

Nepali Media in Fulfilling Social Responsibility for Child Rights

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Article History

Received: 12 May 2024

Accepted: 22 July 2024

Published: 31 July 2024

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How to Cite this Article

Aryal, K. (2024). Nepali media in fulfilling social responsibility for child rights. *The Informal: South Asian Journal of Human Rights and Social Justice*, 1(1), 71–84.

Abstract

News stories on child protection, including child trafficking, prepared by a group of reporters who participated in training on the same theme, resulted in 141 articles in 62 media outlets, both in print and online versions. The study reveals that among the total published news stories, 30.5 percent are related to child sex abuse, followed by orientations and awareness programs on child protection issues at 24.8 percent, and trafficking in persons at 10.6 percent (7.1 percent child trafficking, 3.5 percent adult trafficking). One of the issues concerning child protection that has been widely reported, even by reporters who did not participate in the above-mentioned training, is orphanage trafficking. The analysis of selected content from the media outlets, focus group discussions with the reporters who wrote the news, and key informant interviews with their editors reveal that they are willing to collaborate with CSOs and child rights organizations. They consider expert sources and fellowships or grants for story cultivation to be acceptable. However, they stress the need for transparency and the absence of personal interests on both sides during the collaboration. The study also found that there is a practice of providing editorial instructions on reporting issues of child protection. However, almost all media outlets lack written editorial guidelines in this regard.

Keywords: child protection, child trafficking, news story

Introduction

For the progress of society, people have certain normative expectations from mass media. To fulfill these expectations, the media needs an atmosphere of awareness to be sensitized on a wider range of social issues. An effort to sensitize Nepali reporters on child rights issues, with special emphasis on child trafficking, which comes under the area of child protection, was made via a series of training events for young working journalists by the Together for Protection Project.

This article, based on a study report, aims to present an example of appropriate effort and

outcome. It is based on the idea of reviewing the impact of training organized by an organization named ECPAT Luxembourg for journalists on related issues. A series of training sessions was organized in 2023 to sensitize journalists. In a bid to demonstrate best practices, the impact of sensitization on the issues of child protection, including child trafficking, among Nepali journalists conducted by it under the Together for Protection Project is reviewed. Thus, the content of the training is discussed briefly. Then, the news on the theme of child protection in digital and print media outlets is thoroughly analyzed. The coverage of news ranged

from child trafficking to orphanage trafficking and illicit transfers of children from childcare homes, religious institutions, and alternative care houses.

To examine news stories on the issues of child protection and trafficking in persons at the local level, journalists were provided with international and domestic laws related to child protection and trafficking. A total of 516 journalists, 157 females and 359 males, were trained on reporting local issues related to child protection (CP) such as trafficking in persons (TIP) in Bagmati, Gandaki, and Karnali provinces. The training covered a range of topics including an introduction to the concept of CP and TIP, the national and international legal framework on CP/TIP, the protection of the rights of victims, the establishment of orphanage trafficking as a mainstream issue, and most importantly, the role of media persons in victim-centric reporting. Journalists from the 20 project municipalities in 11 districts of these provinces (see Appendix 6) benefitted from a total of 22 training sessions. Consequently, a total of 148 news stories (141 news articles and 7 feature articles) appeared in print and online media outlets between April 2021 and June 2023.

The study started with the analysis of 141 news stories on child protection, including child trafficking, orphanage trafficking, and similar issues, that appeared in 62 media outlets, both print and online. Although the news stories were mostly prepared by reporters who participated in the aforementioned training, this is not a comparative

report on the reporters' work before and after the training. Rather, it is a comprehensive analysis of the published news stories in terms of journalistic standards and child-friendly reporting ethics. Additionally, it offers a detailed examination of the views of on-field reporters and editorial gatekeepers on covering issues related to child protection.

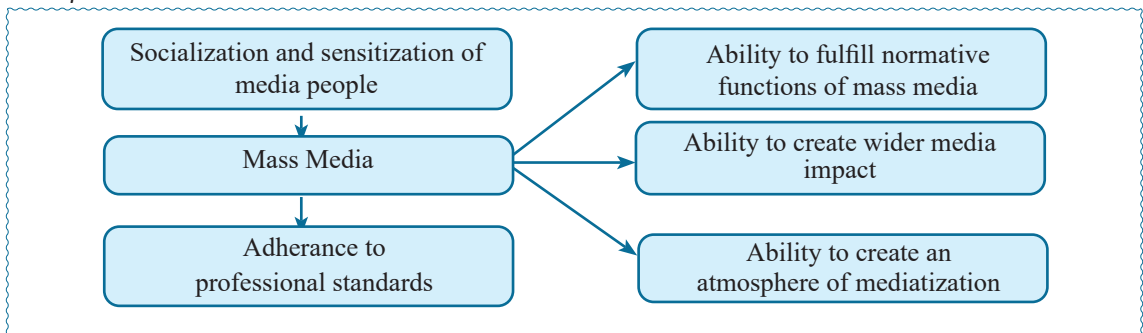
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Society expects several normative functions from mass media. Media cannot be dependable, reliable, and trustworthy in any society if it fails to fulfill its normative functions. The root of the social responsibility theory of media is that it accepts and fulfills certain obligations to society.

At the outset of this study, it was planned to improve upon and adopt a justifiable framework based on the social responsibility theory of mass media. Socialization and sensitization of media outlets or journalists on any subject matter or thematic issue can be effective with a sense of responsibility and strict adherence to professional standards. When media outlets or their personnel become acquainted with professional standards that comprise skills and ethics and are sufficiently socialized in the subject matter, they will be capable of fulfilling their social responsibility effectively. The change could be visible in three aspects: a) the ability to fulfill the normative functions of mass media, b) the ability to create a wider media impact in society, and c) the ability to create an atmosphere of desired mediatization.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) outlines the theory of social responsibility in media in its report *A Free and Responsible Press*. The report presents five requirements of a free society that mass media can fulfill. It presents the basic responsibilities of media, including its duty to supply truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent accounts of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning (pp. 20-21). The social responsibility theory of mass media forwards society's normative expectations of media.

For at least seven and a half decades, a normative theory for the press that demands media be responsible toward society has prevailed as a professional standard. On May 5, 1921, Scott (The Scott Trust & GMG) presented an ideal rule for the functioning of the media in his seminal essay entitled "A Hundred Years," where he wrote that a newspaper has two sides to it. He stated that it is a business, like any other, and has to pay in the material sense to live. But it is much more than a business; it is an institution that holds great power; it reflects and influences the life of a whole community; it may affect even wider destinies (p. 9). He viewed the excessive commercial or material interest as something that could undermine the moral existence of media.

Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1963) state that all the essentials and fundamentals of the theory of social responsibility had already been expressed by responsible editors and publishers long before the Hutchins Commission and have been stated by other editors and publishers since, quite independently of the Commission (p. 5). The Commission on Freedom of the Press was formed against the backdrop of the declaration that the news media "have not provided a service adequate to the needs of society" and that the media "must be accountable ... for meeting the public's needs." The theory demands responsibilities from the media.

After World War II, the social responsibility theory evolved as a new idea, which was later defined as an integrated theory by the Hutchins Commission Report in the US. Peterson (1963) considers a trend of developing criticism of the

press since as far back as the mid-19th century to be the origin of the social responsibility theory of mass media (pp. 78-79). The entire idea is to enhance the interplay between media and society. Social responsibility theory stresses that the media needs to uphold the public interest.

Methodology

The study began with a desk review and analysis of 141 news stories on child protection from select newspapers and online news portals, collected by the project. The contents have been analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In terms of quantitative data, the contents were counted, analyzed, and classified based on 14 different indicators (Appendix 7). Likewise, in terms of qualitative data, the outcomes of interviews with the editors of the concerned media outlets as well as focus group discussions with the reporters who wrote the news have been thoroughly analyzed.

With the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the selected sample of the contents, editors, and journalists were interviewed to find the causes of the present state of coverage of issues concerning child protection. The interviews included various open-ended questions for them to answer.

A focus group discussion was also organized with the media persons who received the training for local media on reporting child protection/trafficking in persons or the reporters who reported the related news, to gather their experiences on media coverage of the issues of child protection. The discussion was based on the questions mentioned in Appendix 3. Hence, there were three specific methods of data collection:

Content Analysis

The published news stories focused on different issues related to child protection rights—from children without families to children's issues in the government budget. The coverage of the analyzed news content is as follows:

1. Childcare homes/children without family/orphanage trafficking

2. Child sex abuse/assault
3. Children's issues and local government (attitude of local authorities)
4. Trafficking in persons (child trafficking)
5. Orientation and awareness on child-related issues (formal news)
6. Children in jail with parents
7. Trafficking in persons (adult trafficking)
8. Policy/commitment on children's issues (policy gap/policy not implemented)
9. Child participation/child clubs
10. Services for children (e.g., child hospital)
11. Child suicide
12. Street children
13. Election and children
14. Child-focused budget

The aforementioned fourteen themes were chosen as the basis of classification as they cover an overwhelming majority, if not all, of the child rights and child protection issues prevalent in Nepal.

The basis for the content analysis from the perspective of professional standards of journalism, as designed for this study, is as follows:

1. **Dateline:** within Kathmandu Valley/ outside Kathmandu Valley
2. **Byline:** with a byline / without a byline
3. **Source:** Formal, Informal, Anonymous
4. **Comprehensiveness (5W & 1H):** What, Why, When, Where, Who, & How
5. **Clarity:** Clear / Ambiguous
6. Presence of direct quotes
7. Presence of field observation
8. Privacy of the involved
9. Child-friendliness

The aforementioned nine areas are considered to be the determining factors for a quality news story. These are the major indicators to examine the quality of news stories in terms of professional standards.

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

The KIIs were conducted with editors to understand in depth the role of editorial instructions and guidelines in the production of news related to soft issues such as child protection and child trafficking. Soft issues are considered to be burning, and immediate incident or event reporting is deeply associated with human emotions and sentiment in journalism. The questions were designed to uncover their system for the evaluation of the impact of such news and whether they conduct follow-ups as well.

The questions also asked editors about their level of satisfaction with the research, treatment, and presentation of such news. The editors were asked about their ideologies and thoughts regarding the collaboration with different pressure groups, civil society organizations, or international organizations for the protection and promotion of child rights, for the enhancement of the capacity and skill of the reporters in specific areas of news reporting concerning sensitive topics, as well as for increasing media personnel's sense of social responsibility. The KIIs also aimed at gathering information on the sort of collaborations the editors expect from such organizations to improve the quality of reporting and increase the coverage of different issues for the promotion of diversity.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A focus group discussion was organized to understand the process of reporting and writing followed by the journalists who prepared the various news stories on child protection and trafficking in persons.

The focus group was asked questions about receiving editorial help and direction while working on stories about child protection and trafficking. The objective of this question was to gauge the extent of editorial guidance in covering these soft topics. Furthermore, the group was asked about how much they prioritize news related to child rights and about the challenges/consequences they faced while reporting on issues such as child abuse, sexual exploitation, etc., with the intent of ascertaining the many reasons that may deter journalists from covering such news.

Additionally, the journalists were also asked about the impact that their news has had on society and the level of satisfaction they receive from writing news. Finally, they were asked about the training and how effective they found it to be.

Data Obtained from the Content Analysis

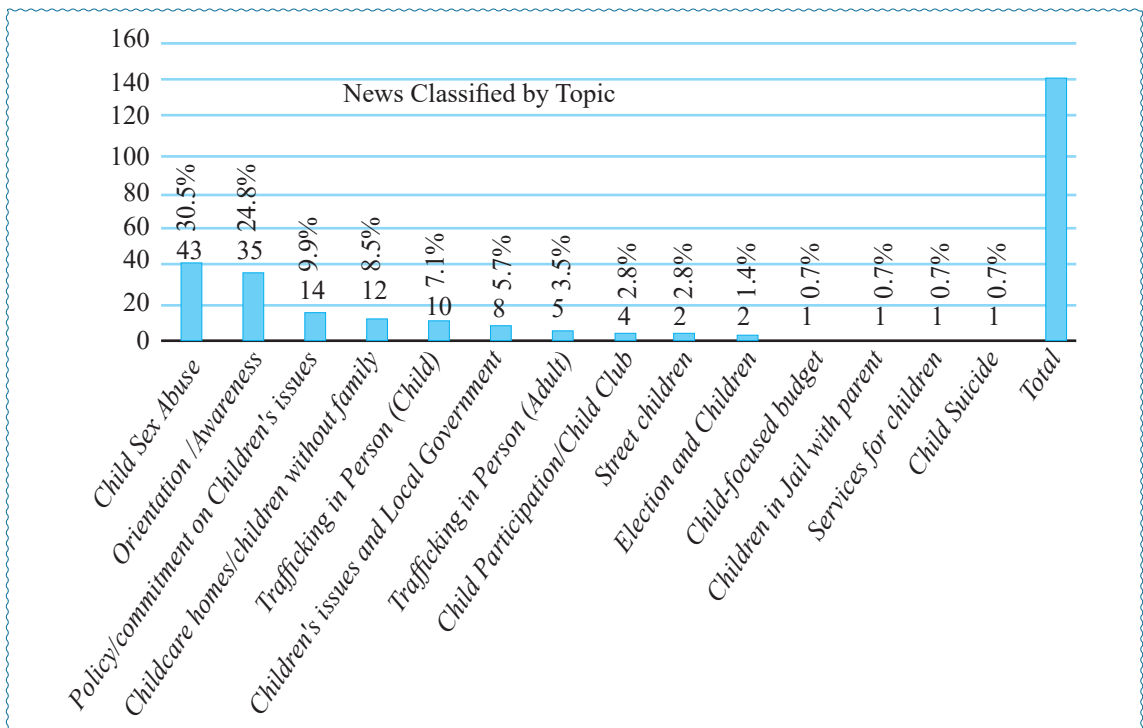
News Classified by Topic

The study reveals that among the total of 141 news stories published, 43 (30.5 percent) are focused on child sex abuse, followed by news about orientations/awareness programs on child protection issues, which account for 35 (24.8 percent), and those related to policy/commitment on children’s issues, which make up 14 (9.9 percent).

Additionally, there are 12 news reports (8.5 percent) related to childcare homes and children without families, 10 reports (7.1 percent) focusing on child trafficking, and 8 reports (5.7 percent) dedicated to children’s issues and local government. News about adult trafficking constituted 5 (3.5 percent), followed closely by child participation/child clubs and street children, with 4 (2.8 percent) each. Lastly, election and children make up 1.4 percent with 2 reports, whereas child-focused budget, children in jail with parents, services for children, and child suicide each make up 0.7 percent with one news story each.

Figure 2

News Classified by Primary Topic



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

News Source Type

Out of the 141 news stories in the study, 95 (68 percent) cite one or more formal sources. These formal sources include publications, press

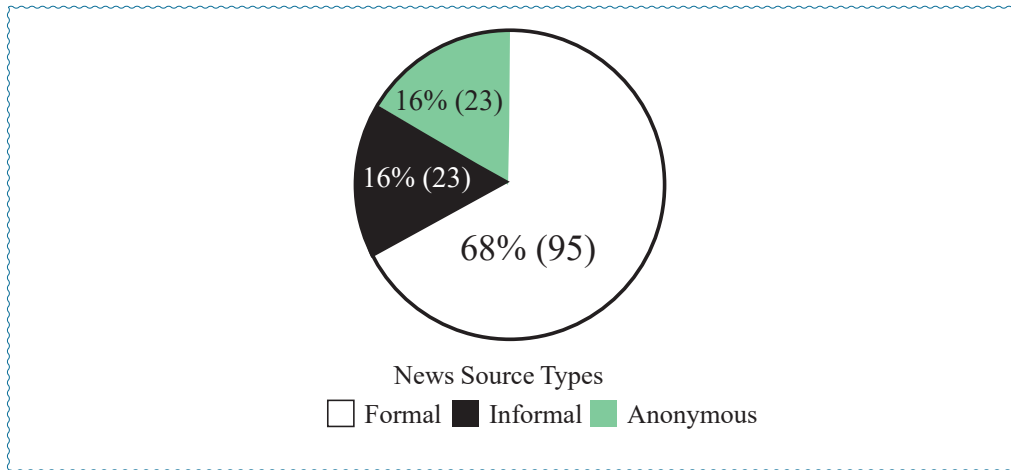
releases, formal event reports, interviews, and similar information from authoritative bodies and experts. Another 23 (16 percent) cite no formal sources but include at least one informal source.

Informal sources consist of accounts by the general public, non-expert interviews, or any other sources susceptible to personal opinions and bias. The

remaining 23 (16 percent) cite no sources explicitly and merely provide a general account.

Figure 3

News Stories Categorized by Source Type



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

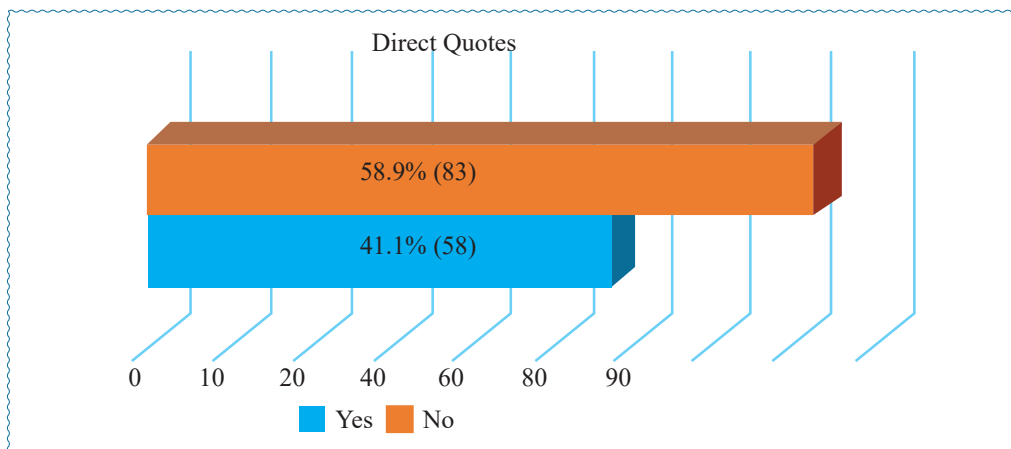
Presence of Direct Quotes

Out of the 141 news stories published, a majority of 58.9 percent (83 stories) contain at

least one direct quote with proper identification of the source, while the remaining 41.1 percent (58 stories) contain no direct quotes.

Figure 4

News Stories Classified by the Presence of Direct Quotes



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

Presence of Field Observation

In the practice of journalism, an effective news story must fulfill three criteria: a) documents or

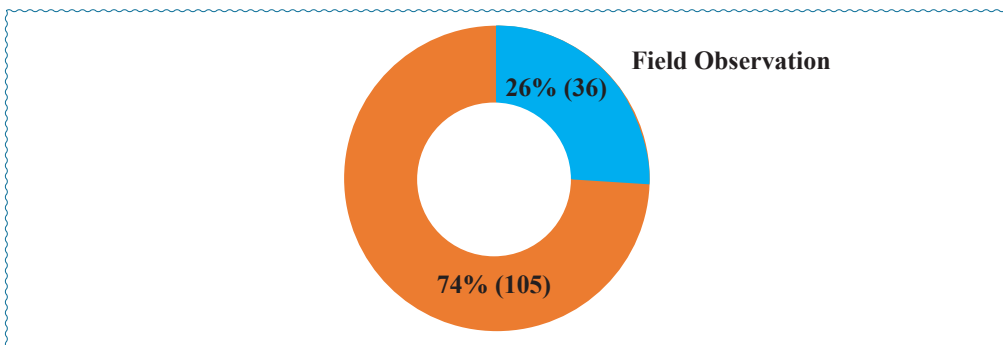
previously published materials, b) human sources, conversations, or interviews, and c) observation of the site. Observation of an event or incident site is

known to greatly enhance reporting. It also helps verify facts obtained from conversations or already published documents. In the context of news stories on child protection, specifically child trafficking,

field observation can help gather additional facts and insights. Among all the news reports in the study, only 26 percent (36) include a direct account of the location of the event.

Figure 5

News Stories Classified by the Presence of Field Observation



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

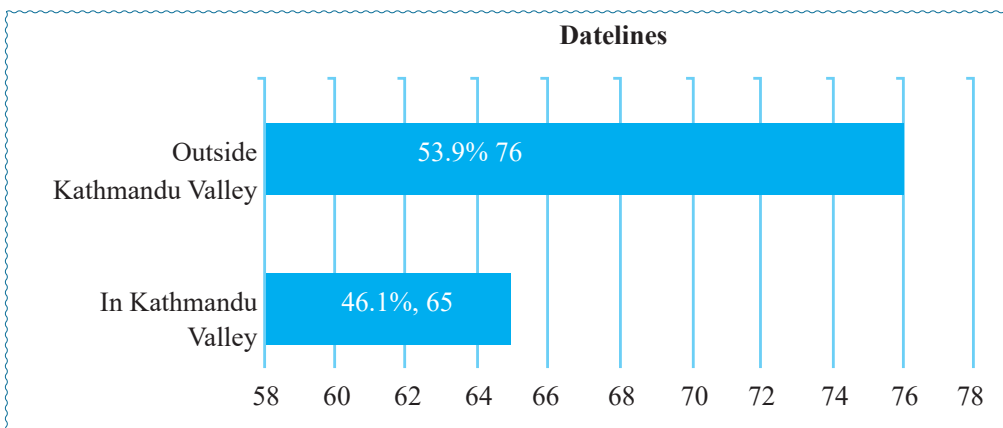
Location on Dateline

Datelines indicate the location where the information in the news article was sourced. In the study, 53.9 percent (76 reports) included a dateline

with a location outside Kathmandu Valley, while 46.1 percent (65 reports) featured a dateline within the valley.

Figure 6

News Classified by the Location Mentioned in the Dateline



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

Presence of Byline

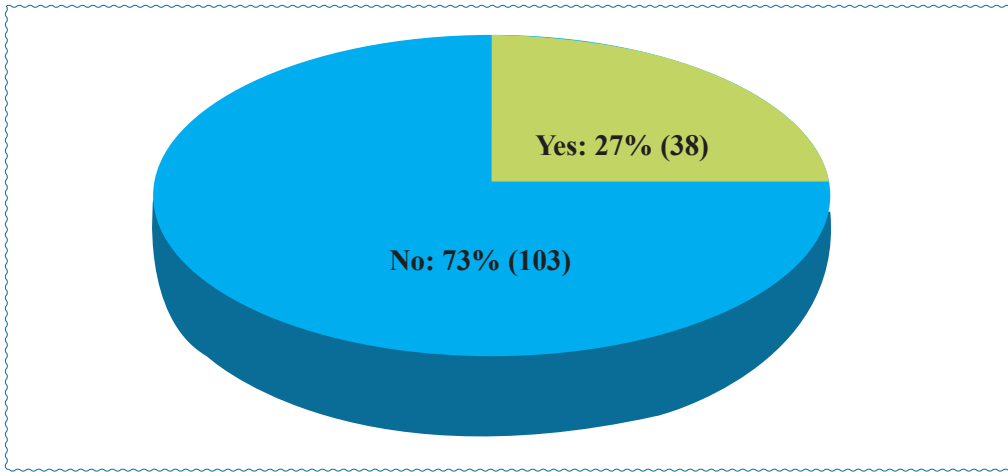
The byline of a news report identifies the author by name. It can be assumed that by presenting their name on the byline, journalists are taking accountability for the impact and effect their news story might have on the public. Thus, bylined

news is considered to be more trustworthy.

In this study of 141 news reports, 38 (27 percent) contain a byline with the names of one or more writers, while 103 (73 percent) do not indicate the writer at all.

Figure 7

News Classified by Presence of Byline Containing Names of Authors



Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

Comprehensiveness of News (Based on 5W+1H)

The comprehensiveness of news in this section is assessed based on the presence of the five W’s (what, where, when, who, why) and one H (how) as indicators of the extensiveness of the news stories. Low-quality news, with fewer than three of the six indicators of extensiveness, accounted for 27 percent (38) of the total data. Slightly above 40

percent of the stories were categorized as medium quality, containing four or five of the six indicators, while nearly 33 percent (46) of the total number of news stories contained all six indicators and were classified as high quality in terms of depth and comprehensiveness. Comprehensive stories are not only easy to read and understand but also showcase strong journalistic skills.

Table 1

Quality of News by Number and Percentage

Comprehensiveness of News	Number	Percent
Low	38	27.0%
Medium	57	40.4%
High	46	32.6%
Total	141	100%

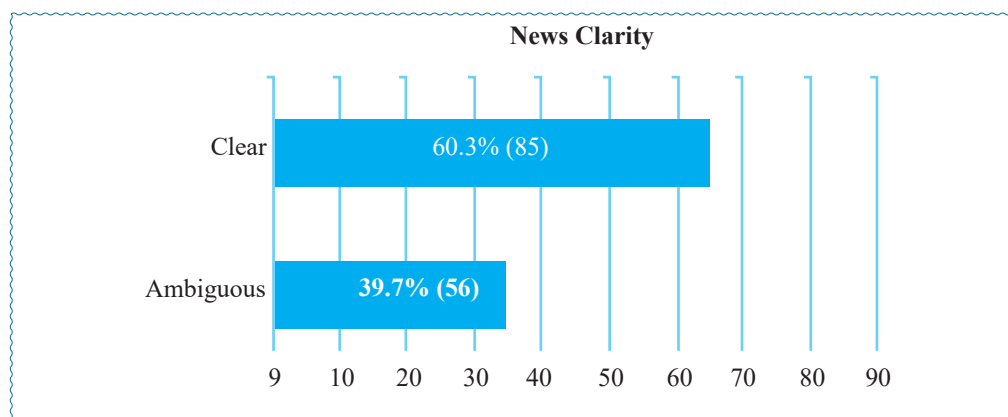
Note. Data Collected by Aryal, 2023.

Clarity of News

If a news story answers almost all of the five W’s and one H and is readable and understandable, it is considered a clear story without ambiguity. To be comprehensible, a news story requires an unambiguous lead and a sharp angle with a clear message. Furthermore, alongside fulfilling the five W’s and one H, the content of the story should be consistent throughout. The message relayed by the

story’s heading must correspond properly to the content in the body. Finally, the facts presented must be precise and completely relevant to the news. Irrelevant facts tend to distract from the message and dilute the substance of the news story.

Using these metrics, 60.3 percent (85) of the 141 news stories covered in the study were considered clear, while the remaining 39.7 percent (56) were classified as ambiguous.

Figure 8*Clarity of News Stories*

Note. Figure Created by Aryal, 2023.

Data Obtained from the Key Informant Interviews

Role of Editorial Guidelines

When asked, “What is the role of editorial guidelines and direction in covering news concerning child trafficking and child protection that have appeared in your media outlet, even though they are generally termed as soft issues?” one editor stated that such topics are considered among the highest priority news in his institution. It is their policy to give precedence to news about any incidents of crime against children or child trafficking. Hence, there is a standing instruction to search for and responsibly report such news stories.

All the editors informed the research team that, as of the day of the interview, their media house does not have any written guidelines concerning the reporting and treatment of news related to child protection. However, all editors also reported that verbal meetings and discussions are not uncommon when covering sensitive topics.

The Trend of Following Up

One of the editors mentioned that their institution has a norm to follow up on news according to its value and conduct routine follow-ups. He stated that news on child protection also falls under their institution’s policy of following up based on the importance and prominence of the

story. Subsequently, the other editors who were interviewed expressed similar views. Almost all the editors affirmed that they do follow-up reports if there are any new developments in the news.

State of Reporting and Processing Standards

When asked if he is content with the current state of reporting and processing standards concerning children-related soft issues, an editor affirmed that a good editor is never satisfied with the quality of reporting, processing, and presentation but instead makes continuous efforts for improvement. He believes there is significant room for improvement in news stories about child protection, specifically child trafficking. No editor explicitly stated that they are content with the current state of news reports on soft issues. All the editors indicated that there is room for improvement in the quality of reporting and editing.

On Collaboration between News Media and CSOs or Pressure Groups

When asked about his views on the collaboration between media outlets and civil society organizations (CSOs) or child rights organizations, one of the editors affirmed that such collaboration is appropriate as long as it is completely transparent and free from petty and private interests. He suggested that collaboration could involve reporting fellowships, transparent

grants, and the cultivation of expert sources of news. However, he maintained that the prerequisite for such cooperation is that it should be perfectly transparent and of national interest. All the editors stressed the need for transparency of sources when collaborating with CSOs or child rights organizations.

Expectations from NGOs / CSOs During Collaboration

When asked about the support they expect from collaborating NGOs and CSOs, one of the

editors expressed the need for proper training focused on clarifying issues. These programs should be centered around journalists and help guide the processes of research, presentation, reporting, and post-production. He also expects feedback from these organizations on news stories concerning child protection issues. All the editors expressed a desire for training and orientation programs that can help journalists better convey sensitive news topics. Some also insisted that these organizations act as reliable sources of data and information for news stories.

Table 2

Summary of the Expression of Interviewees During the Key Informant Interviews

Question Asked	KII	Response
What is the role of editorial instructions and guidelines in the production of soft news, such as child-related stories?	1	There are no written guidelines; primarily, bitwise reporters are responsible for covering the issues. However, some discussions take place at the editorial board or desk editor level to address specific issues. There is also a practice of allocating space for soft news on the front page.
	2	The are no formal guidelines but it is in practice to protect children, women, minority groups, etc. It depends on the reporter but some discussions have taken place about the angle of news in a newsroom.
	3	No written and formal guidelines, but timely editorial instruction.
	4	No written and formal guidelines, but informal and verbal editorial instruction.
	5	No written and formal guidelines, but timely editorial instruction.
	6	No written and formal guidelines, but verbal and informal editorial instruction.
	7	No written and formal guidelines, but verbal and informal editorial instruction.
What is your opinion on collaboration with pressure groups, CSOs, and NGOs?	1	There should be institutional ollaboration. We accept fellowship news, skill development field visits, etc., but these should be conducted through the institution, not just on a personal level. There is a risk of paid news.
	2	It is essential to enhance capacity and clarity on the issues. CSOs/NGOs should review the media's presentation of specific issues. Collaboration should be transparent.
	3	The prerequisite is that such cooperation should be transparent and of national

Question Asked	KII	Response
	4	Collaborations should be transparent and free from petty interests.
	5	The prerequisite is that such cooperation should be transparent and of national interest.
	6	Cooperation for the expert opinion and the source cultivation for the news
	7	Cooperation for enhancement of news quality, including reporting
Are you satisfied with the research, treatment, and presentation of soft news, such as child-related topics?	1	Only 50%
	2	At the C level among A, B, C
	3	There is room for improvement.
	4	Never satisfied, always seeking improvement.
	5	Need to improve news reporting as well as writing quality
	6	Need improvement in quality of news and reporting practices
	7	Not fully satisfied
	1	Training should be focused on the clarity of the issues as well the skill of journalism from research to presentations and up to the postproduction, receiving feedback, etc.
	2	Training should be focused on the clarity of the issues as well the skill of journalism from research to presentations and up to the postproduction, receiving feedback, etc.
	3	Collaboration for the capacity enhancement of human resources and dependable news sources
	4	Capacity enhancement of journalists and data cultivation
	5	Uplifting reporting quality and searching for source for information
	6	Collaboration for the capacity enhancement of human resources and dependable news sources
	7	Collaboration for the capacity enhancement of human resources and dependable news sources

Note. Data Collected by Aryal, 2023.

Data obtained from Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion (FGD) among the reporters who contributed to issues of child protection (CP) and trafficking in persons (TIP) highlighted five key issues pertinent to their production of news stories.

The first topic of discussion was editorial instructions or consultations during the reporting process. There were two viewpoints. On one hand, reporters mentioned that after collecting news and dispatching it to the desk, they were sometimes asked to add more facts. On the other hand, some

journalists stated that they received advice on news angles and sometimes even on subjects from editors, and they discussed these matters daily with their seniors.

The second topic addressed the challenges faced while reporting on CP and TIP. Some reporters found it difficult to properly convey the voice of the survivors, noting that many people believe exposing their pain and suffering in the media could lead to more problems for themselves and their families. They also mentioned that interacting with survivors who are physically disabled presents reality checks and makes it challenging to manage their own feelings and emotions. Some reporters shared experiences of being threatened not to take photographs or ask questions to stakeholders. Reporters frequently faced various challenges along with their sources.

The third topic was satisfaction with their coverage of CP and TIP issues. Reporters expressed that, while they generally covered these issues without systematically evaluating their impact, they felt content when their news proved beneficial, whether by helping provide justice for survivors or by spreading awareness about the situation. They cited examples such as coverage of the deprivation of mid-day meals in some schools when those schools reopened after the pandemic. They believed follow-up news would be highly effective in creating impact and felt great fulfillment knowing their stories contributed to some form of reform, policy formation, or deliberation of justice.

The fourth topic concerned the effectiveness of the training they underwent. Reporters stated that the training was very influential in sparking

their interest in writing about child protection and trafficking in persons. They also found the training useful for identifying various child-related issues and enhancing their knowledge of relevant legislation.

The fifth topic was encouragement. When asked about their sources of motivation for reporting on CP, journalists indicated they were driven by a desire to help the affected by highlighting the misery and abuse experienced by those who find it difficult to speak out or fight back. They felt that child abuse hinders societal progress and expressed their commitment to writing against violations of child rights. They were equally encouraged and proud to write stories about children achieving progress or about advancements in child rights and child protection in the country.

Discussion

The published materials related to the annual budget, for instance, those published on four online news portals from the Bagmati, Karnali, and Gandaki provincial governments, were not presented in the appropriate format of a news story. News from Gosaikunda Rural Municipality regarding the annual budget could be considered an attempt to analyze the budget from a child rights perspective.

The origin of the news or dateline includes Kathmandu Valley, Makawanpur, Chitwan, Kavre, Kaski, Surkhet, and other districts under the Bagmati, Gandaki, and Karnali provinces. Apart from a few Kathmandu-based news portals, most of the news stories originated from the aforementioned locations.

Table 3

Summary of the Expression of Interviewees During the Key Informant Interviews

Activity	Result
Aims to develop participants' awareness of the importance of media reporting in cases and the role of media in facilitating accountability for government bodies' responses to child protection and trafficking in persons. It also aims to enhance their skills in media reporting with victim-centric approaches.	A total of 141 news articles were published in 62 media outlets. Among these, 60.3 percent were clear, 39.7 percent were ambiguous, and 25 percent were based on field observation.

Note. Data Collected by Aryal & Dhital, 2023.

In terms of news quality, Kathmandu-based news portals have performed better compared to media outlets outside the valley. The stories appearing in Kathmandu media are generally more in-depth and comprehensive. Issues like rape and abuse, which relate to child protection, are covered in greater detail. However, well-researched, in-depth stories on child protection are still not widely visible.

Most news stories from outside the valley are related to formal or ceremonial events. Coverage of children and child rights typically focuses on training, seminars, orientation programs, or discussions. There is also relatively high coverage of news about policy commitments concerning children. This trend can be attributed to training programs that facilitated direct dialogues between media personnel and local government representatives, emphasizing the importance of seeking out interviews with these representatives.

Very few reports from outside the valley are research-based or in-depth. However, a positive aspect is that stories on child protection (CP) and trafficking in persons (TIP) seem to be handled with an appropriate level of sensitivity. The privacy of subjects is well maintained, with illustrations and mosaic photographs often used instead of actual images to protect privacy. Despite the lack of formal written guidelines and adequate editorial instructions (as mentioned by editors during key informant interviews), reporters have adhered to norms such as maintaining the confidentiality of a child's identity. This adherence can be seen as a direct outcome of training that emphasizes child-friendly and ethical reporting practices. The news stories are generally well-rounded and comprehensive.

However, in many stories related to children, the focus on the children themselves is minimal, with adult dignitaries and officials often highlighted in news photos. Gorakhpatra Daily is a prominent media house covering child protection issues, and many online news portals replicate its stories, as well as those from Rastriya Samachar Samiti

(RSS), without proper attribution.

For the socialization and sensitization of reporters to be effective, training and interactions should address both subject matter expertise and journalistic skills related to reporting on children. Meeting this criterion will not only benefit the participating journalists but also enhance the overall media community. Increased coverage of lesser-known issues, such as orphanage trafficking, could inspire journalists to pursue previously underrepresented topics. Additionally, fostering a sense of social responsibility encourages media coverage of child-related issues.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although not all participating journalists were equally active in producing news stories on CP and TIP, coverage in 62 media outlets from the Bagmati, Gandaki, and Karnali provinces accounted for about 31 percent of the total number of participants. It should be noted that some outlets covered these issues only once or twice.

Since many news stories lack professional treatment and in-depth knowledge of CP and TIP, journalists require hands-on training in journalistic skills, including reporting and processing. Journalists can play a crucial role in raising awareness about CP/TIP and holding those in power accountable for child rights violations. Reporting on such sensitive issues requires specialized knowledge of relevant topics and skills, including familiarity with existing legal arrangements, both international and domestic.

To enhance media coverage of child protection effectively, at least three factors must be addressed. First, journalists need access to learning opportunities that enhance their skills, including training programs that equip them with tools for effective reporting on child protection issues. Second, covering child protection issues demands a deep understanding of legal frameworks, international conventions, and ethical considerations. Third, pressure groups, civil society organizations (CSOs), and field experts should be involved in sensitizing journalists, updating them

on the state of child rights, and providing additional resources for better coverage.

Since editors, as policy and execution leaders, have expressed a willingness to collaborate with CSOs for cultivating good stories, CSOs need to develop effective plans for such cooperation. Media institutions can benefit from the expert knowledge of child protection, while national, regional, or international rights groups or CSOs can advance their child protection campaigns through positive media processes. Collaboration between non-media institutions and media organizations should focus primarily on knowledge sharing. CSOs can support media through comprehensive training for reporters and provide fellowships and small grants to encourage high-quality reporting. However, financial support should be systematic and transparent.

The successful working modality of the training employed in the protection project has encouraged reporters to produce a series of media products that could be replicated with necessary modifications as a best practice in the future.



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