

The Impact of Media Reporting on Child Abuse and Neglect in Sri Lanka

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“Informed, sensitive and professional journalism is a key element in any media strategy for improving the quality of reporting concerning human rights and society. The daily challenge to journalists and media organizations is particularly felt in coverage of children and their rights” (International Federation of Journalists (2002). In the past few years, media reporting on child abuse in Sri Lanka has been a broadly discussed topic. One of the aims of this research is to identify the impact of media reporting on child abuse in Sri Lanka in creating awareness of the incident, understanding children’s rights and media ethics.

In order to achieve the objective, secondary data were collected and analyzed from print media reports (200). Additionally, interviews and discussions were conducted with 20 professionals on media and child protection. Data was collected via self-administered questionnaire from random samples drawn from the population. The researcher followed a quantitative method and data analyzed by IBM SPSS 20.0 version.

Research findings proved that there was a lack of awareness of media ethics and child rights on reporting a child abuse case. Additionally, it was also discovered that there was a general lack of investigation and reporting on a case and a dependence on one source to have correct information. Child protection has been neglected due to unethical reporting of abuse and there are several cultural barriers that need to be overcome in the future of the child. The researcher proposes to establish formalized awareness programs on media ethics and child rights on reporting child abuse to protect children who have faced abuse.

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