

Newspaper Coverage and the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse in Nigeria

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Abstract : Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) has been a contending issue across the globe. The menace of child sexual violence cuts across all continents. From 0 - 13 years, children have been sexually abused - some to the extent that their reproductive organs have been permanently damaged. The research in view is timely, as it will contribute data on CSA and media role to the communication parlance. This study believes that the adverse effects of this menace can hinder children who are potential leaders of tomorrow from harnessing their potentials to contribute to the growth and development of societies due to the psychological, health, and social effects of sex abuse. Where government policies, the law, cultural beliefs, and bottle necks surrounding processes of fighting child sexual abuse have failed, this study assumes that adequate coverage by the mass media, especially the newspapers known for their in-depth coverage and reporting, can help to eradicate or reduce to its barest minimum, the menace of CSA. Therefore, this study aims at assessing the coverage of newspapers - their policies and content towards preventive strategies, and how the public access and receive the messages to the extent they take action to forestall the persistence of sexual violation of children in Nigeria. Methodologically, the study has adopted qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the problem. The study used in-depth interview method to find out from journalists and editors of newspapers the policies that define the production of news content on sexual gender-based violence. In addition, selected National Daily newspapers are content - analysed to determine the focus of media coverage and whether the contents are preventive-based or case-based. In addition, caregivers of the reproductive ages from 16 years and above, ranging from parents, guardians, and school management, will form the study population through a survey using the questionnaire. The aim is to determine their views regarding mass media coverage of sexual violence against children and the effectiveness of the content, to the extent of prompting them to keep the child safe from sexual molesters. Findings from the content analysis so far show that newspapers in Nigeria are not engaged in preventive content of CSA. Their contents are rather case-based.

Keywords : newspaper, coverage, prevention, child, sexual abuse

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