
ROLE OF MEDIA IN COVERAGE AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE CASES

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ABSTRACT

Child abuse is arguably one of the most debated public/social policy areas. Thus, the need for systematic data is not only for recognizing child protection issues but also for formulating and implementing policy responses and practices in Pakistan. This study aims to analyze the role of the media in the research and reporting of child abuse cases. The method used in this study is to use media framing theory to conduct quantitative investigations using content analysis. Media coverage of child abuse can help communities understand issues around child abuse and neglect and interact constructively with children's rights. Using media as a reporting, representation, and advocacy tool will increase public knowledge about perpetrators and aid in preventing child abuse. However, there are shortcomings in structures and institutions that can cause children suffering. It needs cooperation from government agencies and civil society to improve child protection from maltreatment and carelessness. Therefore, the role of the media as a component of a more extensive system designed to protect children is crucial. Child sexual abuse can be reduced in the country by enacting strong anti-child sexual abuse laws. By affirming the country's commitment, providing legal protection, increasing public awareness, increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement. With clear laws in place, police and the justice system can act on child sexual abuse cases more quickly and decisively. This can provide a deterrent effect to perpetrators and prevent similar crimes in the future.

Keywords: child abuse, media, sexual abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

The media have been essential to the growth of society's awareness of child abuse and neglect, not so much from specific community education campaigns as through ongoing news and features reporting on specific cases, research, and intervention initiatives (Lawson et al., 2020). In recent years, there has also been a reversal in the interest in how the issues are covered in the media, with researchers, academics, and professionals in the field of child welfare analyzing this coverage. The media has dramatically influenced the notions of what is "normal" and "deviant" in society and what is and is not deemed child abuse. Importantly, it has occasionally seemed as though the media had a more significant impact on child protection policy and practice than experts in the field. By reporting on, analyzing, and intervening in news stories involving child sexual abuse (CSA), the media raises public awareness of the issue and puts it on the political and social agenda (Nair, 2019). The issue's media coverage has a significant impact because it clarifies what child protection and safeguarding policies and services are and why they are necessary. In order to develop a sense of shared responsibility for the public safety of children, the study examines the coverage, representation, and advocacy roles played by the media in starting a conversation about prevention.

It also aids in understanding the social and cultural shifts occurring in society, with a focus on Pakistan media, and how these shifts enable alternative care organizations to concentrate on larger-scale solutions.

It is argued that media coverage is essential if public concern for children is to remain on the political agenda and if child protection services are to remain accountable, even though how the media portrays child abuse and child protection can have detrimental effects on children and their families (Featherstone et al., 2014). The study examines how newspapers in Pakistan reported news articles involving child sexual abuse. A Qualitative method of Content analysis is used to analyze the framing of child abuse news stories in four popular Newspapers in English and Urdu language published between the years 2020-2022. Media coverage may offer thorough coverage of these topics, emphasizing prevention strategies and supportive environments and safe, stable, and loving relationships for all children and families.

The current study aims to evaluate the media's coverage of child abuse news and how it relates to The Children Act's implementation and reporting standards. This paper used media framing theory to conduct a quantitative content analysis investigation. To reduce the number of abuse cases, the study advised lawmakers, child welfare organizations, and the media to promote children's rights.

The newspaper coverage conveys a fair sense of the nature and scale of violence, abuse, and exploitation children experience in Pakistan, which involves individual incidences but mainly abuse and exploitation due to broader structural and institutional factors (Jabeen, 2020). The data serves various purposes. They highlight the actual and potential risks to children in Pakistani society, thus, making child protection an issue. They provide a sound methodological justification for using newspaper coverage as a record of child protection problems in Pakistan.

They highlight the role of media in placing child protection issues in the public's minds and on political agendas. Most importantly, this research has shown how representation of child protection issues in the print media reflects the existing reality on the one hand and, on the other, may affect the perception of as well policy and practice responses to these issues. These data can highlight the actual and potential risks that Pakistani children face. They also serve as a basis for conceptualizing and defining child protection issues and provide guidance and direction for child protection policy, legislation, and programming.

Further, with its focus on the language and content of the coverage, this research shows how representation of child abuse issues in the print media reflects the existing reality on the one hand and, on the other, may affect people's perceptions of these issues. The challenging but essential task of reporting on child abuse falls to journalists. The journalist and the audience may become overwhelmed by the sensitive subject, the vivid nature of the claims, and the widespread fury surrounding the instances. However, media specialists have a unique chance to influence public understanding of the problem of child abuse. By highlighting or reporting on the efforts made by the neighborhoods to stop other occurrences of abuse, journalists can extend the scope of stories about child abuse. The media may enlighten the public on how to stop child abuse and guarantee the healthy development of all our children by implementing this change in focus.

The dynamics of child abuse have been identified as a rising social problem on a global scale that is closely related to child humiliation (Sloman & Taylor, 2016). The Government of Pakistan has

undertaken numerous initiatives to address issues of child abuse and neglect and has created laws to safeguard children from exploitation, abuse, and violence; however, most of them are either not enforced at all or are implemented ineffectively due to a lack of a proper definition of child abuse and related terms, as well as various methods of reporting child abuse cases. Most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan focus on severe instances of child sexual abuse, such as child rape or commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, they frequently underreport cases of physical and psychological abuse (Ali et al., 2013). To find the unreported instances of all forms of child abuse and to develop and execute appropriate policies, a proper surveillance system is thus necessary.

Most media stories missed opportunities to address abuse prevention strategies and failed to include any potential risk or cause variables. The voices of child victims could only occasionally be heard among the stakeholders. However, the involvement of legal experts was joint. Rage and despair frequently came up in reader comments. The findings show that numerous strategies must be created to close the gap between research and statistics on child abuse and how the issue is currently depicted in the media, as these portrayals influence both the general public's and policymakers' perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role of the media in research and reporting cases of violence against children. So, this research has the benefit of increasing public awareness because through accurate and factual reporting of cases of violence against children, the media can expand public knowledge about this problem and increase their awareness about how serious this problem is. Thus, the media can help encourage people to take more proactive actions in preventing and overcoming cases of violence against children. Another benefit is encouraging law enforcement action, which means careful and balanced media coverage of cases of violence against children can help increase pressure on law enforcement agencies to crack down on perpetrators of violence. This can encourage society to hold perpetrators accountable and result in faster and more appropriate action from authorities.

METHOD

This planning and data collection tool is essential in the making the proposed research worthwhile and successful; it also immediately impacts the findings and draws inferences. This study explores the relationship between readers and newspaper stories regarding child sexual abuse issues in our society. In terms of knowledge of sexual and child abuse problems in children in Pakistan, the print media (newspaper) plays a significant role. The English and Urdu versions of the national daily newspapers were used to gather the data. The journals were chosen based on their reputation and accessibility. Two English and two URDU newspapers were chosen for this study's purposes.

Secondary data was collected via EBSCO, JSTOR, MEDLINE, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, GOOGLE, and the Web of social science—websites and reports of U.N. and UNICEF, a national report on child abuse and neglect. Newspaper editorials were thoroughly reviewed.

The newspapers were selected based on criteria including nationwide coverage and circulation, reputation for accuracy and speed of reporting, their acknowledged political stance, and the availability of records for the required period, among other things.

- a. In terms of the compilation and analysis of the data, first, the researcher studied one Urdu and one English language daily (which were not chosen for this analysis) over one week each,

developing a typology of child abuse issues reported in those papers. The second purpose of this pre-study was to note what type of coverage, that is, news items, editorials, articles, reports, and opinion pieces, is given to these issues. Then, the actual review started. After a review of one month for each newspaper, the initial typology of issues was revised and finalized.

The researcher reviewed each newspaper and recorded the news items, editorials, articles, reports, and opinion pieces relating to child abuse. The items were recorded chronologically in Excel spreadsheets under headings that included the date, item headline/title, page, column number, and type and detail of the incident. Next, based on the type of incidence, the items were coded under broader themes based on research questions. Following this, each category counted items for each newspaper and in total. Finally, the contents of each theme were analyzed with a particular focus on the use of language, reporting intent, and scoping of child protection issues as represented in these newspapers.

b. Interviews with newspaper editors and media reporters

Comprehensive inter-interviews were conducted with officials of news channels. Some of the questions include the following.

Content Analysis Technique

The content analysis technique organized the indicators into categories and groups. Initially, these methods were adopted to eliminate the selected indicators list;

1. Self-evaluation of the indicators to remove the repetition and alien indicators
2. As the indicators are compared to the basic understanding of the term child abuse and neglect
3. Data availability

To identify and evaluate the topics of the news items, content analysis has been employed to give an insight into respective sound patterns and news frameworks generally used by journalists in each country.

In this research study, the content analysis research method was used. The research tool was created for the aim of the study to discover answers to the research question. The data was gathered using the research tool developed for the study. The content analysis was used to look at sampling news articles from The News (English), Dawn (English), Jang (Urdu), and Daily Express (Urdu) newspapers to analyze the nature of child sexual violence reports in news journals. In this context, the news media are used. Two of the newspapers are in English, and two are in Urdu.

Selection Criteria

For convenience, potential areas of the newspaper were selected. News contents, including Editorial (A), Column (B), and Features (C), were categorized as follows.

Table 1. Selection Criteria

Name of Newspaper	Categories	Language	Coverage
The Nation	Child Education	English	Nationwide
Dawn	Child Survival	English	Nationwide
Jang	Child Protection	Urdu	Nationwide
Daily Express	Child Development	Urdu	Nationwide

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The newspaper review for the analysis of child abuse cases reported in newspapers. Indallies published between the years (2020-2022). Additionally, research was conducted in 2022. The newspapers were chosen depending on many factors, including national reach and circulation. The researcher looked through all newspapers, wrote news articles and detailed news, and tried to find out about the treatment of children's sexual abuse (Marune, 2021). The materials were then categorized into more significant categories based on research questions depending on the kind of incident. Then, items in each category were tallied for each newspaper and in total. In addition, these articles explored each topic in detail on the framing of the stories of child sexual abuse, the aim of reporting, and the extent of child welfare concerns.

Table 2. Total Number of Child Sexual Abuse Cases reported in newspapers during (Years 2020-2022)

Year	Cases in Punjab	Cases in Lahore	Percentage
2022	1807	102	4.80
2020	1602	112	6.52
2019	2403	148	6.16

Table 1 shows that 148 cases were reported in Lahore in the year 2019, which is the highest number. In the year 2020, the second-highest number of 112 cases was reported. One hundred two cases were reported in the year 2022 in Lahore.

Sexual Abuse Cases

Sexual assault is increasingly common in middle, working, and poor communities in urban and rural locations (Veenema et al., 2015). The news reports also tended to show that these reports do not find any cause for murdering and killing children. In newspapers, the news relevant to child protection issues was not getting as much attention as it should be (Lonne & Parton, 2014). Because the media has its agenda, and its priority is political issues. The newspaper did not get stories on the front pages until any specific case got attention on social media or mainstream media. There is no take-care code of ethics regarding publishing or framing a story about child sexual abuse.

Table 3. Summary of newspapers reporting of child Sexual issues in Lahore (2020-2022)

Name Newspaper	Language	Area	Total No. of Cases Report	Child Sexual Abuse Cases	Others
The Nation	English	Nationwide	690	355	135
Dawn	English	Nationwide	678	340	149
Jang	Urdu	Nationwide	700	350	145
Daily Express	Urdu	Nationwide	650	338	114

The table shows two that in the two years, from (2020-2022) there were 2718 child abuse cases in Lahore reported in four newspapers (2 English and 2 Urdu). Data is shown in the above table. Two years' analysis shows that in Lahore, 2178 child abuse cases were reported in national newspapers, including English and Urdu. The researcher took 2 English newspapers (The Nation and Dawn News) and Urdu newspapers (Jang and Daily Express). The English Newspapers (The Nation and Dawn) had reported a total of 1368 cases, including 695 cases of CSA, as we saw that Urdu Newspapers (Jang and Daily Express) had reported 1350 cases which included 680 cases of CSA.

Table 4. Total Number of CSA reports in Lahore newspapers (Years 2020-2022)

Year	Lahore Cases	CSA cases in Lahore
2022	102	51
2021	112	56
2020	148	89

Table 4 shows that in 2020 102 highest number of cases of CSA were reported in Lahore. Eighty-nine cases of CSA were reported during 2018, 56 cases were found in 2021, 51 cases were found in 2022, and the highest number of 89 cases were reported in 2022 to date.

Interpretation

Framing is mainly defined as selecting and promoting certain aspects of perceived reality through the promotion of a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or recommendation for treatment or as a distinction between aspects of an object or attributes that characterize the feature of an object and are the central theme of a specific message (Ghanem, 2013). The query supports framing – the problem is linked with the media and affects how advertising is viewed. The findings show English and Urdu newspapers' wise frequency and percentages of published news.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentages of Published News

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Dawn	102	56.6%
Jang	78	43.33%

Table 4 indicates that of 200 news stories in Pakistani English daily Dawn 102 (56.6%) and Jang 78 (43.3%) were published.

Table 6. Category-wise frequency and percentage of children's issues

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Child Education	28	16.0%
Child Survival	48	25.5%
Child Protection	89	50%
Child Development	17	8.3%

Table 6 displays that 202 news stories were published in *Dawn* and *Jang* from 1 Jan 2020 to September 2022; 90 (50%) of news was penned in the category "child Protection", the highest among all categories. "Child survival" is another utmost covered category with 46(25.5%), whereas 29 (16%) news stories were written on "child education", and the marginalized issue was child development with 15 (8.3%).

Table 7. Frequency and percentage of children issues in Editorial, Column and Feature

News contents	Direction with frequency	Percentage
Editorial (A)	4	33.3%
Column (B)	3	25%
Features (C)	5	41.66%

Table 7 shows four editorials, three columns and five features published on the abovementioned issues about a safer society for children in the first eight months of 2022. Some of them just pointed out the problems, whereas most of them have a social-oriented

approach.

The results show that child protection issues, child rape, murder, kidnapping, and any abuse (sensational) were more frequent in dailies than in other news stories. Dailies focused more on case stories instead of covering the broader issue perspective. English dailies covered more children-related news stories as compared to Urdu dailies.

Crimes against children

News items relating to extreme cruelty and crimes against children, including sexual assault, abuse and killing/murder, constituted most of the coverage. This can be explained mainly in terms of the nature of these offences, making it almost inevitable that they will be reported to the police, who, in turn, inform the press. It was hard to sub-categorize these crimes as most were interrelated. For example, in many instances, victims of sexual assault were kidnapped for the purpose, and many were killed afterwards. Male and female children as young as four became victims of sexual assault. In reporting such cases, both English and Urdu newspapers used the terms 'innocent' and 'minor' about victims and 'sexual assault' to describe the act. However, the language noticeably changed when older children became the objects of the reporting. Teenage victims, mostly girl children, were described as 'young women/females' being 'raped' (Jabeen, 2020). One must read the contents of the news item to know the exact age of these victims, but most were in the age of 13-16 years. It is noteworthy that there is a tendency on the part of both police and press to see some willingness on the part of the victim in such cases, for example, often reporting a 'suspected illicit relationship'.

Sexual abuse cases tend to be more prevalent in the lower middle, working class and poor areas, including urban and rural populations (McIlwaine, 2013). However, kidnapping, especially for ransom, was more likely to be an urban and middle to the upper-class phenomenon where children from established trading and industrialist families were kidnapped (Wilson, 2014). Often, there were news items about parents seeking help from police to lodge a kidnapping report but were told to wait because it was assumed that the child was lost temporarily and had run away, or they were coerced into registering a 'missing person' report. Another trend in news reporting was noted about child-killing and murder. These reports mainly would not identify a motive. However, children were also killed in marital conflicts and family feuds, shootouts among criminals/between police and criminals, armed robberies, terrorist attacks and by 'stray bullets' as people can legally. See Table 1 for a summary of each newspaper's recorded reporting by broader themes.

Table 8. Summary of newspapers reporting of child protection issues in Pakistan (2020-2022)

	Crimes against children (Rape, killing)	Children victims of traffic accidents	Negligence of public departments and agencies	Children in difficult circumstances	Role of those responsible for children	Others	Total
Dawn	840	504	640	707	420	37	3148
Jang	413	166	180	150	124	20	1054
The Nation	326	266	408	655	105	15	1775
Daily Express	492	165	394	249	329	12	1641

Conceptualization of Categories

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

The news about child's issues was studied in occurrence and direction. Frequency was measured by how much news content appeared about children's rights. The direction of printed editorials, columns and features was checked on a 2-point scale, positive and negative. Any above-said piece of journalistic writing that not only. Highlighting the issue but proposing the practical solution was considered positive, whereas the writing that only pointed out the solution was labelled unfavourable.

English language daily published more suggestion-based editorials and columns about children's health, malnutrition, polio vaccination, and primary education in the native language. Urdu Jang pointed out the issues faced by children with facts and figures.

Interpretation of results

In Pakistan, very grave organizational and efficient strategies are required to ensure a safer society for children. Integrated efforts from every walk of life, social, political, financial, academic, 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 (Mayer, 2018). Our ideas of life and the world are derived mainly 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. Media should play an efficient role in guiding, educating, and sensitizing the parents/guardian, teachers, children, and all stakeholders about the vulnerable situation of our highly unsafe society for children (Anthony, 2019).

Findings from Data provided by Sahil Organization.

According to the latest statistics in Pakistan, the number of instances of child sexual abuse in the first half of 2020 has risen quickly (Avas et al., 2020). By an average of six children, 53 per cent were females, and 47 per cent were males. According to the study, most instances recorded were in Punjab-57%. Sindh accounted for 32% of the remainder, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 6%. Consequently, estimates of the 3,832 incidents of child sexual assault recorded in 2018 have not been considered. These numbers do not account for many unreported instances of child sexual abuse and humiliation.

According to Sahil's Six Months Cruel Numbers Report report, 1,489 child abuse cases were reported between January and June 2020 from all four provinces, Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan (Shahid et al., 2022).

Their data revealed that more than eight children were abused daily in the year's first six months. The main categories of the reported cases were abduction (331), sodomy (233), missing children (168), rape (160), attempted rape (134), gang sodomy (104), attempted sodomy (93), gang rape (69), and child marriage (59).

There were also 38 murders as a result of sexual abuse. According to the statistics, 53 per cent of the victims were girls, and 47 per cent were boys. Furthermore, 490 fatalities were between the ages of 11 and 15, with 331 being between the ages of six and ten. According to the research, 57% of the cases were reported in Punjab, 32% in Sindh, and 6% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Islamabad reported more than 35 instances, Baluchistan 22 cases, AJK 10 cases, and GB one case. In rural areas, 62 per cent of the instances were reported, while urban areas recorded 38 per cent.

According to the data, 90 per cent of the cases were registered with the police; the registration status of 135 cases was not published in newspapers; seven cases were not registered with the police, and seven others were refused registration by the police. In 2021, at least 3,852 children-2,068 girls and 1,784 boys-were sexually abused across Pakistan, according to a report titled "Cruel Number" by Sahil, an NGO working against child abuse.

According to Sahil's report, the total number of reported child abuse cases across the country jumped to 2,960 in 2020 from 2486 cases in 2019, showing an increase of 4%. More than eight children in Pakistan were abused daily on average in the year 2020, according to data compiled by Sahil on child sexual abuse cases reported in national newspapers. What is more, according to a recently published retrospective on the prevalence of child abuse in Pakistan conducted with an equal number of male and female respondents, 41% (44% males and 39% females) of respondents reported facing at least one form of sexual abuse during childhood (Abbas & Jabeen, 2020).

Interpretation of results

Sahil is the only organization collecting data related to child issues. This data is somehow more accurate than newspapers. Because many cases that Sahil reports are not part of leading newspapers. Even before the Zainab case, child sexual abuse was widely prevalent but rarely reported. Zainab's case accentuated the need to cure the menace of child abuse. This situation gives rise to many other issues.

Moreover, the critical question is, (are newspapers hiding the cases? Who is responsible?). In this two years review, the increasing trend in crimes against children was like that reported by other sources. For example, in 2020, Sahil-reported a 2.26 per cent increase in sexual crimes against children from the previous year. However, Sahil reports focus on child sexual abuse alone, and they compile data across all major newspapers, including regional ones.

Among many factors for the prevailing situation, the most pertinent is the poor parent-child relationship. We live in a society where fear and cultural taboos make it challenging to uncover cases of abuse. Parents' unwillingness to subject their children to the medico-legal process is also a deterrent. A lack of support from family members, friends, neighbours, or the community leads to the victim's isolation, making him hesitant to share his experience about his abuser. Other factors responsible for child abuse are socio-economic stresses, unemployment, low self-confidence and feelings of incompetence, loneliness, and psychological unrest.

Crimes against children were primarily reported using the language of society's moral deterioration, making communities less safe for children (Crawford & Evans, 2017). One exception

was the serial killing of one hundred children in Lahore (the provincial capital of Punjab and the second biggest city in Pakistan) in the year 2020. In the aftermath of the serial killings, protecting destitute, abandoned, runaway, homeless and street children became one of Pakistan's most prominent child protection issues.

Children in difficult circumstances

Incidents of child labour (such as children working in hazardous occupations) were frequently reported. Newspapers covered legislative and practical interventions by the Government of Pakistan and those of national and international non-governmental organizations such as the ILO-IPEC. Newspapers also covered the ongoing debates on the magnitude of the child labour issue, its consequences, and proposed solutions. Most debates focused on poverty, the lack of schooling facilities as a cause of child labour, and the fact that children in labour were missing out on the fun of childhood. While the English language newspaper was more concerned with child welfare, development, and rights, Urdu Daily tended to challenge the international standards and reports on child labour in Pakistan as a Western agenda aimed at ruining Pakistani exports of carpet and sports goods. They tended to give more coverage to the local views about child labour, including those expressed by employers, chambers of commerce and individual experts, many of whom had a favourable opinion of child labour.

News items also appeared relating to children being given up (11), sold (6) and killed (8) by parents due to circumstances related to poverty. Children were reportedly victims of disputes between parents when an angry father (28 cases) or mother (15 cases) killed a child, especially when a husband suspected his wife of being unfaithful and of the child not being his own. Fathers, brothers, or uncles killed young girls on suspicion of having a love affair or wishing to marry a person of their choice rather than that of their parents. The reporting language mainly was that of 'Bharat - family honour' rather than a concern with the young person's right to life (let alone choice). Abandoned newborn babies, dead (Dawn 10 cases) and alive (Dawn 2; Jang 3 cases), were found in public parks, street corners, and garbage heaps. Again, the language of the coverage was that of the 'cruel woman' 'abandoning/throwing away' an 'illegitimate' child to 'hide her sins' and included next to nothing regarding survival, safety, and protection of the newborn.

Some reports (both collective and individual cases) related to discrimination against girl children. Children of both sexes became victims of 'traditional practices such as child marriage (Dawn 26, Jang 4 cases), being devoted to a fake spiritual person/magician or taking part in some peculiar religious ceremony. However, more girls were reported to be the victim of 'Karo Kari' (honour killing) (17) and the decisions of Jirga (the traditional court) (9). Only Dawn reported these cases in any considerable detail or with due emphasis. Others did not report, reported out of the context, that is, as an ordinary killing/murder, or tend to report very detachedly. Children of both sexes below ten years of age were victims of accidents at home such as sudden fire, roof collapse, wrong eating (e.g., poisonous stuff) or mishandling of weapons such as a revolver or shotgun. Girls between 10-16 years of age were major victims of accidents in kitchens, such as stove explosions. There were rare reports of children being forced into prostitution (1), drugs (4), begging (7) and petty crime. Without systematic evidence, it is hard to determine whether these issues are less prevalent or less acknowledged by newspapers.

CONCLUSION

Moderate media coverage of child abuse can aid society in comprehending the issues surrounding child abuse and neglect and constructively interacting with children's rights. In addition to assisting society in understanding child sexual abuse (CSA) as a serious societal issue, the effective use of media as a reporting, representation, and advocacy tool will also raise public knowledge about the abusers, many of whom are people the kid already knows. Unfortunately, child abuse is frequently mentioned in news reports but goes unnoticed because the subject is not well covered. It is primarily discussed in court and seen from a criminal justice viewpoint. The terminology used to indicate child abuse in regional reporting is sometimes ambiguous, uneven, and frequently suggestive rather than specific. Legal concepts and facts confuse the descriptions. Because interventions are the focus, prevention is unseen. There is no doubt that newspapers are vital in raising awareness regarding child abuse issues in society. However, the reporting will only be meaningful if they get attention from relevant government institutions and civil society members. By looking at the reporting on the issue of child abuse, it would be safe to conclude that this coverage offers us significant insights regarding the nature and scope of abuse, kidnappings, and exploitation of children in Pakistan. We will have to identify from this the structural and institutional deficiency that could have contributed to the suffering of children. These findings led us to the conclusion that the media did play a function, particularly in motivating those who were hesitant to report a kid in distress or who were unsure of how to respond. These findings also demonstrated the media's role as a component of a more extensive system designed to safeguard children from maltreatment and carelessness. Finally, the findings demonstrated that the media's portrayal of abuse was seldom to blame for the total variation in complaints. So that we can better protect children and assist these groups in their work, we must keep working to identify the factors that contribute to these variations.

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