

MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF CHILD RELATED ISSUES AND THE UNICEF GUIDELINES

On behalf of the Social Work Forum (SWF) 2018-19 of the Department of Social work (Aided), a session on “The media portrayal of child related issues and the UNICEF guidelines” was organized on 11.09.2018, Tuesday at the MSSW Conference hall. The Head of the Department, Dr. Shakeela Basheer, the Forum Coordinator Dr. K. Sathyamurthi and the Forum President Ms. P. Elakkiya were on the dais along with the guest speaker Mr. Ramasubramanian and welcomed him. Mr. Ramasubramanian, a senior journalist, with 30 years of experience in the field of journalism was the speaker for the day. He is currently working an independent journalist who has been active in “Thozhamai”, an NGO recognized by UNICEF .The session commenced at 2 pm with a welcome address by Miss. D. Keerthana. The members of the Social Work Forum and students from other departments as well actively participated in the interactive session for the following two hours.

The speaker has been taking active steps in sensitizing journalists across Tamil Nadu on how to portray child related issues in media based on the guidelines published by UNICEF .The students were provided with few copies of “Child rights book for Journalists” for reference. The speaker discussed the preface from the guidelines which clearly explained the vulnerability of children and the need for media to follow the norms to protect the dignity of them. The speaker mentioned about the National Commission for the protection of child rights Act 2005, Juvenile Justice Act, Justice Surveillance act, Child labor Act, POCSO etc which are some of the legislative safeguards for children. The speaker discussed the controversies which evolved since the government of India brought down Juvenile age from 18 to 16 in severe cases. Ignorance of these set guidelines on child related laws by media, bureaucrats and Police has resulted in the violation of child related laws.

The floor was opened for questions at 2.45 pm. Towards the end of the session, the Head of the Department, Dr. Shakeela Basheer presented the guest speaker with a memento as a gesture of love and respect. At 4 pm, Miss Aarthi Raghavan proposed the vote of thanks. The session ended on the note that a country can be categorized based on the treatment towards women and children. The cooperation of media in upholding their dignity is of great significance.