

**THE ASSESSMENT ON THE COLLABORATION AND
ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF
THE MALDIVES (HRCM) AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN
PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE**



MARIYAM LAIZA

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MARIYAM LAIZA 5938466 HPRD/M

M.A. (HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION)

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: NAPARAT KRANRATTANASUIT. S.J.D.,
YANUAR SUMARLAN, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Child sexual abuse is a widespread issue in the Maldives. Civil Society along with the National Human Rights institutions (NHRIs) can play a vital role in combating child sexual abuse. Collaborative work needs to be done especially in making the state accountable for ensuring the protection of its people. The aims of the study were to (1) assess how the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) collaborates and engages with civil society to protect children from sexual abuse, (2) identify the challenges faced by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) and the civil society in doing collaborative work to protect children from sexual abuse, and (3) find out the impact on the protection of children from sexual abuse as a result of collaboration of Human Rights Commission of the Maldives with civil society. Data was gathered from 3 well-known and active NGO's that works for the well-being of children in the Maldives, HRCM and other randomly selected 140 Civil Society members, namely, parent, religious leaders and young adults. Data were analysed using content analysis. Findings of the study indicated that there was a selective collaboration with NGOs while there was no collaboration with the Civil Society at all. There was no strategic plan or a mechanism either for child protection or for HRCM collaboration. Challenges for collaborative work for HRCM includes difficulty in reaching the community due to budget constraints while NGO's identified the inhibition of HRCM works and independence due to the Supreme Court verdict following the 2nd UPR submission to UN. Hence it is recommended to integrate a multi-facet and systematic framework for the child protection system, to formalize collaboration, and to have a plan to assess and evaluate collaborative efforts.

KEY WORDS: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE / COLLABORATION / NHRI / CIVIL SOCIETY

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