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# A Role of Media in Protecting Child Rights Issue in Telangana State

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**ABSTRACT:** Media plays a crucial role in society. They act as the eyes, ears and voices of the public, drawing attention to abuses of power and human rights, often at considerable personal risk. Through their work they can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect changes that will improve the quality of people's lives. Media also helps in bringing awareness and of course protecting the rights of every child irrespective of their background. The present paper is an overview to investigate the role of media in addressing rights of the child. Media plays a major role in providing awareness about the child protecting rights and develop the awareness in the civil society regarding the protection of child rights.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Children are one of the most vulnerable categories in the Indian society. Recognising this vulnerability, our constitution has, introduced various provisions for promoting welfare of child. So, it becomes responsibility of every stakeholder of this democratic system to contribute to the protection of children. Media, being such a stakeholder, share the same responsibility. But of late, it has been seen that Indian media has ignored this responsibility and put more focus on selling sensational news. Children are often easy target and it is seen that Indian media is more focussed on issues related to child exploitation rather than covering actual child right matters. In this whole affair, children's privacy, rights, and emotions get neglected. This article is an attempt to analyse from a socio-legal perspective, how children should be represented in Indian media, and how their rights can be protected. The study is limited to print and electronic media only.

Every child in Telangana will grow in a safe, protected and enabling environment, that fosters positive all round development of the child and creates opportunities for every child to reach her/his potential. An environment where all stakeholders of the State, including parents, care providers and the community, work in partnership to make children's rights a reality by eliminating discrimination, bringing respect in its interactions with children, valuing children's opinions and participation, and upholding dignity of the child. The Integrated Child Protection Services (ICPS) aimed at building a protective environment for children in difficult circumstances, as well as other vulnerable children, through Government-Civil Society Partnership.

Nuanced and well-informed reporting is to the benefit of the rights of the child. It is important that the media themselves do not abuse children. The integrity of the child should be protected in reporting about, for instance, involvement in criminal activities, sexual abuse and family problems. Media's role is not only to create information, to cover and report the crime news against children, they should also produce special informative programs on the issue of child safety. Some tools of media have tried to inform society about child sexual abuse and laws made for child safety in India. Through their work they can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect changes that will improve the quality of people's lives. Media also helps in bringing awareness and of course protecting the rights of every child irrespective of their background.

## II. VISION

The ICPS will provide preventive, statutory, Care and Rehabilitation services to vulnerable children including those from potentially vulnerable families and families at risk, children of socially excluded groups like migrant families, families living in extreme poverty, SCs, STs & OBCs families subjected to or affected by discrimination, minorities, children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS, orphans, child drug abusers, children of substance abusers, child beggars, trafficked or sexually exploited children, children of prisoners street & working children.

### III. OBJECTIVES

ICPS brings together multiple existing child protection schemes of the Department under one comprehensive umbrella and integrates additional interventions for protecting children and preventing harm. ICPS, therefore, would institutionalize essential services and strengthen structures, enhance capacities at all levels, create database and knowledge base for child protection services, strengthen child protection at family and community level, ensure appropriate inter-sectoral response at all levels. The scheme would set up a child protection data management system to formulate and implement effective intervention strategies and monitor their outcomes. Regular evaluation of the programmes and structures would be conducted, and course correction would be undertaken.

#### **Child Protection Act In India – Major Laws**

India has created a comprehensive legal framework and policy under the Child Protection Act In India to ensure each child in the country gets equal access to protection, and their rights are safeguarded.

#### **The Juvenile Justice Act**

The Juvenile Justice Act was passed in 2016. This is India's primary law addressing children's rights needing protection and care. It aims to ensure children's care and development through a child-friendly approach and has provisions to protect children against punishment.

#### **Child Labor Prohibition Act**

The act prohibits children from engaging in specific employment activities and regulates children's work conditions. It is an act to stop the child's abuse. As per this act, a child below the age of 14 should not be engaged in any type of harmful employment.

#### **Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act**

Protection of Children From Sexual Offences law of 2012 is one of the most progressive acts of the Government aimed at combating sexual abuse and exploitation of minors. This act classifies sexual assault on a child below 12 years as a punishable crime.

#### **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act**

This law outlines the minimum age for children to go through marriage and makes it an offense to get them married before the legal age. The last amendment of the Child Marriage Act was passed in 2021, according to which the minimum marriage age for women and men is restricted to 21 years (prior, it was 18 for women).

#### **The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act**

This act aims to limit and eventually abolish prostitution in India by criminalizing different forms of sex work. According to the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, any individual or group who will be found guilty of managing or keeping or assisting or acts of the brothel, shall be imprisoned for not less than 1 year and not more than 3 years and shall be charged a said amount of fine.

#### **Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act**

This act intends to ban pre-natal sex determination and related techniques. The goal of the law is to take control of the declining male/female ratio resulting from female foeticide.

#### **Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act**

This law describes the significance of free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 in the country. The right to quality education is now considered to be one of the fundamental rights of Indian citizens.

The Child Protection Laws In India is a notable effort by the Government to raise more awareness about children's rights, safety, and security. While millions of children still face risks, India is improving its awareness of violence, particularly sexual abuse.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To identify the role of media in addressing the child rights issues.
2. To develop awareness in the civil society regarding protection of child rights.
3. To suggest media to sustain serious attempt in protecting children rights.
4. To mould public opinion regarding mass media.

### **Principles and guidelines for media reporting on children**

Media reporting on children and young people should never put them at risk. UNICEF has developed principles and guidelines to help journalists report on children's issues in a way that enables them to serve the public interest without compromising the rights of children. These are six over-arching principles; six guidelines for interviewing children; and seven principles for reporting on children's issues.

#### **Six principles**

1. Respect the dignity and rights of every child in every circumstance.
2. In interviewing (and reporting on) children, pay special attention to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from harm and retribution.
3. Protect the best interests of each child over any other consideration, including advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.
4. When trying to determine the best interests of a child, give due weight to the child's right to have their views taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity.
5. Consult those closest to the child's situation and best able to assess it about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reportage.
6. Do not publish a story or an image that might put the child, their siblings or peers at risk, even when their identities are changed, obscured or not used.

### **IV. THE MEDIA AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

The significance of media can be felt from the very fact that media is considered the fourth pillar of democracy. It is the most powerful weapon, which, if used efficiently and ethically, can bring about revolutionary changes in the life of people. But since long Indian media is facing criticism for being non ethical and serving bias content. Generally, the very function of mass media is of a watchdog of the society, but due to growing competition among various media houses or internal and external pressure, media has failed to show the fact as it is, instead it presents that picture which majority love to watch. Children are often easy target and it is seen that Indian media is more focussed on issues related to child exploitation rather than covering actual child right matters. In this whole affair, children's privacy, rights, and emotions get neglected. Commissioned by UNICEF and based on the practical experience of working journalists, The Media and Children's Rights is an attempt to assist media professionals and others to consider how the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child might impact upon the way children are represented in and by the media. Its purpose is to generate responsible coverage of children and the impact of adult behaviour and decisions on their lives, as well as to encourage media professionals to consider how best to protect the rights of children and help children to play a role in the mass media.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

Media can play an instrumental role to protect and promote child's rights by their coverage. However, journalists need to have an understanding of the subject matter to cover the issues concerning protection, development, survival and participation of children in society. Children are considered to be the backbone of a country. It is right of every child to spend its childhood in a happy and safe environment. Therefore it is necessary to provide a healthy and safe childhood to every child of our telangana state. Even though some initiatives were taken by various media tools to raise the child safety issue in the society but those are not enough. there is a need to develop and run more specific programs regularly to raise awareness throughout society on child rights. In India, media has a good grip on the minds of the people. It is the media which played a vital role in attaining independence of India. By exerting pressure on the Government, media can compel it to implement the child right activities and by educating children it can make them aware of their rights. However, media is expected to be more cautious and ethical in presenting content affecting child right. Children should not be treated as 'silent audience'; rather, they should be treated as 'target audience' by media. In India, media has a good grip on the minds of the people. It is the media which played a vital role in attaining independence of India. By exerting pressure on the Government, media can compel it to implement the child right activities and by educating children it can make them aware of their rights. However, media is expected to be more cautious and ethical in presenting content affecting child right. Children should not be treated as 'silent audience'; rather, they should be treated as 'target audience' by media.





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