CHAPTER-1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Media is the fourth pillar of democracy along with the legislature, executive and the judiciary system of our country. It is very important for these pillars to work hand in hand to ensure justice, equality and development of our society. Similarly, a democratic system can run to its utmost potential only when there is a wide participation on the part of the general mass which is not possible without people getting informed about various issues. Reliable information resources are an important constituent of any democratic society.

Today, with the explosion of information, the media of mass communication holds more substance than ever. Media has also turned the world into a global village. Media includes different forms of mass communication ranging from print media, electronic media-audio and visual. It is a powerful agent or tool 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. It has been playing a significant role in most of all social, political and development sectors due to its power to influence on attitude and behaviour of the general public and its outstanding role to design plan and policy on national and international level.

Around the world, the media is the most, Effective Avenue for creating awareness on various issues like education, adult literacy, child education, higher education and distance education. Besides its emphasis on education, stress should also be given on information, culture and recreation. Hutson and
Liddiard (1994) note, that media representations of social problems are important not at least because of the impact that such representations have on "public attitudes".

According to Aggarwal et al. (2001), “The overall tone of the programme should be of humanism and nationalism with a general orientation towards the limitation of potentially negative influence of programme content (especially those of violence and sex).”

Media and its agencies, especially a newspaper or the television channel is a living organism reborn with each news cycles. At its best, it holds a mirror to allow the people to see who they are, what they do and why their actions have consequences. It systematises complex phenomena rooted in human hopes and struggles to help people, communities and the nation to move forward towards better daily life.

Media has wide use in every field. Similarly, media is also playing a major role in promotion of children development. Media have been playing an essential role of placing the problem of child abuse in the minds of the public and on the political agenda. The media defines, what is "normal" and what is "deviant" in society, thus contributing to definitions of what is, and what is not, considered to be child abuse.

Significantly, the media have appeared, at times, to have more influence on child protection policy and practice them than any professional working in the field. This phenomenon is described as "legislation by tabloid".

While acknowledging that the media’s portrayal of child abuse and child protection can have negative consequences for children and their families, it is argued that media coverage is vital if public concern for children is to remain on the political agenda, and if child protection services are to remain accountable.
Media has been playing a very positive role to convert the child right issues into one of the major political and social agendas. In this situation, there has been an urgent need to monitor the information and issues on children covered by the media. The media has 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 (Gough 1996).

Children’s rights are human rights, but children are not always recognised as citizens with such rights. According to UNICEF, “Human rights are not something a richer person gives to a poorer person; nor are they owned by a select few and given to others as a mere favour or gift. They belong to each and every one of us equally, and need to be protected”.

While significant progress has been made over the last century, children’s rights are still violated daily. UNICEF reports that at the start of the 21st century the world has more children living in poverty than it did ten years ago, has more wars and instability and that children remain the most vulnerable and susceptible to abuse of rights. The reality experienced by children in India and the world confirm the need to protect children’s rights.

Today, therefore, Media has a crucial role to play to:

- raise awareness of children’s rights and responsibilities;
- ensure children’s rights are promoted and protected;
- report on failures and neglect;
- highlight successes and
- hold government and society accountable to the commitments made and goals set to promote and protect children’s rights.
Involvement of the media in raising awareness of issues affecting children is important in that the public and policy makers become aware and get involved in safeguarding the rights of children because inadequacy of child policy may encourage violation of child rights. According to Goddard (1994): "Every development in knowledge of the problem of child abuse has been accompanied by disagreements about definitions to be used, the incidence of the problem, theoretical approaches to causation, the perpetrators of abuse, the effects on victims, efficient approaches to practice, the adequacy of child protection policies, and the appropriateness of methodologies chosen to ascertain the ‘truth’ about all of the above."

It is well known that 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. Violations on the rights of children and especially in their formative years of development could lead to irreversible damage and effect which has a bearing on the kind of person they become when they grow up. They could suffer from physical, emotional, social and intellectual imbalance if their rights are violated at various stages of their lives.

There is tremendous potential and need for media and communication to contribute towards the protection of child rights. If media, civil society and children and youth themselves are empowered to provide valid, credible and realistic information that is widely shared with and among citizens and simultaneously educating the mass people across a society on the rights of children as full and protected members based on international standards, then a society will gain understanding of appropriate standards for treating and protecting its children, pressure will be brought to bear on governments to improve legal protection (both through codification of laws and the implementation of these laws) and individuals as parents, teachers, neighbours and children will internalise these norms and systems of protection and practice them in daily life, thus radically improving the protection of human rights of their children.
1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to the study conducted by the ministry of women and child development on child abuse (2007), the picture of the extent to which children are ill-treated in the country is very alarming. Child abuse and neglect is an issue that demands an urgent response from society and the state. Children are vulnerable and require safety and opportunities for development. It is important for all of us to have knowledge about the child rights to ensure happy and healthy childhood of our children. Media plays a vital role in promoting child development. The responsibility of media in projecting child rights in society is extremely crucial and decisive. The Agenda Setting theory of mass communication very well describes the role of media as that the media educate and inform the public and also perform the role of agenda setting which makes mass media audience to consider as important any issue which the media concentrate on. Thereby determining selective issues relating to children such as their right to survival, to development, protection and right to participation and further projecting these in mass media would create awareness and ensure child right protection.

In originating opinions of the mass people on vital issues in a democratic system print media has a larger role to play. It is further strengthened by the fact that during freedom struggle it played a critical role in mass awareness. Media’s role in handling and highlighting children issues is seen to be believed. Due to its wide outreach and affordability, print media can be one of the most effective medium of generating awareness among the mass people on 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. Thereby, the present study entitled, “Role of print media in educating the mass people on child rights: A case study of Kamrup (Metropolitan) District” is well justified.
1.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

1. **CHILD**: According to Child right Convention, every human being who is below the age of 18 years is defined as a “Child”.

2. **CHILD RIGHTS**: These are the human rights of children, which draws particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to the minors.

3. **CHILD ABUSE**: All types of maltreatment towards a child.

4. **CHILD LABOUR**: The employment of a child in an industry or any hazardous place which is considered to be illegal.

5. **MEDIA**: It is a means for mass communication. E.g. T.V., Radio and Newspaper etc.

6. **PRINT MEDIA**: It is the means of mass communication in the form of printed publications such as newspapers, magazine, journals etc.

7. **NEWSPAPERS**: a printed publication which may be a daily or weekly or fortnightly, consisting of few folded sheets of papers and containing news, articles, advertisements and correspondence etc.

8. **FEATURE**: A newspaper or magazine article that deals with a particular topic.

9. **ARTICLE**: A piece of writing included with other news/views in a newspaper.
10. **EDITORIAL**: The opinion of the editor of a newspaper on a particular issue.

1.4. **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**:  

The review of literature is a condensed version of an exhaustive literature survey. It is essential to review all the relevant materials connected with the problem identified. The available literatures collected from various sources are classified under the following headings:

1. **Child Rights**  
2. **Violation of child rights**  
3. **Impact of media**  
4. **Role of media in educating the mass people on child rights**

1. **Concept, definition and types of child rights:**

According to Franklin .B (2001) the consensus on defining children's rights has become clearer in the last fifty years. In a publication by Hillary Clinton (then an attorney) in the year 1973 had stated that, children's rights were a "slogan in need of a definition". According to some researchers, the notion of children’s rights is still not well defined. Till date there is no singularly accepted definition or theory of the rights held by children.

Stainton Rogers (2004) said that, “Children's rights have been argued about for centuries, and the concept touches raw nerves when adult decisions and actions are put to the test”.

The United Nations had introduced the Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC) in the year 1989 and which was ratified by the Indian Government in the year 1992.
Freeman (1996, p. 70) had defined Child Rights as “Rights are entitlements, valuable commodities' which we 'do not have to grovel or beg to get’

According to Melton,(2005, p. 655) “Children's rights have often been perceived as 'a political hot potato', which, rather than advancing children's interests, jeopardise them”.

He further said that, “The idea of children having rights tends to be interpreted as being permissive and giving them too much power and control, while at the same time taking power and control away from parents (or others in authority over children, such as teachers). This 'ideological blindness to the facts at hand and the interests at stake' is not productive”.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), “Children are citizens and social participants in their own right. This is a fundamental shift from the old age 'children should be seen but not heard'. No longer are children are to be thought of as the property of their parents, unwarranted of consideration until the attainment of adulthood. Children are human beings and entitled to the same degree of respect as adult human beings. This position of being people unto themselves, while also being dependent on others, is clearly recognised in the pre-eminent human rights instrument specific to children”. Boshier (2005, p. 7) considered this document as the most widely adopted human rights document in history, ratified by 192 countries, UNCROC provides a powerful backdrop to the Care of Children Act.

“A 'rights' perspective is serving as a powerful antidote to 'needs' in many areas of policy-making. Children's rights breaks through the web of paternalist, protectionist constructions that emphasise children as powerless dependants, separated-off from adult society and effectively excluded from participation in shaping their own destiny. This is especially true in respect of rights that empower children to participate in the process of defining their 'needs', treatment and destiny”. (Woodhead, 1997, p. 81).
Sir William Blackstone (1765-9) had recognized three parental duties to the child. They are maintenance, protection, and education.

According to Manuel. S, “Child rights and protection are guaranteed in the Constitution of India. Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(a), 21, and 23 include children in their rights to equality, protection from discrimination, freedom of speech and expression, protection of life and liberty, and prohibition of trafficking and forced labour respectively”.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which enunciated ten principles for the protection of children's rights, including the universality of rights, the right to special protection, and the right to protection from discrimination, among other rights.

2. Violation of child rights

Historically, children have been accorded little, if any, status in the society. Cleverley and Phillips (1987) and Archard (1993) had argued that children were deprived of rights and perceived as the property of their parents or guardians; they could be treated any way their 'owners' saw fit. In this context, community awareness and acceptance of the reality of child abuse, particularly child abuse perpetrated by family members, has been slow. It was believed that children's stories are not trustworthy, and believes that parents always act in the best interests of their children, appear to be easier for communities to accept.

The Study on Child Abuse (2007) by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) found that many children still suffer from abuse. These abuses include not only physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, but also poor
education and health, hazardous employment, early marriage, and discrimination.

NFHS-3 (2005-06) stated in their report that, “The most basic rights of survival and development are not guaranteed for all Indian children. Every year, 2.5 million children die in India, “with girls being 50% more likely to die”. The mortality rate for children under five is 74 for every 1000 children. The rate is higher in rural areas and for children born to teenagers or to parents with little education or wealth”.

According to Goddard (1994: 9), "Every development in knowledge of the problem of child abuse has been accompanied by disagreements about definitions to be used, the incidence of the problem, theoretical approaches to causation, the perpetrators of abuse, the effects on victims, efficient approaches to practice, the adequacy of child protection policies, and the appropriateness of methodologies chosen to ascertain the ‘truth’ about all of the above."

Franklin and Horwath (1996) had observed a concerning change in society's perception towards children. This was further extended to adolescence period by Tomison (1997).

Franklin and Horwath (1996, P 315) said that children are no more perceived as 'innocent' and 'innately good', it seems a child or young person may now be portrayed as a 'powerful, destructive human being'.

Walby (1996: 25) argues: 'Children and childhood need to be better appreciated; families with children need a more supportive environment; issues affecting children need more sophisticated debate; and services for children and the people who work for them need more support from the public.'

“The best interest of the child will be the parents’ basic concern” (singhal, 2008)
According to Abdulla A & Baby shari P.A, “In case of child, there are many chances for the abuse to remain unnoticed. The children are usually unaware of the fact that children too have rights”.

They further added that much of the adult population is unaware of the rights of the children.

Homer Folks (the chairman of united states national child labour committee) defined child labour as any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable minimum of education on their needed recreation.

“Children are constantly subjected to benign oppression into all the other violations that any under-represented minority group experiences”, (Koocher 1976)

As per UNICEF (2005) report on the state of the world’s children under the title ‘Childhood under threat’, speaking about India, states that millions of Indian Children are equally deprived of their rights to survival, health, nutrition, education and safe drinking water. It is reported that 63 percent of them go to bed hungry and 53 percent suffer from chronic malnutrition. The report says that 147 million children live in kuccha houses, 77 million do not use drinking water from tap, 85 million are not being immunised, 27 million are severely underweight and 33 million have never been to school. It estimates that 72 million children in India between five and 14 years do not have access to basic education.

In a study on Child Abuse (2007) by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) found that many children still suffer from abuse. These abuses include not only physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, but also poor education and health, hazardous employment, early marriage, and discrimination
3. Impact of media

According to Hutson and Liddiard (1994), “Media representations are the primary source of information on social problems for many people”.

Similarly Maley (2000) noted that, "In social and cultural matters, the various media provide the main platforms of debate, and their choices of subjects, participants and opinions shape the agenda and much of its content."

McDevitt (1996, p. 270) cited the note of O'Keefe and Reed (1990, p. 215) as 'the media is best in being effective at building citizen awareness of an issue" but for more complex attitudinal or behavioural change, more direct forms of citizen contact and intervention will be required.'

Lindsey (1994, p. 163) supported the above note by saying that, “Media has a central role in mediating information and forming public opinion. The media casts an eye on events that few of us directly experience and renders remote happenings observable and meaningful.”

Sanders et al. (2000, p 939-940) said that “Media prevention needs to provide information about both the problem behaviour and how to deal with it effectively”.

“Press releases are one of the most important primary sources of media news stories” (Brawley 1995).

Characteristically, controversial issues attracts comment in the literature and have been reviewed in the print media (Campbell 1989; Donovan 1992; Scott 1993; Hellen 1998; Musiel 1999; Pristel 1999; Edwards 1999).

Similar to mass media, mass communication campaigns also have 'a crucial role to play in setting agendas for professional, administrative and political leaders and decision makers'. This was mentioned by (Marcus, Owen, Forsythe, Cavill and Fridinger 1998, p. 375).
Stanley and Goddard (in press) have noted that media coverage has a major impact.

Further Hutson and Liddiard (1994, p. 73) noted that, media representations of social problems are important not least because of its impact on "public attitudes". But, they argued that the stories provided by the media are the "main source of information" for most people (1994, p. 73).

Some researchers have also found that media may have both positive and negative impact on the mass people.

Rajkhowa (2013), quoted that “may be, its due to influence of media or real incidents on the ground, the children are becoming more prone to violent activities.

4. Role of media in educating the mass people on child rights

Children and young people are each day constructing their self identities, which are highly influenced by the media. The media frames public discourse and although there have been many studies into the harm stemming from media effects, it is important to consider media responsibility in its influential role as creator of perceptions rather than concentrating purely on these effects.

Gough (1996), said that “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”.
Giordano and Stan (1992: 29), while writing about the outcomes of a seminar, "Focus on Children: The Beat of the Future", which was held at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in the United States, noted that "mere coverage of issues affecting children places journalists in the role of advocate".

Specifically, it is apparent that the perception of the society and the young people can be reflected and identified through media's conceptualisation of children and young people, and its reporting on both physical discipline of children and child abuse. Therefore it is very much significant in reflecting and defining society’s perceptions of children and young people (Franklin and Horwath 1996), and what is and what is not acceptable behaviour towards children.

According to Corby (1993) by accepting position i.e. "the issues of childhood and child abuse are closely linked", it therefore follows to be effective in contributing to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the media must not merely focus on the issue of child abuse, but must also draw attention to the perceptions and the status of children and young people in society.

Unfortunately, attitudes towards children, as portrayed in the print media, are clearly ambivalent. While going through the past studies, it was found that the coverage of children’s issues has not been encouraging. In many of the cases, they were either shunned or inadequately covered.

For example, Ridley (2000) had found that the Children's Express, a UK charity which teaches children journalism and gives them the opportunity to report on issues concerning children, analysed how children are portrayed in both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. They found that children are stereotyped and that childhood is portrayed neither realistically nor appropriately: "the media portrays an image of the child which affects people’s opinions and thereby political decision making"
Indeed, assessment of the media’s portrayal of children by Franklin and Horwath (1996) revealed that the majority of stories describe children as either victims or as out of control, or even as evil. They further added that “although children’s vulnerability and resilience are the focus of a number of articles, there is far less emphasis on children as responsible citizens, or on children as autonomous individuals with rights”. In some articles children appear to be coveted, but the emphasis appears to be on their physical cuteness, novelty appeal, or sensational arrival into an adult centric world. “Children are portrayed as more of a burden, expense, and appendage to adults than as the adults of the future — society’s most important investment” (Goddard, Saunders and De Bortoli: research in progress).

The overall amount of good news in the media can be well reflected by an Australian survey of 600 people found more than half the respondents thought news stories about young people were negative – only 18% could remember positive stories in the previous 12 months. Such perceptions have the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes about young people.

UNICEF’s *Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children*, which encourages reporting on children and young people that does not place them at risk of retribution or stigmatisation. Reporting on health issues, particularly mental health issues, concerning children and young people can be sensitive and present challenges in terms of key messages being promoted. This is particularly pertinent in dealing with suicide. Reports on abuse sometimes depersonalise the child involved by referring to them as ‘it’ instead of ‘him’ or ‘her’, when journalists are attempting to avoid identifying of the child involved. To minimise breaches of privacy and possible safety risks, public reports should not disclose personal information which identifies children and young people.

Nahed (2005) conducted a study which aimed to investigate the role of the family and social psychological guidance and media on overcoming the adolescence stop problem. To achieve the objective of the study questionnaire
was made. The findings of his study showed that the means of media have a positive role in the availability of good religious and moral education for adolescents.

Khamakhem (2002) conducted another study in this domain entitled "Radio and Television children programs and child rights" The study aimed to know the extent of the suitability of radio and T.V children programs to Arab legislations according to child rights.

While guiding the children and ensuring their rights, the society has a great deal of responsibility. Cohen, Ooms and Hutchins 1995; Korbin and Coulton (1996) said that, “Responsibility for children is not entrusted solely to parents or guardians but to whole communities”.

Media plays a significant role in forming and influencing the people’s attitude and behaviour Goddard and Saunders (2001) in their paper on Child abuse and the media, Issues Paper 14, had drawn attention to the essential role of the media in increasing society's awareness of, and response to, child abuse and neglect.

“By understanding the influences of media and how to use the media constructively, may thus be an essential tool for those who advocate for children, young people, and their families”. (Brawley, 1995).

The effectiveness of mass media in the prevention of child abuse and neglect is debatable. Many arguments are still going on in this topic. It was argued by Rayner (1996) that “media campaigns are bloody expensive' and their impact is difficult to determine. Expensive media campaigns may be hard to justify in a political climate where limited funds and resources are provided to address children's needs”.

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It was observed by Wurtele and Miller-Perrin (1993) that, “media coverage of child sexual assault has contributed to demystifying and reducing the secrecy that has characteristically surrounded its occurrence”.

The media have played a key role in periodically placing the issue of child abuse on the public agenda. Olafsen, Corwin and Summit (1993) have argued that the cycles of awareness followed by suppression have typified society's response to child sexual abuse. Arguably, this has been society's response to all forms of child abuse and neglect of children. Campaigns on mass media education and prevention, present one means of breaking cycles of suppression and denial.

Moreover, as claimed by Tomison (1997) that the children should not be perceived as 'powerful' and 'evil' beings, which may 'dehumanise' children and serve to justify child abuse. He further contended that, “the negative portrayal of children in the media may result in victims of abuse blaming themselves for their abuse. Victims may be led to believe that they deserved the assaults perpetrated against them, and thus accept their abuse as justified”.

Gough (1996) said that “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”.

The article by (Kempe et al. 1962) on "The Battered-Child Syndrome" in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* was important in creating the sense of an urgent national problem._. According to Barbara Nelson (1984), this "caused a storm" in the medical and mass media, with the AMA contributing a press release entitled "Parental abuse looms in childhood deaths". Nelson argues that while the "rediscovery" of child abuse as a social issue is usually attributed to the work of Kempe and his colleagues

Nelson (1984) had termed the media’s role as important "in transforming the once-minor charity concern called ‘cruelty to children’ into an important social welfare issue". He further analysed media coverage of child abuse using the
"issue-attention cycle" which was described by Anthony Downs (1972). Downs proposed that this cycle of interest in a problem "is rooted both in the nature of certain domestic problems and in the way major communications media interact with the public".

Nelson (1984) analysed that “The growth in the number of articles on child abuse in professional journals (which as Nelson notes, feed the broader media) was also accompanied by a growth in the number of journals. These factors have allowed increased coverage of child abuse in professional journals without excluding other topics”.

Today there are various journals on child abuses published by different countries such as the UK-based journal **Child Abuse Review** published a special issue devoted to media coverage of child abuse and neglect. In Australia, **Children Australia** has carried a number of articles on the subject. The Queensland Crime Commission Police Service **Project Axis: Child Sexual Abuse in Queensland: Selected Conference Papers** included a major paper devoted to analysis of media coverage of child sexual abuse (Goddard and Saunders 2000b).

Goddard and Liddell (1995) note, the dominant academic analyses tend to rely on Cohen’s (1972) "moral panic" approach.

Franklin and Parton (1991), in their review of the media approaches to child abuse "scandals" in the UK make a number of criticisms, suggesting that events tend to be sensationalised and trivialised, vital issues are misrepresented, and scapegoats are sought. Franklin and Lavery (1989) has described the result as "legislation by tabloid".

Alison Taylor (1998) made efforts in bringing the abuse of children in "care" in North Wales to public attention were supported by extensive explorations of the problems by the print media (Goddard 2000).

“Media representations are the primary source of information on social problems for many people”, (Hutson and Liddiard 1994).
Maley (2000) noted that: "In social and cultural matters, the various media provide the main platforms of debate, and their choices of subjects, participants and opinions shape the agenda and much of its content."

Giordano and Stan (1992) while writing about the outcomes of a seminar, "Focus on Children: The Beat of the Future", held at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in the United States, note the "mere coverage of issues affecting children places journalists in the role of advocate"

Further Franklin and Horwath (1996) had added by saying that, “Media reporting on both physical discipline of children and child abuse, is significant in reflecting and defining society’s perceptions of children and young people”.

“The negative media coverage of child protection responses to child abuse has led to the development of more sophisticated media strategies on the part of the organisation” ((Goddard and Liddell 1995; Franklin and Parton 2001).

Mshindi (1993) observes that necessary attention have not been paid to the discussions on child survival and development, as much as they deserved. He further stated that the pressures to boost up circulation was the major reason for most of the media houses to concentrate on those issues that will generate some debate and hold the interest of the readers. The new/views on children have failed to generate the same interest among its readers. Due to which the media with objectives to make profit find the news/views on children is not favourite and consider them as least important. Usually they cover those issues like child abuses which are sensational and support them in profit making.

Mshindi notes that newspapers very rarely consider any issue on the child’s survival and development as an important feature. He also argues that since Children’s issues are not sensational therefore they have not drawn attention of the media persons.
According to Bwire and Wenje (2000) said that as the children’s issues do not make any worthy news and since their rights rarely “make news”, they are going to occupy the inside pages for many years to come. They further cited the following reasons behind the mediocre performance of giving child rights violation lukewarm attention are:

- in order to boost their circulation, the print media is more keen to cover political and entertainment news and

- the child rights issues lacks research or in-depth study by the reporters.

In a study conducted by Ng’ang’a (1999) in Kenya accuses the media of doing too little to explain to the society what child rights issues are. She says the media focuses more attention to violation of children’s rights and child protection whereas very less is done towards the amplification and promotion of the child rights protection.

According to Ng’ang’a, since Kenya is a member of international community and has signed international conventions and declarations dealing with child rights, therefore the print media should be utilised as a tool to educate children and the adults about the child rights and protection. The Kenyan newspaper i.e. The Kenya Times newspaper, should accept the challenge to do more in promoting child rights and child protection.

Her conclusion is perhaps reinforced with a study done by African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse (ANPPCAN) in February 2000.

She found in her study that among the respondents although 96 per cent of adults and 80 per cent of children were aware of violations of child’s rights but according to them the print media did not feature as a source of information about child rights. In her 1998 publication, she mentioned that the value of media for children and by the children lie in letting children speak for
themselves, treating them as equals, and seeking their opinion about issues covered in the media.

All these foregoing arguments indicate that the media is a powerful instrument, which can be effectively used in educating the mass people on child rights. The media is valuable as a change agent of attitudes and behaviour of individuals and as means of giving the children a better tomorrow. Media has the power to influence people in changing their perception regarding several issues, this can be very well utilised in its process of agenda setting.

Severin and Tankard (1997) had set casual hypothesis suggesting that media content has an influence on the public perception of the importance of issues. He defined the process of agenda setting as the capability of media, to raise the importance of an issue in the mind of its readers through repeated news coverage. They argue that the media can be used to influence polices and the way people think. Moreover the media through the process of setting agenda can immensely change attitude of the mass people into positive attributes towards the children’s rights.

Arguing in the same vein, Nyamnjoh (1995), stated that in order to change attitude of an individual and ways, and translate theories into practice so as to bring about behavioural changes among the people and transform the society, an individual needs vast amounts of information and persuasion which can only be met through the media as the source through which information multiplies.

Daniel Lerner, in his book, “The passing of the traditional society”, argues on the role of media by saying that the mass media can bring about innovative changes by widening the horizons of individuals. He explains the role of media as an educator, trainer, and a change agent of socio-cultural values.
Therefore, as the world increasingly has become mediated through mass media, the role of the media in enhancing and influencing the realisation of the children’s rights through its coverage is paramount.

Keeping in mind the above reviews, the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1.5. OBJECTIVES:

1. To know the children’s issues those are more frequently published in the print media.
2. To find out the prioritized issue related to child rights on each newspaper.
3. To identify the overlooked children issues that should be advocated.
4. To ascertain the role of print media in educating the mass people on child rights

1.6. HYPOTHESES:

Hypotheses provide an initial start to a detailed research through which the facts are confirmed or rejected.

The following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. The mass people of Kamrup (Metropolitan) District do not have satisfactory knowledge on child rights.
2. The percentage of child rights issues are very less compared to the total number of news/views present in the newspapers.
1.7. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

In order to achieve the set objectives, research studies need tested procedures, proven techniques and standard tests. So, many times the tools and techniques adopted in the research become more important than the results.

This section deals with the description of the methods and techniques employed to accomplish the objectives laid down for the study. The relevant aspects have been presented under the following subheadings:

- Data source
- Research design
- Study area
- Population of the study
- Sample design
- Data collecting method
- Construction of tools and techniques for data collection
- Pre-testing of the tools
- Statistical analysis

Data source:

The study is based on primary data. The primary data were collected through survey method from the respondents. Similarly, various news, news features, analysis, news articles based on child rights were collected and analysed. The present study is based on coverage of newspapers on child rights issues from the year 2012 i.e. 01/01/12-31/12/12.
**Research design:**

The study is empirical in nature. Considering the objectives of the study, survey method and content analysis method were employed for the present study. The study focused on four basic rights of children, they are:

- The right to survival: to life, health, nutrition, name and nationality
- The right to development: to education, care, leisure, recreation
- The right to protection: from exploitation, abuse, neglect, and
- The right to participation: expression, information, thought and religion

**Study area:**

The study was conducted in the state of Assam, which is situated in the North-Eastern part of the country.

The locale of the study was Kamrup (metropolitan) district of Assam. The state of Assam has 27 districts and among them Kamrup (metropolitan) was purposively selected for the study because it has a higher literacy rate. Kamrup Metropolitan district is situated between 25.43° and 26.51° on north latitude and between the 90.36° and 92.12° on east longitude. The total area of Kamrup (Metropolitan) district is 216.79 sq.km. it is surrounded by Darrang and Kamrup district in north, the Meghalaya state and the Kamrup district in the south. Whereas, in the East side falls Morigaon district and the west part is again surrounded by the Kamrup district.

**Population of the study:**

The population of the study comprises of literate men and women residing in different parts of the district including the experts of print media followed by selection of four daily newspapers, which were purposively selected for the study. The research looks at all the four newspapers’ issues excluding their supplements, from 1st January, 2012 to 31st December, 2012. All articles with
information on the child rights issue are included. Following are the selected newspapers-

1. *The Assam Tribune* (English)
2. *The Sentinel* (English)
3. *Amar Asom* (Assamese)
4. *Asamiya Pratidin* (Assamese)

These newspapers were selected on the basis of their popularity and circulation. Their circulation were found to be

- *The Assam Tribune* --- 68786
- *The Sentinel*---61938
- *Amar Asom*---70,474
- *Asamiya Pratidin*---68772

Source: *Annual statements submitted by publishers 2007-2008*

The circulations of these newspapers were found to be better in comparison to the other newspapers.

- **Sample design:**

A multi-stage purposive cum random sampling was carried out in order to select the representative sample for the purpose of the study. The diagrammatical representation is given in Fig 1.1.

In the first stage, Kamrup Metropolitan was selected purposively.

Kamrup Metropolitan has six circles. They are Dispur, Guwahati, Sonapur, Azara, Chandrapur and North Guwahati. Therefore in the second stage, one
town and one village were selected randomly from each of the six circles under Kamrup metro district as shown in the figure 1.1. In case of Guwahati circle, selection was made among the wards.

In the third stage, nearly 1 percent of the population of the respective towns and villages were selected randomly. The ultimate size of the sample was found to be 560. Among them 300 were the male members and the remaining 260 were the female members. This size is the 0.05 percent of literacy rate of men and women as per census 2011.

Similarly figure 1.2 shows the sampling procedure of the newspapers. The study seeks to explore and analyse the content through random sampling. Under this sampling procedure, every item of the universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample. Newspapers for the whole year of 2012 i.e. 1st January, 2012 to 31st December, 2012 were taken into consideration. Words, symbols, or a theme related to children were chosen as unit for analysis. The printed matter in form of news-items, articles, feature, pictures, advertisements and cartoons were analysed.
Fig. 1.1 diagrammatic representation of sample procedure
Fig:1.2 Diagrammatic representation of sample procedure of newspapers

- **Data collection method:**

  Interview and content analysis methods were considered as an appropriate tool for data collection for this study.
• **Tools and techniques:**

A questionnaire cum interview schedule was formulated after considering the objectives of the study and reviewing the relevant literature related to the study. In the process of preparation of the questionnaire suggestions were also taken into consideration from the subject specialists and research experts who have vast experience in these fields. The questionnaire was divided into two major parts. One part consisted of questions designed to collect information regarding socio-economic condition of the respondents which includes the age, type and size of the family, occupation, income, educational level etc. The second part consists of questions pertaining to elicit the information regarding the awareness of the respondents on child rights. Another interview schedule was constructed to interview the sub-editors of the selected newspapers to elicit information regarding the role played by their respective newspapers regarding the coverage of child rights.

The questionnaire cum interview schedule is given in Appendix-I.

Similarly, to know the role of newspapers in educating the mass people on child rights, news samples on child rights were collected from the four major daily newspapers mentioned above and were critically analysed.

• **Pre-testing:**

The prepared questionnaire cum interview schedule was pre-tested by administering the instrument to 50 literate men and women from the non-sampling areas of Kamrup Metropolitan district. After getting the responses, necessary modifications were made in terms of elimination of ambiguous statement and change of the instrument deleting areas of monotonous responses under the study.
• **Reference period:**

The reference period of the study was one year i.e. from 1\textsuperscript{st} Jan 2012 to 31\textsuperscript{st} Dec 2012. The year 2012 was purposively selected as the year was significant in terms of child rights in India. The right of children to free and compulsory education (Amendment) Act, 2012 had come into force in this year. The protection of children from sexual offences, Act, 2012 has been passed by Lok Sabha. Similarly, the Union Cabinet of India had approved the child and adolescent labour (prohibition) Act in the same year (28/08/12).

• **Data collection:**

The final questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to the selected areas. The respondents were carefully briefed prior to the commencement of the interviews regarding the purpose and significance of the study in order to get full co-operation. The duly filled questionnaires were collected for the study purpose.

Similarly, the selected newspapers of one year were referred and analysed in the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Library, Guwahati.

• **Analysis of Data:**

The data obtained were duly consolidated/recorded, tabulated and statistically analysed by applying simple frequencies and percentage analysis.

The news/views on child rights reported by the selected newspapers were critically analysed by the content analysis method.
1.8. THEORETICAL CONTEXT:

The Agenda Setting theory of the media will serve as the theoretical framework on which the research is based. Many studies have indicated the validity of this theory and they have shown that the mass people pay more importance to the issues which have more coverage by the media. Their (mass people) viewpoints are dependent on the level of coverage given to them by the media. The analysis of this theory will be instrumental in understanding the widespread role of media as well as the likely consequence(s) of their ability to promote the child rights agenda.

1.9. CHAPTERIZATION:

Chapterisation of the study will be as follows:

The thesis has been presented in seven chapters. The Chapter one includes introduction, which gives out a general foreword to the role of print media in educating the mass people on child rights. This chapter includes review of literature, wherein the focus is on the work already undertaken in the field of media and child rights. This has been divided into four categories i.e. concept, definition and types of child rights; violation of child rights; impact of media and role of media in educating the mass people on child rights. Besides this, it explains the methodology of the research. Towards the end it deals with significance of the study undertaken, the objectives of the research and the hypotheses upon which the entire study depends. Limitation of the study is given at the end of the chapter.
The demographic profile of Kamrup (Metropolitan) District is discussed in detail in chapter two. Further it also gives the statistics on the status of children in the district and the background information of the respondents. It discusses the personal and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Chapter three gives the historical overview of child welfare and chapter four deals with the role of media in ensuring child rights. It explains media and its role in creating awareness among the mass people on child rights. Few case studies on the role of Indian media in creating public awareness on child abuse are discussed briefly. Keeping in view the status of child rights in our country and the role of media in educating the mass people on child rights, an attempt was made in this part of the study to assess the awareness among the respondents regarding child rights.

Chapter five deals with the coverage of print media on child rights issues. Content analysis of the newspapers collected were carried on in this part of the study. Summary and the main findings of the study are given in chapter six. Chapter seven draws a conclusion to the study. It also includes recommendations/suggestions for future researches in the same field.

Bibliography is given at the end.
1.10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1. The study involves data collection from Kamrup (Metropolitan) District only.
2. Since the publishing houses keep changing their patterns and policies according to the situations, therefore, the time period of one year actually cannot dictate the trend of.
3. The present study is only involved with two local English dailies and two Assamese dailies and no other print media is taken into consideration.
4. Considering the time factor and communication facilities the study was limited to only 300 male and 260 female respondents which is 0.05% of literacy rate of the population as per the census 2011.
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