



ROLE OF NEWS PAPERS IN IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE ON CHILD RIGHTS

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Media holds a mirror to allow people to see who they are, what they do and why their actions have consequences. It systematises the complex phenomena of human hopes and struggles to help people, the communities and the nation to move forward towards better daily life.

Media is a powerful agent of socialisation. It influences every one, irrespective of age, sex, social status etc. Modernisation has converted media into an indispensable part of peoples' life. It can bring about desirable changes among the mass people, keeping them vigilant and informed about the world. Media as a stimulant satisfies the information needed by the people to widen their horizon and therefore this information must be dispersed undiluted. Due to its power to influence on attitude and behaviour of the general public, it has been playing a significant role in most of all social, political and development sectors in planning and policy making on national and international level. Similarly, media is also playing a major role in promotion of children development. It places the knowledge of child rights and its violation in the minds of the public and on the political agenda.

Children whose rights are guaranteed and respected grow up into responsible adults. It is therefore crucial to protect children by guaranteeing their rights as they grow up. Due to which there is a tremendous need for the media and communication to contribute to the protection of child rights.

Print media being the first rank holder in credibility ranking (FICCI-KPMG Report, 2012), has the potential to create mass awareness about the significant issues pertaining to child rights by publishing various articles, special features, interviews and case studies on child rights. Therefore, the present study entitled, "**Role Of News Papers In Imparting Knowledge On Child Rights**" was conducted with the following objectives:

- i. to find out the prioritized issue related to child rights on each news paper and
- ii. to identify the overlooked children issues that should be advocated

Materials and methods

Content analysis method was adopted for the study. Four highly circulated local newspapers (The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Asamiya Pratidin and Amar Asom) were traced for twelve months i.e. January to December, 2012.

Findings

it was found that the total space given to news/views by all four newspapers – *the Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Amar Asom and Asamiya Pratidin*, which was 2,93,88,783sq cm ,out of which the space given to child related issues was 11,33,523sq cm. Therefore, coverage given by all four newspapers to child related issues was merely 3.8 per cent of the total news/views area.

Table-1 Total space given to Child related issues in The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Amar Asom and Asamiya Pratidin from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Sl. No.	News papers	Total space given to news/views(sq.cm)	Total space for children's issues (sq.cm)	Percentage (%)
1	<i>The Assam Tribune</i>	73,45,802	3,40,458	4.63%
2	<i>The Sentinel</i>	79,59,145	3,19,162	4.01%
3	<i>Amar Asom</i>	61,10,434	2,18,754	3.58%
4	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i>	79,73,402	2,55,149	3.2%
5	Total	2,93,88,783	11,33,523	3.8%

The Assam Tribune gave 3,40,458 sq cm space to children's issues out of 73,45,802 sq cm news/views area. It accounted to maximum 4.63% per cent of the total content excluding ad area. *The Sentinel* gave 79,59,145 sq cm space of total news/views and the space given to children's issues was 3,19,162 sq cm, accounting to percentage of 4.01 per cent among the four newspapers. *Amar Asom* gave an area of 61,10,434 sq cm to news/views out of which 2,18,754 sq cm coverage was given to children related issues, which is 3.58 percent of area contributed to children related issues. *Asamiya Pratidin* gave 2,55,149



sq cm coverage to children related issues out of 79,73,402 sq cm total content area excluding ads. *Asamiya Pratidin* gave least amount of coverage to children related issues with 3.2 per cent only. Thus the findings satisfies the second hypothesis of the study.

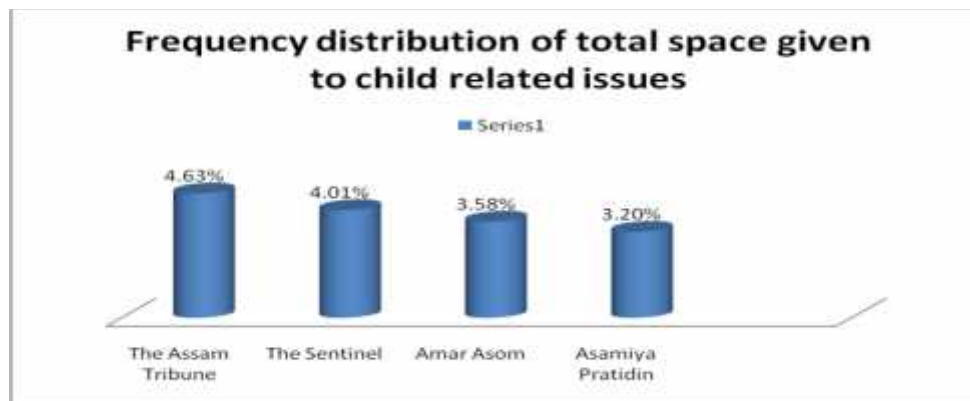


Fig.-1 Total space given to Child related issues in The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Amar Asom and Asamiya Pratidin from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Fig.1 shows the comparison among the four newspapers regarding space given for the coverage of child related issues. *The Assam Tribune* has the highest coverage and *Asamiya Pratidin* with least coverage on child related issues.

The total space given to child related issues, including pictures (photos, ads, cartoons) is mentioned in table 5.3. The total percentage of children's issues along with pictures in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* accounts to 4.6 per cent. *The Assam Tribune* gave total space of 4, 25, 748 sq cm to child related news/views, including pictures which accounts to 5.7 per cent. *The Sentinel* gave 3,79,658 sq cm coverage to child related news/views out of total area of 79,59,145 sq cm, thus giving 4.7 per cent. *Asamiya Pratidin* gave 2,97,867 sq cm coverage to child related news/views giving 4.1 per cent and least amount of child related coverage, including pictures (photos, ads and cartoons) was given by *Amar Asom* with 2,52,460 sq cm (3.7%).

Table-2 Total space given to Child related issues (including pictures) in The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Amar Asom and Asamiya Pratidin from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Sl. No.	News papers	Total space given to news/views (sq.cm)	Total space for children's issues(including pictures) (sq.cm)	Percentage (%)
1	<i>The Assam Tribune</i>	73,45,802	4,25,748	5.7%
2	<i>The Sentinel</i>	79,59,145	3,79,658	4.7%
3	<i>Amar Asom</i>	61,10,434	2,52,460	4.1%
4	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i>	79,73,402	2,97,867	3.7%
5	Total	2,93,88,783	13,55,733	4.6%

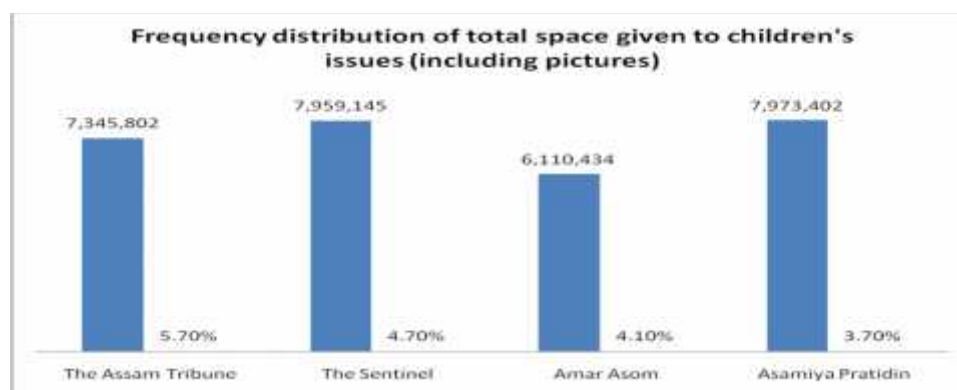


Fig.-2 Total space given to Child related issues (including pictures) in The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, Amar Asom and Asamiya Pratidin from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.



the above table shows the total space provided to children pictures in *The assam tribune*, *The sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* during the study period of one year. Overall, children advertisements including commercial and social advertisements of Government schemes for children got maximum coverage 139895 sq cm of space followed by children photos and cartoons with coverage of 53268 sq cm and 29047 sq cm respectively.

Table 3. Total space given to child related issues by the four dailies including pictures, advertisements and cartoons.

Sl.No	Children pictures	<i>The Assam Tribune</i> (sq. cm)	<i>The Sentinel</i> (sq. cm)	<i>Amar Asom</i> (sq. cm)	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i> (sq. cm)	Total
1.	Photos	18763 (22 %)	18148 (30%)	7685 (22.8%)	8672 (20.3%)	53268 (24%)
2.	Advertisements	53733 (63%)	35693 (59%)	21976 (65.2%)	28493 (66.7%)	139895 (63%)
3.	Cartoons	12794 (15%)	6655 (11%)	4045 (12%)	5553 (13%)	29047 (13%)
4.	Total	85290	60496	33706	42718	222210

Majority of photos were given by *The Sentinel* with 30 percent followed by *Amar Asom* with 22.8 percent, *The Assam Tribune* with 22 percent and *Asamiya Pratidin* with 20.3 percent. Maximum ads coverage was done by *Asamiya Pratidin* (66.7%), followed by *Amar Asom* (65.2%), *The Assam Tribune* (63%) and *The Sentinel* with 59 percent. Cartoons in the interest of children were in maximum given by the *Assam Tribune* (15%) and the least by *The Sentinel* (11%).

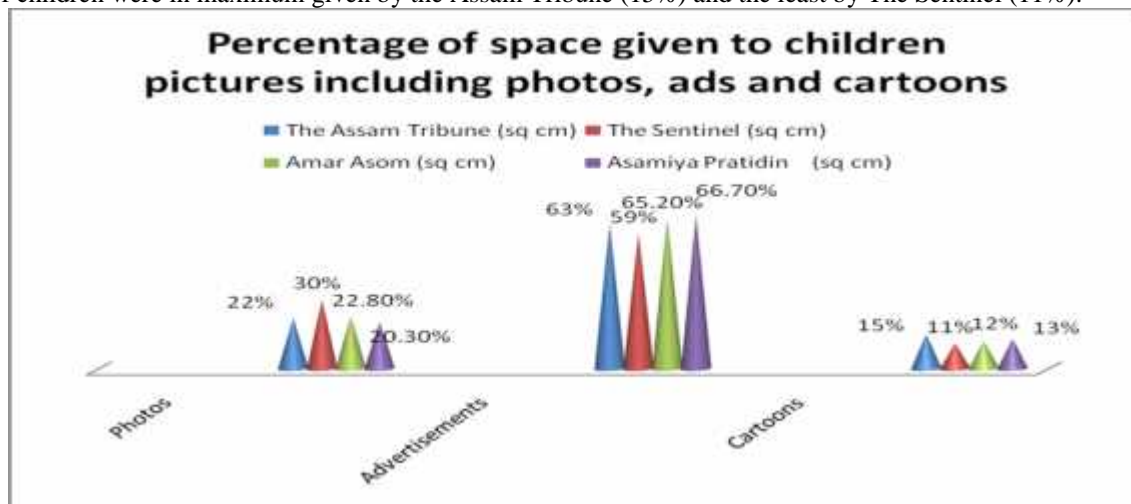


Figure 3. Total space given to child related issues by the four dailies including pictures, advertisements and cartoons

The table above shows that maximum coverage was given to general photos of children with 28346 sq cm (27.01%) followed by violation of child rights with 26 percent. Least importance was given to girl child with 10164 sq cm (9.6%) of coverage. Children general photos were majorly given by *Amar Asom* with 32.92 percent. Second place was taken by *The Assam Tribune* with 28.6 percent followed by *Asamiya Pratidin* with 26.98 percent and *The Sentinel* with 22.58 percent. Children achievement photos were in maximum covered by *The Assam Tribune* with 32.20 percent followed by *Asamiya Pratidin* with 24.53 percent, *Amar Asom* with 21.35 percent and *The Sentinel* with 15.17 percentages.

Table 4. Total space given to children photos in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Sl.No.	Children photos	<i>The Assam Tribune</i> (sq.cm)	<i>The Sentinel</i> (sq.cm)	<i>Amar Asom</i> (sq.cm)	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i> (sq.cm)	Total
1	General	5366 (28.60%)	8059 (22.58%)	7234 (32.92%)	7687 (26.98%)	28346 (27.01%)
2	Achievements	6042 (32.20%)	5415 (15.17%)	4692 (21.35%)	6989 (24.53%)	23138 (22.05%)
3	Violation of child	2814	11964	7054	5448	27280



	rights	(15%)	(33.52%)	(32.1%)	(19.12%)	(26%)
4	Girl child	2064 (11%)	3294 (9.23%)	996 (4.53%)	3810 (13.37%)	10164 (9.68%)
5	Children in conflict zone	2477 (13.2%)	6960 (19.50%)	2000 (9.10%)	4559 (16%)	15996 (15.24%)
6	Total	18763	35692	21976	28493	104924

Violation of child rights photos were majorly given by *The Sentinel* with 33.53 percent. *Amar Asom* gave 32.1 percent, *Asamiya Pratidin* gave 19.02 percent and *The Assam Tribune* gave fifteen percent photos of violation of child rights. Girl child photos were in maximum given by *Asamiya Pratidin* with 13.37 percent followed by *The Assam Tribune* (11%) and *The Sentinel* (9.23%). Least number of girl child photos was given by *Amar Asom* with only 4.53 percent.

Children in conflict zone were published majorly by *The Sentinel* with 19.5 percent followed by *Asamiya Pratidin* with 16 percent, *The Assam Tribune* with 13.2 percent and least percentage of publication was given by *Amar Asom* with 9.10 percent.

According to table 4.6, the total number of news/views items in four newspapers is 31,916, out of which only 1006 items appeared related to children's issues. Therefore, the overall frequency of 3.15 percent of child related issues in all the four newspapers is extremely low. In newspaper-wise comparison, *The Assam Tribune* gave 9,046 total news/views items, out of which, 339 issues were related to children. The percentage of child related news/views in *The Assam Tribune* is 3.74 per cent. *The Sentinel* gave 242 children's issues out of 8050 total news/views items published.

Amar Asom published 7260 total news/views items during one year study period, out of which it gave 216 child related issues, with 2.97 per cent. *Asamiya Pratidin* gave 7560 total news/views items, among which the contribution towards child rights were merely 209 items, which is 2.76 percent of the total news/views published

Table-5 – Frequency of Child Rights issues in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Sl.No.	Newspapers	Number of views/news	No. Of children news/views	percentage
1	<i>The Assam Tribune</i>	9046	339	3.74%
2	<i>The Sentinel</i>	8050	242	3.00%
3	<i>Amar Asom</i>	7260	216	2.97%
4	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i>	7560	209	2.76%
5	Total	31,916	1006	3.15%

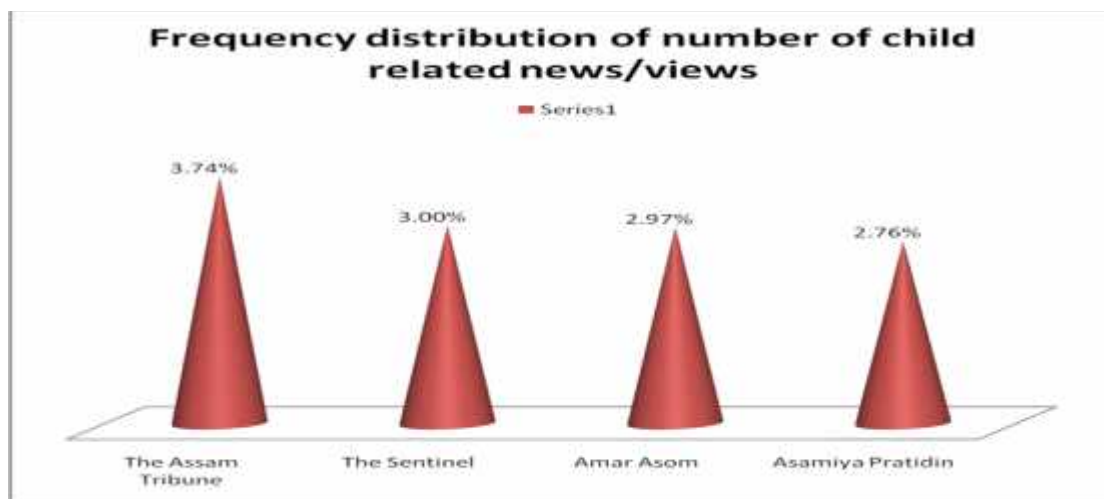


Fig.4 – Frequency of Child Rights issues in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.



The highest percentage of coverage of child related issues was published by *The Assam Tribune* (3.74%), followed by *The Sentinel* (3.00%) and *Amar Asom* (2.97%). The least percentage of children's issues were covered by *Asamiya Pratidin* which is only 2.76 percent as shown by the graph 5.5

Table-5.8. Placement of Child related issues in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Sl.No.	Placement	<i>The Assam Tribune</i>	<i>The Sentinel</i>	<i>Amar Asom</i>	<i>Asamiya Pratidin</i>
1	First page	38 (11.5%)	14 (5.78%)	48 (22.2%)	43 (20.5%)
2	Editorial	55 (16.2%)	3 (1.23%)	10 (4.6%)	12 (5.7%)
3	International	17 (5.01%)	47 (19.4%)	06 (2.77%)	09 (4.3%)
4	Other	230 (67.8%)	178 (73.5%)	152 (70.3%)	145 (69.3%)

It was revealed in table 5.8 *The Assam Tribune* had published 16.2 percent of news article related to children in the editorial page followed by 11.5 percent in the first page and only 5.01 percent of issues was in the international page. Remaining 67.8 percent of news/views were on other pages. In case of *The Sentinel* 19.4 percent of news/views were covered by international page whereas the first and the editorial page contained 5.78 percent and 1.23 percent of news items respectively. Majority (73.5%) of the news/views on children were on other pages. While in case of *Amar Asom* 22.2 percent of news was published in the first page, 4.6 percentage of news was on editorial page. International page had least percentage of news on children with 2.77 percent only. Maximum coverage of news was on other pages with 70.3 percentages. *Asamiya Pratidin* gave 24.4 percent of news/views of children on Editorial page followed by 5.7 percent on first page and only 4.8 percent on international page. Remaining 69.3 percent of news was on other pages.

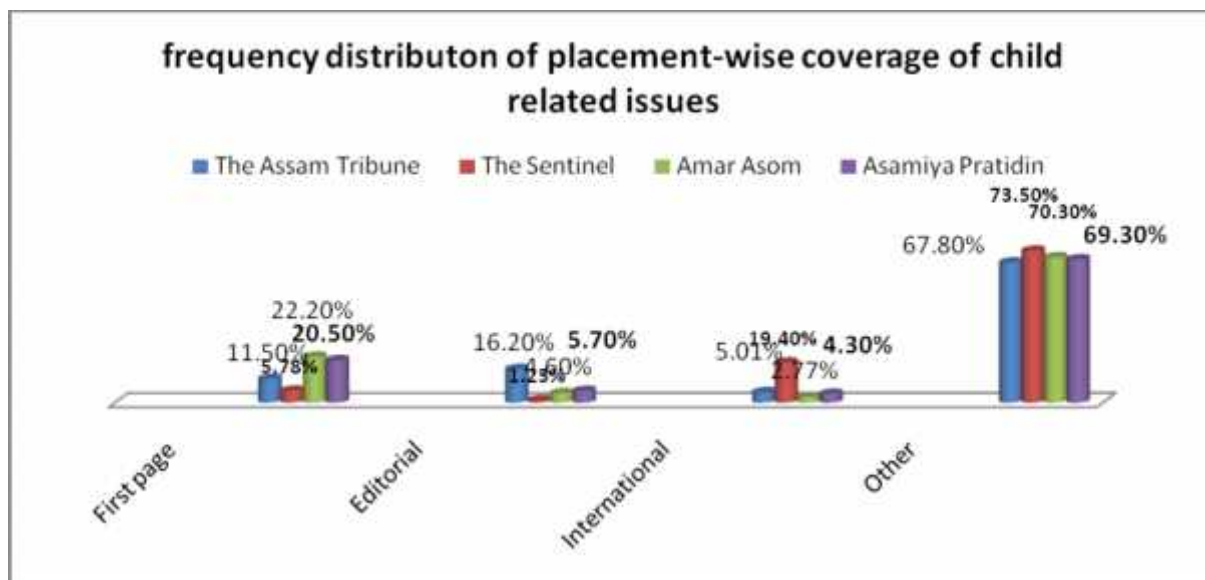


Fig.-5.7. Placement of Child related issues in *The Assam Tribune*, *The Sentinel*, *Amar Asom* and *Asamiya Pratidin* from Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2012.

Further the study showed that all the newspapers had published the issue of organisational activities in a large scale. However, the news seemed mostly to be descriptive of activities such as trainings, workshops and seminars. If the follow up report of such programs and its impact on the target group were reflected then the coverage on this issue would have been called a real one in true sense. Even minor activities of established organizations are presented as news. Reporting seems to be done the way these organizations want them to be. The right to information seems to be thus limited to only what is shown rather what is hidden behind. The civic society would have benefited a lot with information plus in-depth analysis based on studies and researches.



It was found that news/views on violation of child rights under various parameters received almost equal importance as to the child rights issues. Incidences on violation of child rights were more sensationalised in order to boost up the circulation.

During the period news/views on violation of right to education was on discussion in all the newspapers. It was the most prioritized issue. This has helped the readers to know about the law and child rights related to education.

There were very less reporting on corporal punishment and female foeticide and infanticides issues with an average coverage on child labour and trafficking. These are the burning issues of present day and should be reported sufficiently.

While looking into the treatment given by the four newspapers, it was found that the majority of the news/views were for general awareness followed by sensitised issues. Least importance was given for the upliftment of the children. Print media has a huge potential to work for the upliftment of the children, but it was very disappointing to find that newspapers were not fully exploited for educating the mass people on child rights but rather they gave more importance for its sale value.

Conclusion

It may be concluded as News Papers studied covered news article on children issues were more incidental however article on RTE, child labours, female infanticides, and various survey reports were very informative.

The language used by the reporters is always very respectful and many times they are found to be sensitive to the issues related to child rights. But there have been numerous occasions when the incidents have just been reported, without in depth analysis and going to the root of the problems faced by children.

Recommendation

It may be recommended that Children related news/articles and news on news papers should be more analytical and solution oriented. Children issues should be given more priority in newspapers coverage to bring the issues on public eyes therefore more news on child rights should be given place in front page rather than inside pages.

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