



RESEARCH PAPER

Media Treatment of Safer Society for Children: A Comparative Study of Leading Urdu and English Pakistani Dailies

Dr. Nasim Ishaq¹ Robina Saeed² Aqdaswaheed³

1. Chairperson, Communication Studies Department, Government Fatima Jinnah College (W) Chuna Mandi Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Humanities, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Humanities, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:

January 18, 2019

Accepted:

June 24, 2019

Online:

June 30, 2019

Keywords:

Safer Society For Children,
Children Issues,
Media Treatment

Corresponding

Author:

nasimishaq17@gmail.com

Children embraces over 45%Pakistan's overall population since they are vulnerable to raise their distresses themselves, all segments of society are responsible to make a safer society for children. Safest society for children may become public and political agenda if media accelerates integrated awareness campaigns to train families, children, teachers and all stakeholders. Six months analysis of leading dailies aims to analyze weather children broader issues; education, survival, protection and development were given any preference or not. The results show the significance variance the way English and Urdu dailies had given coverage to the children issues. Very few editorials, columns and features were issued on children problems so it illustrates that media is not playing its responsible role in enhancing awareness about making the safer society for children

Introduction

Children embraces over 45%Pakistan's overall population since they are vulnerable to raise their distresses themselves, all segments of society are responsible to make a safer society for children. Safest society for children may become public and political agenda if media accelerates integrated awareness campaigns to train families, children, teachers and all stakeholders. The researcher recapitulates the child's rights in to three parts; right to persistence, right to fortification and right to progress (Burke, 2007).

The onus is on all segments of society to make the world a safer place for tangible children. The fight against child abuse is a long-haul one. This means it's

hard to become civilized without protecting the rights of children. In negligence in case children development is like killing the goose that lay golden eggs. Media is a very powerful tool as its consumption is sometimes unintentional as when we read the news about election, we can't help but see ads (Baran, 2001).if media own is social responsibility about human rights specially children rights, definitely it'll make a difference.

This study will analyze the role of media in portraying the child sexual assaulters and the victims that will eventually throw light to the consequent impacts in our societal fabric. The study will help the media practitioners to adopt certain media practices that enable the victims and survivors to get justice without being blamed and hated by society. This study will also enable policy makers and administrative bodies to play their apt role in prevention and eradication of this evil.

Literature Review

The researcher suggested that the media should play its vital role to highlight the sensitivity of issue regarding child sexual abuse with solution-oriented strategies instead of just focusing at case studies(Kitzinger & Skidmore, 1995).Apart from the officials, multiple studies show that parents have also quoted media as their main vehicle of information about CSA, the percentage ranges from (90-99)% (Babatsikos, 2010; Elrod & Rubin, 1993; Pullins & Jones, 2006). In this regard, media holds an eminent position in the world for dissemination of news and information regarding CSA cases. The practice of observing child rights at community level and legislation about it varies in different countries (Gran,2010). Children remained deprived from their basic right because of poverty, large family size, unemployment of guardian, illiteracy and poor practice of punishment after child physical, financial, psychological and sexual abuse (Malik. Hyder, 2007).The brutal show of power and dominance through rape and sexual assaults is now no longer limited to the victim only but the whole world is now an audience to it. The availability of cell phones with camera and internet connection has added to the misery of victims as it has enhanced the reach and speed of such content. Pictures and footages of such assaults float across the globe. Hence, the victims are now more prone to name calling, bullying, character attacks and gossips. Previously, such tragedies used to be victim's personal agony that only he can recall but technology has made it a publicly humiliating event (Campbell, 2013)

In present era, the mainstream media endure to be an imperative source of disseminating information and attentiveness regarding child fortification issues (Babbot, 2018; Ho& Chan, 2018; Mejia, Cheyne, & Dorfman, 2012;Niner, Ahmad, & Cuthbert, 2013). Child specific issues frequently failed to get any space at opinion pages of dailies, whereas the staff of newspapers is not trained to get the relevant information. Ho & Chan (2018) study about how the print media frames the concerns of adolescentmishandling and neglect in Hong Kong, where this issue

still not fully acknowledged and exposed. This study reviewed 579 dailies reports of 2016 from four papers that were indigenous. This study was conducted for the assessment of child maltreatment's framing and presentation by the news media in the public discourse. This study concluded that child sexual abuse received more media attention as compared to other types of child maltreatment. News reporting was mainly either case specific or event specific. It was asserted in results that the issue of child maltreatment was not discussed as a social issue in a broader sense. Differences in reporting style and framing also noticed in paid vs. free newspapers. Dailies with less reliability comprised more pictures and graphics with meticulous descriptions of abuse as compared to high credibility newspapers. Study suggested that concrete guidelines about the formulation of media messages about child abuse and maltreatment are essential and mandatory. These guidelines can be beneficial for the improvement of individual, communal and organizational competencies in order to thwart children from mishandling on the first hand as well as in the identification and response of already victimized ones (Ho & Chan 2018, p. 62).

In previous studies, the media covered the maltreatment of children under the umbrella of rest of crimes but now media practitioners highlighted it as collateral issue which is deeply embedded in multifaceted societal layers. Weatherred (2017) analyzed that previously child sexual abuse was considered as an individual level problem and the solutions suggested were individual based as well. However this issue is now considered a societal level issue and institutions are blamed as well. However, solutions of individual level are still framed as best ones.

Similarly, Maydell (2018) contrarily states in a study that news media framed issue of child abuse largely in episodic frames as crime stories with extremely sensationalized content, highlighting the shocking cases with aggressive forms of abuse more than the rest. The study at hand focusing on the child abuse cases of New Zealand for a time span of two years November, 2007 to 2009, this study analyzed the coverage of country's three largest newspapers which are New Zealand Herald, The Press and The Dominion Post. Analysis of total data that comprised of 205 news articles revealed that three quarters of data comprised of physical abuse that might include death whereas one quarter explained sexual abuse. Author states regarding framing that 56% of the items were framed as 'crime stories' whereas rest of the data included factual data, suggestions and criticism. Author is of the view that the reason for the higher coverage of physical abuse may be attributed to the time of study that coincided with two high-profile cases of Nia Glassie and the Kahui twins that were extremely sensationalized by the media and mentioned in 63 articles in total. Moreover, child abuse was dominantly framed as 'Māori issue' attained through individual framing of the perpetrators' personalities in addition to their assumed inherent characteristics like being naturally inclined towards violence and dysfunctional. These characteristics were generalized to the whole of Māori society and by virtue of this; abusers as

well as their ethnic groups were being blamed that eventually downplayed societal frames that brings the responsibility to the society as a whole (p. 721).

In a similar manner, a more recent study by Katz, Glucklich, & Piller (2019) explored the portrayal of child maltreatment in the Israelian along with examining public perception regarding this abuse through the analysis of reader comments. After analyzing articles the five official news websites in Israel about child maltreatment through descriptive and qualitative analysis, episodic framing was found as most prevalent throughout the coverage. According to the authors, information related to risks, causes and the solutions was largely missing in most of the articles. Regarding the stakeholders of the child abuse cases, authors noted that reporting rarely allowed the voices of victim or their families to reach the masses however repeatedly voiced legal professionals. On the other hand, analysis of readers' comments expressed rage a high occurrence was of extreme fury as well as anguish. Study emphasized the development of practices that may assist in reducing the gaps that are existent between the statistical data of child maltreatment and the media portrayal of this data because these portrayals are impactful on the perceptions of the public and attitudes of policy makers (p. 127).

In developing countries large family size, financial crises pushed children to indulge in various child labor activities; these are different according to living place (Patrinos, 2007).

Health facilities for children in Pakistan are pathetic. Malnutrition and waterborne diseases are quite common in Pakistan. Lot of efforts are required at both public and private sectors much needed to overcome the issue (Arif, Farooq & Sathi, 2014). Pakistan is the only country except Afghanistan where Polio cases appeared very frequently even then parents show resilience for polio vaccination.

The researcher also noticed that regardless of alarming rate of Child rights violations, least literature and certified information on child maltreatment is available about the region of Sub-continent, in broad-spectrum and Pakistan, in specific. Furthermore, the print media responsibility and practices in the treatment of safer society for children have not been studied. The study hand will be an endeavor to address these gaps.

Material and Methods

Theoretical Framework

According to Social Responsibility Theory, it's the obligation of the press to cover all the imperative information and professional Journalists would commit themselves to following certain practices designed to assure that their work would serve the public effectively (Davis 1986). This theory rationalizes the basic concept that the societies have publically and privately owned media and all the media's primary purpose is to serve society rather than to make a profit. Social

responsibility theory changes the mass media with development and enforcement of ethics in the public interest (Whitney, 1975).

According to Mcquail (1987) said social responsibility theory is a normative that is, it explains how media should ideally operate in a given system of social values. The current study tries to examine whether national dailies framed the issues of children in such a way that society supposed to become a safer place for them or just report the events to elevate restlessness in society.

Research Questions

RQ1. Did Pakistani leading dailies give more coverage to child protection compared to other issues?

RQ2. Is there any difference in the treatment of issues regarding safer society for children in the English and Urdu dailies?

The researcher studies all the news stories, reports, editorials, features and columns penned in the two national dailies i.e., Jang and Dawn from 01 January, 2019 to 30 June, 2019 by applying content analysis technique.

Conceptualization of Categories

The issues were divided into four categories: child Education, child Survival, child Protection and child Development. All the news contents about basic education, children enrolment issues in school, unrestricted education in public schools, dropout rates and reasons all are included in "child education" category. All contents regarding the health of children, kids diseases, mortality, children vaccinated related issues, malnutrition and health facilities in public centric hospital was considered under the category of "Childsurvival". In the "child protection" all news contents about any elements that make children unprotected, i.e., physical, psychological, financial and sexual abuses, kidnapping, murder, was put in the above said category. Legislation for protecting child against any violation of their rights and budget allocated for welfare of Child were considered as "child development".

The news contents about children issues were studied in two ways: occurrence and direction. Frequency was measured as how many times news contents appeared about children rights. Direction of printed editorials, columns and features were checked on 2-point scale positive and negative. Any above said piece of journalistic writing that not only

Highlight the issue but also propose the practical solution was considered positive whereas the writing that only pointed out the solution was labeled as negative.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
English and Urdu newspaper's wise frequency and percentages of published News

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Dawn	102	56.6%
Jang	78	43.33%

N=180

Table 1 indicates that out of 180 news stories, in the Pakistani English daily Dawn 102 (56.6%) and in Jang 78 (43.3%) were published.

Table 2
Category -wise Frequency and percentage of children issues

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Child Education	29	16.0%
Child Survival	46	25.5%
Child Protection	90	50%
Child Development	15	8.3%

Table 2 displays that total 180 news stories were published in *Dawn* and *Jang* from 1 Jan 2019 to 30 June 2019, 90(50%) news were penned on category "child Protection" which is highest among all categories. The "child survival" is another utmost covered category as 46(25.5%), whereas 29 (16%) news stories were written on "child education" and marginalized issue was child development with 15 (8.3%).

Table 3
Frequency and percentage of children issues in Editorial, Column and Feature

News contents	Direction with frequency	Percentage
Editorial	4	33.3%
Column	3	25%
Features	5	41.66%

Table 3 shows that four editorials, three columns and five features were published on the above mentioned issues about safer society for children in first six months of 2019. Some of them just pointed out the problems whereas most of them have social-oriented approach.

The results show that child protection issues; child rape, murder, kidnapping, any sort of abusing (sensational) were more frequent in dailies as compare to other news stories. Dailies focused more at case stories instead of giving coverage to wider perspective of issues. English dailies covered more children related news stories as compare to Urdu dailies.

English language daily published more suggestion based editorials and columns about children health; malnutrition, polio-vaccination and primary education at native language. Urdujag pointed out the issues faced by children with facts and figures.

Conclusion

In Pakistan to ensure the safer society for children; very grave organizational and efficient strategies are required. Integrated efforts from every walk of life; social, political, financial, academics and legislative measures are needed to observe at priority levels. Global Human rights organizations also endorsed the central role of media in highlighting human rights violations (Fayoyin, 2001). Our ideas of life and world are largely derived from the media which produce and package the version of events and issues in their output and which we consume as part of our daily lives (Krugur, 2001).

Media should play its efficient role to guide, educate, sensitize the parents/guardian, teachers, children and all stakeholders about the vulnerable situation about our highly unsafe society for children.

The current study highlights that leading dailies covered mostly the case based issues also known as "Here and now" most frequently report about children rape, murder, kidnapping, abduction, accidents but very few news stories were investigative and endorse the strength of children related legislation, protection and development related issues. Media should avoid sensationalism through selection of words and frequency of any particular case. It is indispensable for policy-makers in Pakistan to identify that children are predominantly exposed to violence and that overlooking child rights only further impends their health and growth while they are stuck in a cycle of poverty and helplessness. It's highly recommended that media practitioners should practice ethical guideline while reporting children issue. Being the fourth and proactive pillar of society media should promote the integrated strategies for safest society for children.

References

- Babatsikos, G. (2010). Parents' knowledge, attitudes and practices about preventing child sexual abuse: a literature review. *Child Abuse Review*, 19(2), 107-129.
- Baran, J. Stanely, (2001). *Introduction to Mass Communication media literacy and culture*. London: Myfield publishing company.
- Babbot, M. (2018). On the frontline: child well-being and role of the Zimbabwean mass media in awareness creation. *SociolIntJ*. 2(3), 267-269.
- Burke, K. M. (2007). Human rights and the rights of the children a panoramic view. *Globalization, Societies and Education*, 5(3), 333-349.
- Davis, K. dennis ; Levy, R. Mark; & Robinson, P. John. (1986). *The main source of learning from television*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Elrod, J. M., & Rubin, R. H. (1993). Parental involvement in sexual abuse prevention education. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 17(4), 527-538.
- Fayoyin, A. (2001). Promoting children's rights through the new media: the Nigerian Experience. *J Communication*, 2(2):57-65.
- Gran, B. K. (2010). Comparing children's rights: Introducing the children's rights index. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 18(1), 1-17.
- Hyder, A. A & Malik, F. A. (2007). Violence against Children: A Challenge for Public Health in Pakistan. *J Health Popul Nutr*; 25(2):168-178 ISSN 1606-0997.
- Ho, G. W., & Chan, A. C. (2018). Media portrayal of a hidden problem: An analysis of Hong Kong newspaper coverage of child maltreatment in 2016. *Child abuse & Neglect*, 83, 62-73.
- Katz, C., Glucklich, T., & Piller, S. (2019). Child Maltreatment in the Media :Analyses of Media Coverage and Reader Comments on Child Maltreatment in Israel. *Child Abuse Review*, 28(22), 127-138. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2546>
- Kitzinger, J. & Skidmore, (1995). Playing safe: Media coverage of child sexual abuse prevention strategies. *Child Abuse Review*. 4(1), 47-56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2380040108>.
- Kruger, S & Peterwall, P. (2001). *Media studies: the essential introduction*. London :Rout ledge.

- Mejia, P., Cheyne, A., & Dorfman, L. (2012). News Coverage of Child Sexual Abuse and prevention, 2007–2009. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 21(4), 470–487.
- Mcquail, Denis. (1987). *Mass Communication theory: an introduction*. London: Sage publication.
- Maydell, E. (2018). It just seemed like your normal domestic violence': ethnic stereotypes in print media coverage of child abuse in New Zealand. *Media, Culture and Society*, 40(5), 707–724.
- Niner, S., Ahmad, Y., & Cuthbert, D. (2013). The “social tsunami”: Media coverage of child abuse in Malaysia’s English-language newspapers in 2010. *Media, Culture and Society*, 35(4), 435–453.
- Patrinos, H. A. (2007). *The living conditions of children (Working Paper)*. World Bank Policy Research. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/7403/wps4251.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Pullins, L. G., & Jones, J. D. (2006). Parental knowledge of child sexual abuse symptoms. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 15(4), 1–18.
- Weatherred, J. L. (2015). Child sexual abuse and the media: A literature review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 24(1), 16–34.
- Whitney, C, Feed rick. (1975). *Mass Media and mass Communication in society*. Dubugue and Iowa: WMC.Brown.