing laws that protect child rights, such as the Juvenile Justice Act or the Right to Education Act. Print media contributes to promoting child rights by raising awareness by Highlighting Issues in Newspapers, magazines, and journals often cover stories about child labour, abuse, trafficking, and neglect, bringing these issues to the forefront of public consciousness. Local newspapers often report on community efforts to improve conditions for children, inspiring others to get involved. Print media educates parents, teachers, and communities about child rights, child protection laws, and the importance of proper upbringing. Print media plays a watchdog role, ensuring that governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders are held accountable for their responsibilities toward children. Through informative articles that discuss the importance of child education, health, and nutrition inform readers about the rights children are entitled to helps to promote child rights. Some publications dedicate sections to children's rights, offering tips for parents on education, health, and psychological well-being.

Globally, the media is recognized as a pivotal player in the advocacy for child rights. According to UNICEF (2014), media can educate the public on child rights, report violations, and hold authorities accountable. In India, print media has a rich history of activism and advocacy, playing a crucial role in social movements and policy changes. Studies highlight how newspapers and magazines have campaigned against child labour and promoted education rights, demonstrating media's potential to drive social change (Sharma R.).

1.2. CHILD RIGHTS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Madhya Pradesh boasts a vibrant and diverse print media landscape. Newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar, Patrika, NaiDunia, Hindustan Times and many more in vernacular languages reach vast and varied readers, making them powerful tools for social communication. Research by Rao (2018) illustrates how regional newspapers in states like Madhya Pradesh extensively cover local issues, resonating deeply with their readership. The ability of print media to contextualize national and global issues within local frameworks is crucial for effective communication and advocacy. Madhya Pradesh faces significant challenges concerning child rights. According to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR, 2020), the state has high incidences of child labour, malnutrition, and child marriages. Efforts to combat these issues require not only legal and policy interventions but also widespread public awareness and societal engagement. Print media, with its extensive reach and influence, is uniquely positioned to contribute to these efforts.

1.3. IMPACT OF PRINT MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Empirical studies on the impact of print media campaigns on public awareness and behaviour change provide valuable insights. A study by Gupta and Singh (2017) on health communication in India found that sustained media campaigns significantly improved public knowledge and altered behaviours. Similarly, campaigns focused on child rights, as documented by Chatterjee (2019), have led to increased reporting of child rights violations and greater community involvement in protective measures. Despite its potential, print media faces several challenges in effectively covering child rights issues. Constraints such as limited resources, competition with digital media, and sometimes a lack of public interest can hinder comprehensive coverage. Journalists often struggle with accessing reliable information and dealing with the sensitive nature of child rights issues, as noted by Banerjee (2020). These challenges necessitate innovative approaches and collaborations to enhance the effectiveness of print media.

While there is substantial research on the role of media in general, specific studies focusing on print media's role in child rights education in Madhya Pradesh. This study examines the impact of print media on child rights in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. It examines how newspapers and magazines raise awareness, change public attitudes, and inspire community action. Study examines Madhya Pradesh's major publications and periodicals, focusing on child rights activism. It discusses triumphs and limits and suggests improvements in the media's role in creating awareness on child rights. The study emphasizes the role of print media in empowering young people.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this study is centralizing with primary data techniques, conducted by survey method and questionnaire is used for data collection. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyse the role of print media in promoting child rights in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This approach facilitates a detailed examination of media content and an assessment of public perceptions and impacts. A sample of 300 readers were surveyed using stratified random sampling to ensure demographic representation. Readers of selected newspapers and magazines in Bhopal were treated as targeted population. A structured questionnaire was used to assess the awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of child rights issues, and responses to media coverage and surveys administered online and in-person for maximum response rates. Some Interviews were conducted from journalists, editors, and child rights activists in Bhopal.

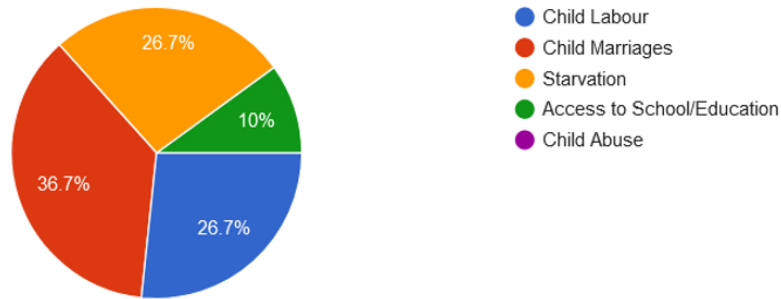
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here, diverse opinion of respondents is collected as data, based on the subject of role and impact of print media in child rights. Questionnaire is formed and comprised with quality of affection.

Major Findings:

1) Major child rights issues frequently covered by print media in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

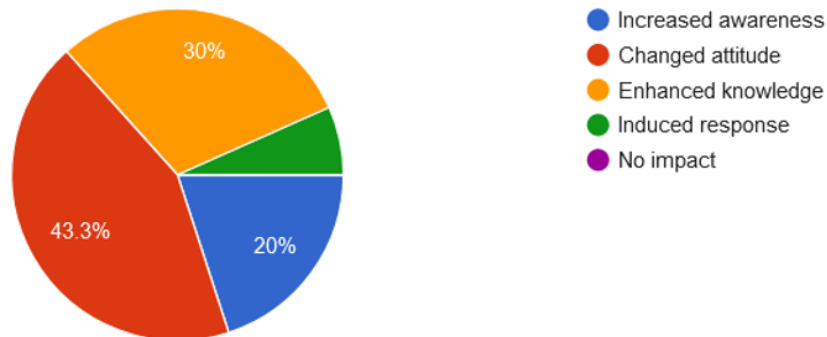
- Child labour
- Child marriages
- Starvation
- Access to school
- Child abuse



The researcher during his research finds that most covered child right issue was child marriage followed by child labour 26.7% and starvation 26.6%. Access to education was one of the least covered issues covering just 10%, child abuse though happening in the society is not been either reported or been noticed by the print media of Bhopal.

2) Print media coverage's impact on public awareness and attitudes towards child rights in Bhopal.

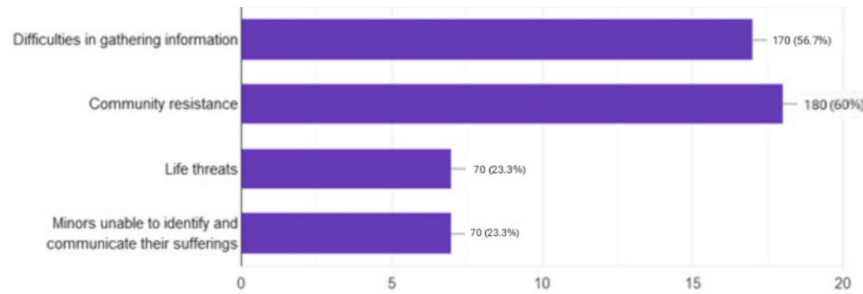
- Increased awareness
- Changed attitude
- Enhanced knowledge
- Induced response
- No Impact



Print media turns out to be a game changer in raising the public awareness and attitude towards child rights in Bhopal. The major reaction that researcher finds out is the response gathered from public, change in attitude took the major share i.e. 43.3% indicating that print media does changes public attitude. Enhanced knowledge 30% was second most generated response followed by increased in awareness 20%. Only 6.7% respondents agreed with the option of induced response.

3) Main challenges faced by journalists and media organizations in Bhopal while covering child rights issues.

- Difficulties in gathering information
- Community resistance
- Life threats
- Minors unable to identify and communicate their sufferings
- Others



According to the survey, been conducted by the researcher it was found that community resistance (60%) was a major challenge faced by journalists and media houses, the second major challenge faced was in gathering information (56.7%). Equal number of responses came for life threat and minors unable to identify and communicate their sufferings as the other challenges. Here it is to be noticed that many respondents though would have noticed or faced the issue of minors unable to identify and communicate their sufferings but could not communicate it.

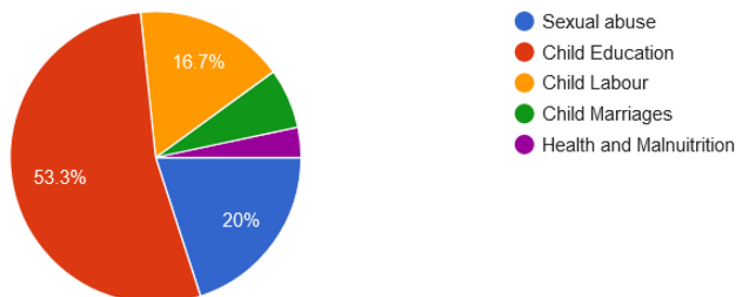
4) Strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of print media in child rights education and advocacy.

- Pictorial content
- Regular content
- Dedicated column
- Interviews of prominent personalities
- Monitoring and publishing reports of child related issues

The responses gathered by the researcher indicates the following ways that can improve the effectiveness of print media in child rights education and advocacy in Bhopal. Dedicated column 53.3% should be there in newspapers and other print media was the opinion of respondents. 33.3% of the respondents also advocated for regular content. Pictorial content can enhance the effectiveness was the opinion of around 30%. The other responses i.e. a) Interview of prominent personalities. b) Monitoring and publishing reports were generated response of 20% and 13.3% respectively. This response indicates a shift from regular reading habit to new perspectives and avenue in print media.

5) Major child related issues or crimes observed/witnessed by respondents.

- Sexual abuse
- Child education
- Child labour
- Child marriages
- Health and malnutrition



53.3% of the respondents said they observed child related issues in his/her daily life followed by 20% of the respondents witnessing sexual abuse 16.7% child labour 6.5% Witnessed child marriages and 3.2% health and malnutrition issues in their daily life.

The researcher minutely observes the data and finds out that there is a wide gap between the child related issues actually observed by the respondents and actually been printed in print media. This may happen due to various reasons like community resistance or difficulties in gathering information or life threats faced by the journalists. It may be also because of creating sensational or eye-catching news content.

Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were fully informed, and consent was obtained prior to data collection.
- **Confidentiality:** Identity and responses of participants were confidential and used only for research purposes.

Data Analysis

- **Survey Data:** Statistical software analysed survey data for descriptive and inferential statistics.

Validity and Reliability

- **Triangulation:** Multiple methods enhanced validity by providing diverse perspectives.
- **Pilot Testing:** Instruments were pilot-tested to ensure clarity and reliability.
- **Consistency:** Consistent coding and analysis procedures ensured reliability.

By employing a mixed-methods approach and rigorous methodologies, this study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of print media's role in promoting child rights in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

4. EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINT MEDIA IN PROMOTING CHILD RIGHTS

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of print media in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, in promoting awareness and advocating for child rights. Print media serves as a crucial platform for disseminating information, spotlighting issues, and shaping public discourse on critical child rights issues such as child labour, education rights, child marriage, and abuse. The content analysis revealed substantial coverage of these topics in local newspapers and magazines, indicating a concerted effort to educate and engage the community. The study found that print media plays a pivotal role in raising public awareness about child rights issues. A majority of survey respondents reported increased knowledge and positive attitudes towards child rights due to media coverage. This indicates that print media effectively informs and influences public perceptions, fostering a more informed and empathetic society concerning children's rights and welfare.

5. MOBILIZATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION

Moreover, the study highlighted print media's role in mobilizing community action. A significant proportion of survey respondents indicated their participation in discussions or actions related to child rights after being informed by media reports. This demonstrates print media's potential not only to inform but also to inspire civic engagement and advocacy among its readership.

5.1. CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINT MEDIA

Despite its contributions, print media in Bhopal faces several challenges in effectively covering child rights issues. Journalists identified resource constraints, including limited funding and manpower, as significant obstacles. Additionally, accessing reliable data and sources for comprehensive reporting on child rights remains challenging. Moreover, the perceived lack of public interest in child rights stories compared to more sensational news topics affects the extent and depth of coverage by media organizations.

To enhance the effectiveness of print media in promoting child rights in Bhopal, several strategies emerge from the findings:

- 1) Capacity Building:** Providing specialized training and workshops for journalists on child rights issues can enhance their understanding and sensitivity in reporting.
- 2) Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships between media organizations, child rights NGOs, and government agencies can facilitate access to information, resources, and amplify advocacy efforts.
- 3) Public Engagement:** Implementing strategies to increase public interest and engagement in child rights issues through interactive features, community forums, and reader feedback mechanisms.
- 4) Sustainability:** Ensuring sustained coverage of child rights issues beyond episodic events or crises through editorial policies that prioritize long-term advocacy and impact reporting.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of print media in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, in promoting awareness and advocating for child rights. Print media serves as a crucial platform for disseminating information, spotlighting issues, and shaping public discourse on critical child rights issues such as child labour, education rights, child marriage, and abuse. The content analysis revealed substantial coverage of these topics in local newspapers and magazines, indicating a concerted effort to educate and engage the community. The study found that print media plays a pivotal role in raising public awareness about child rights issues. A majority of survey respondents reported increased knowledge and positive attitudes towards child rights due to media coverage. This indicates that print media effectively informs and influences public perceptions, fostering a more informed and empathetic society concerning children's rights and welfare.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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