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ROLE OF MEDIA IN PREVENTING CHILDREN FROM DISASTERS

Dr. Shumpenthung Ezung¹, Sanihe Arijjii², Razoukhrienuo Seletsu³, Dr. Abel Kavahru⁴, Dr. Neikesonuo Rame⁵ and Dr. Velhou Koza⁶

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Don Bosco College, Kohima, Nagaland.

²Assistant Professor & HOD, Department of Sociology, Don Bosco College, Kohima, Nagaland.

^{3,4,5,6}Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Don Bosco College, Kohima, Nagaland.

Article Received: 08 August 2025 *Corresponding Author: Dr. Shumpenthung Ezung

Article Revised: 28 August 2025 Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Don Bosco College,

Published on: 18 September 2025 Kohima, Nagaland. Email ID: aushumpene@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article explores the media's crucial role in crisis management with an emphasis on how it affects children around the world. It examines the vast coverage of disasters, which impacts not only those who are directly affected but also resonates with children globally, demonstrating the media's global reach. The literature review emphasizes how crucial child-centered strategies and efficient risk communication models are to catastrophic risk reduction. Key terminology is established in the operational definition, setting the stage for further conversations. The article emphasizes how important it is for the media to be involved in every phase of disaster management, from providing early warnings to aiding in recovery. It looks at risk communication methods and emphasizes how important it is for children to understand and share information about danger. The section on lessening the negative effects of upsetting media coverage on children offers practical parental strategies that encourage mediation and active observation. It also emphasizes the media's role in averting disasters and promotes cooperation between media outlets, governments, and international organizations. To limit potential harm to children from crisis coverage, the paper concludes by advocating for responsible media behavior, effective risk communication measures, and child-centered methods. This multidisciplinary study reveals the complex relationship between media and disaster management, adding insightful information to current conversations on improving readiness and resilience in the face of global issues.

KEYWORDS: *Media's Role, Crisis Management, Young People, Risk Communication, Disaster Coverage, Child-Centered Approaches, Global Resilience*

INTRODUCTION

One of the best methods to connect with people worldwide these days is through the media. Media offers an online statement that fosters networking and information sharing across various communities (Ezung & Baksh, n.d.). The media becomes more prominent in their roles of enlisting the many players, promoting victim relief and support initiatives, and building confidence among those impacted. This viewpoint is founded on the belief of several earlier works that, in the event of a disaster, the media is the authorities' most valuable instrument for mitigating damage since its actions shape the public's perception of the event's hazards (Reis et al., 2017). Large-scale disasters usually result in an abundance of media coverage. It is important to consider how much media coverage impacts young people who do not directly experience a disaster because it has been shown that media consumption affects how people view the world. Media coverage of disasters is frequently widespread, intense, and constant (Houston et al., n.d.). Both for individuals who are directly affected by a disaster and for those who learn about it through the media, disasters may be chaotic, perplexing, and terrifying experiences. Directly experiencing a tragedy can lead to PTSD symptoms, anxiety, concern, fear, grief, and behavioural issues in young individuals. Children and teenagers may become distressed as a result of disaster coverage in the media. This implies that media coverage of a crisis may exacerbate the distress experienced by young people living through it, and that media coverage of a disaster occurring elsewhere may frighten or worry young individuals living far away from a disaster (*THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF DISASTERS ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS*, n.d.). The mass media, both domestically and internationally, reported on and covered the majority of these disasters to varied degrees. Additionally, the mass media must be dedicated to and actively involved in the communication and speedy dissemination of warnings and educational information. While there has been significant success in integrating the media in these collaborative endeavours, there is still a great deal of work to be done in order to improve public education about disasters and sustain long-term civic preparation initiatives (Pararas-Carayannis, 2014).

Only a tiny number of practitioners have assessed the advantages of this method for the family and larger community, despite the fact that some practitioners have used it and

addressed in the literature the virtues of informing and educating children about their dangers of natural hazards in order to be prepared. Outside the sphere of development, children's and youths' abilities to take action to lower their risks has received little attention. The great majority of research on children's roles in catastrophes focuses on the emotional effects that children experience, and it typically targets younger children instead of older children and youth (Mitchell et al., 2008). Resilience investigators are asked to share their expertise and viewpoints as the number of large-scale disasters increases and the world faces a potentially fatal pandemic. This will enable communities and society to better plan for and respond to future disasters (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020). Before, during, and after disasters, the media is crucial in providing the public with essential information by creating a direct line of communication between the public and emergency groups (*Role of Media in Disaster Management Senior Specialist (Polices & Plans), National Disaster Management Authority Government of India Roopdave@yahoo.Com INTRODUCTION*, n.d.). In the past several years, the media has come to be recognized as a mediator, enhancing public awareness of disasters and bolstering preparedness for them. Originally, the media's function in natural disasters was limited to informing and alerting the public about them. Different disasters are more likely to occur in different places; for instance, a location may be known for its geo-risks, which include earthquakes. This connects one to the information and experiences already present in communities, making preparedness both attainable and valuable. This article aims to provide knowledge gained regarding the media's function in shielding children's from harm (Romo-Murphy & Vos, 2014).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(*Role of Media in Disaster Risk Reduction: A Few Essential Tips Snehasis Sur Rajib Shaw*, 2023) regarded this study as a catastrophe risk reduction manual for media personnel. Along with basic essentials for disaster risk reduction, it offers some advice for before, during, and after disasters. We don't refer to it as "Dos and Don'ts" because it heavily depends on the context. Instead, he makes an effort to offer a few fundamental guidelines along with some advice, such as safety precautions for reporters and reporting ethics.

(Möbius & Thesis, 2018) in their study on "The Role of Social Media in Disaster Communication: The Case of Hurricane Harvey" examines, using a single case study, the extent to which official disaster response communication guidelines and public institutions' social media participation during catastrophes take into account the increased demand for

social media communication. Data generated during Hurricane Harvey in August 2017 on Twitter was compared and connected to data from pertinent government papers. The raw Twitter data was usable thanks to techniques like natural language processing and social network analysis, among others. The primary conclusions of this study are that social media is not given enough credit in crisis communication, as evidenced by the official rules and public institutions' Twitter participation during Hurricane Harvey.

(Jyoti Sarma, 2021) in their study on “Media and Disaster Management: The Role of Media” aims to review the literature on the relationship between media and disasters in order to draw attention to the various ways that the media can help with disaster preparation and recovery, as well as the numerous issues that come with media coverage of disasters. The article discusses potential avenues for further research on media-disaster relationships, as well as strategies for media professionals and emergency management experts to handle these relationships more skillfully prior to, during, and following catastrophic occurrences.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Media: Online communities that facilitate user connection, content sharing, and cooperative communication are referred to as media. It entails web-based platforms that support online communities founded on shared interests and provide means of communication including chat and email. Powered by technology, media is a digital platform that allows users to create and share information as well as keep up with friends, family, and local events. It includes ways to foster relationships, move people around, and collaborate online among interconnected networks of people, communities, and organizations.

Children: People who are still in the early phases of human development, usually between infancy and puberty. This age group has specific demands and milestones as they go through a stage of physical, cognitive, and emotional development.

Disaster: A disastrous incident that causes significant damage and surpasses the ability of a community to recover. Disasters, whether man-made or natural, cause extensive damage, many fatalities, and the need for coordinated emergency response operations for recovery and mitigation. The extent of the damage, the number of people killed, and the interference with regular operations in the impacted area are used to determine the severity.

MEDIA'S CRUCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT EVERY PHASE

The media plays a vital role throughout all phases of disaster management.

- Preparation Phase: The media provides early warnings, spreads public education on disaster components, and reports on plans and activities designed to mitigate vulnerabilities. This helps reduce disaster risk, which refers to the potential losses in lives, health, livelihoods, property, and essential services within a community.
- Response Phase: During and immediately after a disaster, the media highlights the direct effects on impacted areas, assists in estimating community needs, informs affected individuals about where to access relief, and monitors ongoing emergency projects.
- Recovery Phase: In the aftermath, media coverage emphasizes the responsible use of aid, shares lessons learned and success stories, and promotes sustainable practices such as environmentally friendly building techniques and alternative livelihoods. This also supports disaster risk management, which is the systematic process of applying policies, strategies, and coping mechanisms to reduce disaster impacts.
- Advocacy & Policy Phase: The media extends its responsibility to promoting long-term development agendas, linking disasters with climate change, food and water security, livelihood, health, and the welfare of women and children. By raising these issues, the media influences not only public opinion but also government and donor policies. This aligns with the principle of disaster risk reduction (DRR), which involves reducing vulnerability, improving environmental management, and enhancing readiness for future events.

Thus, at every phase—before, during, and after disasters—the media has the crucial responsibility of ensuring that information is accurate, timely, and effectively communicated, shaping both immediate action and long-term resilience.

(Re-Examining Principles of Disaster Reporting A TRAINING COURSE FOR SENIOR JOURNALISTS, PIOs and PROs Sub-Deliverable of Deliverable 14, 2014))

RISK COMMUNICATION MODELS

A novel strategy called child-centered disaster risk reduction (CC-DRR) focuses on giving kids and young people the agency to engage in groups and individually to improve community resilience to disasters and make their lives safer. These days, disasters have such a strong effect in obstructing pathways out of poverty that it is imperative to investigate all

avenues for proactive community-based risk mitigation strategies. Nonetheless, CC-DRR represents a significant shift in conventional disaster management settings, which are dominated by command-and-control response organizations such as law enforcement and the military. Although there are compelling anecdotal stories demonstrating that children and youth can significantly lessen the effects of catastrophes and their dangers, it is still unclear why and how their agency is best deployed and employed.

The role of children and youth as both providers and users of risk knowledge has not been addressed in risk communication models derived from popular understandings of scientific literature. In the past, risk communication has been linked to information flows that place the public at the bottom and scientific institutions at the top. These methods take an objective risk and presume that the general population is stupid and needs just basic information to make up for their "deficit" in knowledge. Though this has been challenged by many sociologists of risk and despite recognition of the importance of social issues in the characterization of risk, as well as the increasing adoption of more equitable The Role of Children and Youth in Communicating Disaster Risk 259 and deliberately participatory approaches to managing risks, most emergency management practices and related communication campaigns are still dominated by positivist one-way learning and systems approaches. Since experts are presumed to be knowledgeable, they ought to oversee knowledge management systems. Risks are typically quantified to make complex cause-and-effect explanations more understandable. A more complete analysis that would have acknowledged and supported the capacities and interests in risk protection within vulnerable groups has been thwarted by this narrow focus.

Fatherhood and the widely accepted notion that parents decide what degree of risk their children should incur. It is expected that parents and other caregivers would be able to inform their kids about this information and take appropriate action to ensure their safety. This results in risk management strategies that rely on parents to make sensible and responsible decisions regarding the hazards that their kids are exposed to. This paternalistic perspective on children fails to acknowledge the child's rights or, more importantly, their value or usefulness as an agent capable of managing information, assimilation, and communication of reasoned risk management decisions within their families and larger networks. It was also shown that for risk messages to be effective, they need to have cultural and personal significance, although achieving these is not always clear-cut or simple. The benefit of child-

centered risk communication approaches may depend on the child's willingness to trust information sources, their capacity to communicate messages that have meaning shared by their families and friends, and whether they can win over recipients' trust because they are not political or powerful actors. Since the child is a part of the family, this relationship implies that risk information and mitigation strategies may be reinforced on a regular basis, in contrast to external messages that depend on fleeting opportunities to spread knowledge and sway behaviour.

AIDING YOUR CHILD TO DEAL WITH DISASTER COVERAGE IN THE MEDIA

Both for people who are immediately affected by a disaster and for others who learn about it through the media, disasters can be chaotic, perplexing, and terrifying experiences. Directly experiencing a tragedy can put young individuals at risk for posttraumatic stress disorders, anxiety, worry, fear, grief, and behavioural issues. Children and teenagers may experience anguish due to media coverage of disasters. This implies that media coverage of a tragedy may exacerbate the distress experienced by a kid who is directly affected by it, and that media coverage of a disaster that occurs elsewhere may frighten or worry children who live far away from a disaster.

Even though every crisis is unique, the news media follow standard procedures while reporting on them. These methods consist of a propensity to highlight the most dramatic details of the disaster. Frequent use of visually striking content to evoke strong emotions. It is most likely that a child will be exposed to media coverage of disasters through television or the internet. Consequently, talk about the media coverage of disasters that kids "see" or "view" on TV or the internet. Children, however, might also read about disasters in newspapers or magazines or hear about them on the radio. As a result, parents should think about how much exposure their kids have on media coverage of disasters.

Children and teenagers may experience emotional distress when watching catastrophe media coverage since the news media frequently highlights the most terrifying parts of disasters. Youngsters who watch media coverage could feel frightened, fearful, or worried. These reactions might prevent them from falling asleep or from stopping to think about what they have heard or seen. Youth who believe that what they see on TV or the Internet could happen to them or their family frequently react with fear and worry. It is not necessary for a disaster to happen nearby to cause distress in kids and teenagers. Young people who live far from significant disasters may become affected by media coverage of events like Hurricane

Katrina or the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001. Younger youngsters might not be able to tell the difference between a disaster that is closer to or farther from home than older youth can. Every calamity portrayed in the media has the potential to impact a child, and parents need to be aware of this. A young kid may grow more fearful or upset the more coverage of disasters they witness in the media. When a crisis is covered by the media, it can make kids and teenagers anxious about what is going on. This can make them want to watch more of the coverage to learn more, which can make them worry even more. Media coverage of disasters may worry younger children considerably more than older ones. For younger children, footage and pictures of harm, death, and destruction may be very distressing (*THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF DISASTERS ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS*, n.d.).

METHODS TO ASSIST CHILDREN IN HANDLING WITH CATASTROPHIC MEDIA COVERAGE

Restricting their children's media use is a popular tactic used by parents who are worried about possibly disturbing media material. This could be an effective approach for media coverage of disasters involving children under the age of eight, since these young ones might find it hard to understand news that is meant for an adult audience. For a child, watching media coverage without completely comprehending it might be especially upsetting or terrifying. Therefore, it could be advisable, if possible, to assist younger children in avoiding media coverage of disasters. Should a child's heightened curiosity cause them to watch media coverage of disasters without their parents being aware of it, the parent may find themselves unable to assist their child in comprehending the material or managing any reactions, which could lead to more issues for the child. Active mediation may be the most effective strategy for assisting older kids and teenagers in adjusting to the media's coverage of disasters. Monitoring a child's media exposure and elucidating the content of said coverage are key components of active mediation.

It is best to watch media coverage of a disaster with your child so you can address any reactions they may have and assist them in understanding the topic. You should at least be aware of the media coverage your child is exposed to, even if you are unable to watch it with them. Having the computer or television in a family area is one method to help achieve this, since it prevents the youngster from being left alone in their room unsupervised and exposed to potentially disturbing content. Limiting your child's exposure to disaster media coverage can still be beneficial, even though denying them access to all coverage may not be the best

course of action for older adolescents. You could recommend that you both switch to something else, like a sports game or comedy show, if you and your child have watched several news reports on a disaster together. Alternatively, you may recommend that your youngster go outside and play or focus on their homework in place of watching more television. It is crucial that you support your child in stepping back from the dramatic news coverage of events because it might be tough for them to do so. Limiting media coverage of catastrophic events is equally beneficial for adults; you may also benefit from asking your child to change the channel or switch off the TV or internet.

SUPERVISING WITH RECOMMENDATION PROCEDURE

Distress and impairment can result from disasters, so support the children's recovery by recognizing and embracing the changes, keeping an eye on behaviour, and understanding emotional reactions. Reduce the impact on the body and mind by providing emotional support, such as by talking, comforting, and demonstrating appropriate coping mechanisms. But most of all, learn to control your emotional discomfort. Reassure the child that thinking back on the terrible experiences is normal. Give them room to discuss the event. Ask them to visit and discuss it whenever they would like. Talk about your views and ideas regarding the incident. Be sure your explanations and language are age-appropriate. As you pay attention, offer consolation and assistance in response to their inquiries. Find out from the child what they dread, what they believe death to be, and other things so that you may have meaningful conversations with them (*PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT Maitreyee Mukherjee, Senior Consultant Psychosocial Care and Social Vulnerability Reduction National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), New Delhi, n.d.*).

ADDRESS TO THE MEDIA ABOUT PREVENTION OF DISASTERS

The promotion of disaster risk reduction policies and the advancement of disaster risk reduction agendas at the international, national, and local levels are greatly aided by the media, both domestically and internationally. The media are vital allies in educating communities and spreading ideas about disaster risk reduction to a variety of audiences. They are also active participants in the early warning chain. They are also essential for improving the responses that communities affected by disasters get. The media is aware of how important disaster risk reduction concerns are becoming in today's world and how knowledge may help people become more resilient to the harmful effects of climate change and other natural hazards. The media is willing to collaborate more closely with actors, partners, and

decision-makers in the global, national, and local disaster risk reduction to better inform their audience, save more lives, and safeguard more assets from natural hazards. The media recognizes the role it can play in educating and informing people about the risks of disasters. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Indonesian government hosted the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022) in Bali, Indonesia from May 23 to 28, 2022. Present media organizations pledged to play an active role in warning, educating, and enlightening populations at risk of disaster and in advancing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Before, during, and after disasters, make sure that vital communication infrastructures are available and operational. Make sure that all their media outlets have early warning systems in place so that communities at risk may get precise and timely early warning signals. Before, during, and after catastrophes, provide fair, accurate, and timely information about disaster risk reduction. Give the recommendations made by policies and programs for disaster risk reduction top priority. Should commit more time, space, and resources to reporting on the reasons behind disasters as well as preventative measures. Prior to, during, and after disasters, make sure that the radiocommunications spectrum is protected for the benefit of the general people. Incorporate communication for disaster prevention modules into journalism and mass communication curricula (*Media Statement on Disaster Risk Reduction*, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Within this paper, the researcher addressed several subtopics related to the media's role in shielding children from calamity. The author emphasized topics like the media's critical role in all stages of the media, risk communication models, helping your child deal with media coverage of disasters, ways to help children's deal with media coverage of catastrophic events, supervising the recommendation process, and talking to the media about disaster prevention. The importance of the media in crisis management is emphasized in this essay, especially as it relates to kids and teenagers. It draws attention to how media coverage of disasters can potentially upset and frighten people, even if they are not personally impacted. The literature review addresses the need for efficient risk communication models and child-centered disaster risk reduction methods by examining numerous studies and points of view on the connection between media and catastrophes. Key words like children, media, and disasters are clarified in the operational definition, which lays the groundwork for comprehension of the debate that follows. The article highlights the media's role in disaster management at every stage, from early warning to recovery efforts after a tragedy. The

significance of catastrophe risk reduction, risk communication strategies, and the changing influence of adolescents and children on risk knowledge and communication are also covered. With a focus on active mediation and monitoring of children's media exposure, the section on helping children deal with catastrophic media coverage offers parents and caregivers doable strategies. The essay acknowledges that tragedies may have an emotional toll on kids and emphasizes the value of listening to their worries, offering emotional support, and promoting candid dialogue. With an emphasis on disaster risk reduction guides, social media's role in disaster communication, and the larger relationship between media and disaster management, the inclusion of numerous research in the literature review deepens the discussion. To improve catastrophe risk reduction initiatives and encourage accurate and timely information transmission, the article also urges cooperation between the media, governments, and international organizations. In conclusion, this essay emphasizes how important the media is to crisis management, especially when it comes to influencing the attitudes and actions of young people. To lessen the possible harm that disaster coverage may do to children, it promotes appropriate media practices, efficient risk communication models, and child-centered strategies.

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