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**Challenges to children's rights in the mega teledrama industry in Sri Lanka: Focus on the right to survival and development**

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**Background:** This research attempts to study how the survival and development rights of children are subtly violated in the mega teledrama industry. With the emergence of teledrama as an industry, there has been a growing trend toward the production of mega teledramas. It has become common to employ children as actors and actresses to attract audiences, which often leads to the violation of various children's rights. In this context, this study sought to address the following research question; Despite the potential of teledramas to contribute to social development, why are children's rights challenged in the mega-teledrama industry?

**Method:** A qualitative method was employed to collect data, including observations and in-depth interviews with field experts. The key findings of the research reveal that child actors/actresses have been purposely commercialized within Sri Lanka's mega teledrama industry. Children's rights to survival and development are subtly violated as child actors in the mega teledrama industry are engaged in part-time child labor. Producers shape children's characters according to their own vision, effectively redefining childhood through these portrayals. After years of acting in mega tele dramas that extend beyond 100 episodes, child actors begin to internalize their on-screen characters, influencing their real-life identities. This prolonged exposure leads to lasting psychological and behavioral effects. In the process, children's rights, such as freedom of expression, the right to grow and live freely, and access to education, are subtly violated.

**Conclusion:** Accordingly, this research reveals that the absence of a legal and policy framework concerning the use of child actors in Sri Lanka's mega teledrama industry has led to the subtle violation of their rights to survival and development. In this context, to safeguard all children's rights while ensuring the sustainable development of the mega teledrama industry, a robust legal framework must be established, supported by a systematic institutional mechanism for effective implementation.

**Keywords:** Children's rights, mega teledrama industry, child actors.