

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

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Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

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MPHRC AND PRINT MEDIA: COMPLIMENTING EACH OTHER
IN REDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS' VIOLATION CASES



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

Protection of human rights across the nation has become a central point of concern for the government and administration. In addition to the union and state governments and their administrations, there are several non-government organisations which are working in various parts of the country for protection of human rights.

Considering the gravity of the cases of human rights violation and their

redressal, human rights commissions have been established at both central and state-level. And with media getting more sensitive towards the human rights' violation incidents, the cases of such natures have started coming to the limelight as a result of which the victims get the justice most of the time. The activeness of both human rights commission and media has collectively been very successful in redressing the issues of people being denied their rights in different context.

If we take a look at the situation of human rights reporting in print media in the state of Madhya Pradesh, in the last few years it is very encouraging. Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC), have taken cognizance in many cases after they came to the fore through media, following which government and administration came into action and ensured justice to the victims of human

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rights' violation and penalized the culprits. Madhya Pradesh has seen many such incidents in the past few years.

This research paper would attempt to study the cases which were reported by media in the state and following which MPHRC took cognizance and ensured justice to the victims.

KEYWORDS

Human rights, human rights violation, media, human rights commission etc.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives: The research paper aims at examining the role of newspapers published from Bhopal in raising the issues of human rights violations from across the state and serving as an important tool for MPHRC in redressing such cases.

Hypothesis: Both media especially newspapers and Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) are helping each other in identifying the cases of human rights violations in the state and bringing justice to the victims in addition to penalizing the accused.

Research Methodology: The research methodology adopted to carry out this research was CASE STUDY wherein the researchers would visit the MPHRC in the month of January and would discuss the cases reported in the newspapers on human rights violations on which the MPHRC took cognizance.

MPHRC & PRINT MEDIA IN BHOPAL:

Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) came into existence in September 1995 with a view to provide easy and close access to the victims of human rights violations in the state. Madhya Pradesh was amongst the first few states to constitute a commission of this kind for the redressal of the cases of human rights violations in the state. The commission enjoys an autonomous status in appointing members, their term's fixation to including investigative agencies and others.

Realizing the power of media as a tool for safeguarding people's right, the commission has a special 'Information and Public Relations Division' which works for creating human rights awareness through print/electronic media, website and printing of various publications and advocacy materials etc. In addition to these, the division of the commission does a review of all the major newspapers published from the state capital in both English and Hindi languages and identifies the stories related to human rights violations in any part of the state. And after coming across any such reports from across the state, they immediately come into action and taking cognizance into the issue, it immediately writes to the concerned authorities of the reported area and seeking immediate intervention from them to penalize the culprits and provide proper compensation, protection and rehabilitation to the victims.

The commission engages into this exercise every day. In this paper, we have outlined the similar stories which were first published in different newspapers of the state capital and then the commission came into action and took cognizance of the reports to ensure justice to the victims of human rights violations and protecting their rights.

Following the reports in the newspapers published every day, the commission took cognizance on many social issues including malnutrition, existence of wine-shops in or around residential colonies,

schools, colleges etc., female feticide, lack of basic infrastructure like poor roads, lack of water supply, power etc.

In addition to issuing notices to the concerned authorities of the regions of origination of the stories, the commission also, on a regular interval, kept making recommendations to the state government and its various departments for ensuring various services and facilities of basic needs in various parts of the state.

The commission was seen very prompt in addressing cases of human rights abuse when the victims of such cases were children, women, poorer, senior citizens, tribal populations as the reports came in the newspapers.

Reports in newspapers published in January, 2015 on which MPHRC took cognizance

The Hitavada – 01/01/2015 – A mentally retarded man died of cold waves right in front of a hospital in Anupur district of Madhya Pradesh owing to the callous attitude of health authorities. A person named, Vinod (35) succumbed to bone chilling cold outside the community health centre where he was dropped by a 108 ambulance three days ago. However, he was not admitted in the hospital due to his mental state.

Deshbandhu – 05/01/2015 – A woman, Bhuribai who came to a community health centre at Piparia was 4 months pregnant and was bleeding but with the absence of a female doctor none came to attend her and her conditions deteriorated further. Following this, she was taken to a private hospital where she was treated after she mortgaged her jewelries.

Dainik Jagaran – 07/01/2015 – A youth named, Devkaran injured himself on the neck with blade at Siddhiganj police station in Ashta district. The report read that he was called at the police station for an interrogation in connection with his brother.

Patrika – 07/01/2015 – Visually impaired children of the organisation, Childs with Special Need (CWSN) were beaten severely with sticks that left dark marks on their backs. The children were initially scared to reveal but some of them gathered courage and disclosed it.

Another report beside this one disclosed that a Gwalior-based de-addiction centre, Recovery Foundation, was applying third degree to torture the innocent children, adolescent and adults admitted their for rehabilitation.

Dainik Jagaran – 09/01/2015 – A youth, Anwar son of Kallu Khan working as temporary assistant to the lineman of the power department died due to electric shock while he was working on an electric pole and fixing an 11kv electric line which had developed some fault. All of sudden the current flew through the lines which claimed his life on the spot. The incident was reported from Shyampur Nikli near Vasudev village of Nasrullaganj district of the state.

Dainik Jagaran – 09/01/2015 – Parents of the girls of Bediya community of Morena district were themselves pushing their children into flesh trading in the cities like Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi and Meerut. Many girls were taken out of schools and were being forced into flesh trading by their parents themselves.

Dainik Jagaran – 11/01/2015 – School children of tribal villages like Parasiya, Salaiya, Barapaudi, Sanaidar, Devri, Hathanpur, Khamarkhua and many others in Bichhua Tehsil of Begamganj district of the state have to cross a river to reach their school as there is no bridge on the river. The basic amenities like roads, electricity, medical and education are missing in the region. Large numbers of school children

have to quit education due to all these problems including absence of power supply due to which they have to remain in dark and face difficulties in studies. The region is dominated by tribal population and their children are not able to study beyond primary education and therefore these villages are completely illiterate.

Dainik Jagaran – 11/01/2015 – Many quakes are operating in state capital and playing with the lives of the patients. Although, a woman had died after being wrongly treated upon by a quake in the old city area of Bhopal after which the clinic was closed but a few months later it reopened and started the exercise again putting the lives of the patients under serious threat. The report revealed that these quakes even mislead the patients by claiming that they could cure even AIDS and cancer like diseases.

Dainik Bhaskar – 13/01/2015 – Hundreds of beds of the Sultania Women's Hospital were more than ten years old upon which the patients were treated. Wheels of around 40 beds were damaged and still they were not changed. According to the report, on many occasions, the beds have collapsed and patients have suffered injury including a recent incident wherein in lady patient who was in the hospital after giving birth to a child fell down on the ground after her bed collapsed. The report read that the beds kept in the Post Operative Unit and General wards were in dilapidated shape.

Dainik Bhaskar – 13/01/2015 – Policemen beat a farmer so mercilessly that his skin below his waste was peeled off. The severely injured farmer named, Tejpal was then taken to the district hospital. The incident was reported from Bijawar in Chhatarpur district of the state. The farmer had reportedly gone to register complaint about loss of crop.

The Hitavada – 18/01/15 – A 35 year old woman of Dhapera village of Lalbarra Block of Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh was sold by the resident of the same village for Rs one lakh to a man on the pretext of getting her job. Accused Chhotu of her village promised her good employment in Bhopal as a domestic help but instead sold her off to a Chhatarpur district resident Ramcharan Kushwaha. But due to everyday torture and abuse by her wife and him she one day managed to escape from there only to fall prey to another tout who again sold her to a Jhansi resident. After succeeding in escaping from there she returned to her home where her parents accepted her but Panchayat levied a fine of Rs 20,000 for her reentry to the society.

Dainik Bhaskar (Local Supplement – DB Star) – 18/01/15 – Many young girls and those in adolescent age had to give up going to the school following continuous eve-teasing by some anti-social elements in areas like Indira Nagar, Meera Nagar and PC Nagar. The report said that the victims also approached the police and apprised them of the situation but nothing was done to prevent the incidents following which they were left with no option but to quit going to their schools.

The Times of India – 21/01/15 – A middle-aged woman delivered a baby at the gates of Sultania Lady Hospital following which the newly-borne baby died. Relatives of the patient alleged that the baby died due to the negligence of the hospital administration.

Raj Express – 23/01/15 – There were various complaints of many sterilization operations performed on women under Family Planning programme of the Central Government to have failed. The report also revealed that due to the negligence of the doctors, the condition of many women became serious and some of them also lost their lives. According to the provisions of the Family Planning programme of the Union Government, the beneficiary must be paid Rs 25,000 if the operation fails but many of them have to run from pillar to post to get the amount and are not paid easily.

Dainik Bhaskar – 25/01/2015 – The report of the newspaper brought to the fore a sensational story which disclosed in Itayada village of Bhind district of the state, 12 daughters and 32 sons were

borne between June, 2010 and August, 2011. Out of them, all the 12 daughters died within 24 hours of their birth while all 32 sons survived and were healthy. The report further read that following the relatives of the deceased daughters could not give satisfactory reasons of their death. The new story also disclosed the fact that more than 60 daughters were dying in the Bhand district due to diseases and other reasons every year.

Navdunia – 26/01/15 – Body of an under-trial inmate at Sevda Sub-jail in Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh was found hanging with a towel in suspicious circumstances. The prisoner named Pawan (25) was in jail in a case of theft and was found hanging from a window. He was rushed to the hospital immediately where he was pronounced dead by the doctors.

Patrika – 28/01/2015 – A 70 year old dies after being attacked by a herd of stray dogs. The old man was admitted to the hospital after sustaining severe injuries following the attack but succumbed to the wounds.

Navdunia – 28/01/2015 – A report in the newspaper reads that a case of untouchability came to the light in Damoh district of the state wherein a two year old girl who was accused of polluting a Gadariya family's utensils as she was from a lower caste. The family sought compensation for purchasing new utensils. The father of the victim, Bhagchandra Prajapati registered a complaint in this regard with the police but to no avail.

Patrika – 29-/01/2015 – More than one thousand dog bites were reported in three months. The report read, quoting Bhopal Municipal Corporation data, said there were more than 2 lakh dogs in the city out of which only 15000 were sterilized.

Navdunia – 30/01/2015 – A police personnel beats a 12 year old girl after she rode the bicycle of his daughter in Indore. He dragged the girl for around half kilometer to his house and a few minutes later the girl came out of the house ablaze and fell on the ground following which she was taken to MY Hospital. The accused was on run with his entire family.

Important findings: After keeping an eye, on a daily-basis (working days), as to how MPHRC uses print media as a tool to locate the victims of human rights violations across the state and reaching out to them to help them out, following facts came to the fore.

- ▲ Print media and MPHRC complement each other in raising and addressing cases related to human rights violations in the state.
- ▲ A total of 21 such reports of human rights violations were identified by the commission on which it took cognizance in January, 2015.
- ▲ One on an average, 0.68 reports were published every day by the newspapers related to human rights violations following which the commission came into action to help the victims.
- ▲ The reports were not only from the state capital and other major cities but from various other parts of the state including the rural and tribal areas.
- ▲ The commission took cognizance on various kinds of social issues reported by media which were of grave concern like addiction, malnutrition, lack of basic amenities, female feticide, exploitation of workers etc.
- ▲ As of the current status of the above-mentioned issues, MPHRC has sent the notice to the concerned authorities of the related areas to take action.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the studies and the findings, it was interesting to see that although, Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission was an organisation especially to be there to protect the human rights of the population of the state and ensure justice, protection and rehabilitation to the victims who were meted out such treatments, it used media as an effective tool in performing its duties. Both media, especially print and MPHRC were seen working in tandem with each other, though not strategically, in redressing the cases of human rights violations in the state. While media gave coverage to the actions taken by the commission on the cases of human rights violations when such incidents occurred in the state, MPHRC took prompt cognizance whenever media brought any incident of such nature to the fore.

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