



## “Perceptions of teachers, parents and media professionals regarding media education in schools.”

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**ABSTRACT**

Today children are growing up in a media saturated environment. Media have become part of young person's life. Their constant exposure to media messages influences the way they think about the world and themselves. Their constant exposure to media messages influence the way the children think about the world. Media messages if consumed wisely can broaden their horizon and help them to understand world in a better way. This can be best achieved through media education. The school is the best agent for providing media education to the children in an effective way. Among the members of the society, teachers, parents and media professionals play pivotal role in the development of a child. Therefore, it is very essential to know their viewpoints regarding media education in schools. Keeping this in mind, it was decided to undertake a study on “Perceptions of teachers, parents and media professionals regarding media education in schools.” It is an exploratory study . It reveals their perceptions on the various aspects of media education.

### KEYWORDS

#### Introduction

Today children are growing up in a media saturated environment. Media have become part of young person's life. Their constant exposure to media messages influences the way they think about the world and themselves. The influence of media can be both positive as well as negative ones. Children are especially vulnerable to the negative effects from media violence in general compared with adults. This is affecting the young minds to a great extent. Their constant exposure to media messages influence the way the children think about the world. They hold dangerous potential for damaging children's personalities Bodkin (1994) pointed out that watching television impedes the growth of longer attention spans in the children, interferes with the development of reading skills and decreases the time for developing speaking skills. Moreover, a child rarely develops proficiency with speech simply by getting older. A child spending four or more hours a day watching television loses the time needed for conversation, may well find difficulty becoming articulate and fluent, and be less able to speak and write in complete sentences than the child who, it seems, “Just never stops talking.” (Cited in Valkenburg and Kremer, 2001. p.81)

They need to examine critically whatever they see, hear or read. Media messages if consumed wisely can broaden their horizon and help them to understand world in a better way. This can be best achieved through media education. The school is the best agent for providing media education to the children in an effective way. It is in the schools that a child imbibes values, habits, thinking, attitudes and behaviour. Schools deal with different types of students. Therefore, schools can empower young children with better understanding of the media so that the children can control their relationship with vast array of media messages they receive in their everyday environment.

In India, there is no formal established media education curriculum, though in various private schools media education is taught at an informal level. Even at college and university level, there is little media education. There is an urgent need to introduce an appropriate curriculum for media education in the Indian schools on a regular basis. Among the members

of the society, teachers, parents and media professionals play pivotal role in the development of a child. Therefore, it is very essential to know their viewpoints regarding media education in schools.

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#### Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study the overall and aspectwise perceptions of the teachers, parents and media professionals regarding the media education for students in standards VII to IX.
- 2) To study the differences in the overall and aspectwise perceptions of the teachers and parents regarding media education in relation to their sex, educational qualification, teaching experience, types of school they are employed in, mass Media exposure, opinion about importance of media.
- 3) To study the differences in the overall and aspectwise perceptions of the media professionals regarding media education in relation to their sex, age, experience in media profession, type of Media organization, type of employment.

#### Sample of the study

The sample of the study comprised of five hundred and sixty teachers, parents and media professionals, which included two hundred and forty teachers teaching VII to IX standard, two hundred and fifty parents of students in VII to IX standard selected from 35 English medium schools and seventy media professionals of Ahmedabad city of Gujarat. The entire population of teachers in the selected schools and media professionals of Ahmedabad were selected as samples of the study. For selection of parents, simple random sampling method was used.

#### Research Tool for Data Collection

The present study was an exploratory research. The research tools for teachers, parents and media professionals were constructed separately. Structured questionnaires prepared in English were used as research tools with equal

appearing interval scale, checklist and opinionnaire. The research tools for teachers, parents and media professionals comprised of seven sections. Except section-I,i.e,background information, all the sections were same for the research tools for teachers, parents and media professionals. These were- Importance of media education, Content for media education, Strategy for implementing media education, Role of teachers, parents and media professionals in imparting media education.

### Data Collection

The data were collected from total 560 respondents which included two hundred and forty teachers, two hundred and fifty parents and seventy media professionals of Ahmedabad city of Gujarat. The selected English medium schools were contacted to collect the data from teachers teaching in VII to IX standard. To collect the data from the parents of students in VII to IX standard of the selected schools, the students were contacted personally in their classrooms during the recess time to carry questionnaires for their parents. Media professionals were contacted in their office with prior appointment. The statistical measures used for analysis of data for three different groups were frequency, percentage, intensity indices, t test and F test (ANOVA).

### Major Findings

- Overall and aspect-wise, teachers, parents and media professionals had more favourable perceptions regarding media education for students in standards VII to IX and role of parents in imparting media education to children in standards VII to IX revealed highest intensity index.
- The overall perceptions of teachers regarding the selected aspects of media education differed significantly in relation to their mass media exposure. Overall, teachers, who had more exposure to mass media, had more favourable perceptions regarding the selected aspects of media education as compared to the teachers having less exposure to mass media.
- Overall perceptions of the parents regarding selected aspects of media education differed significantly in relation to their sex, mass media exposure and opinion about importance of media. Overall, female parents, parents who had more exposure to mass media and more favourable opinion about importance of media, had more favourable perceptions regarding all the selected aspects of media education.
- Overall perceptions of the media professionals regarding selected aspects of media education differed significantly in relation to the type of media organization they were working with. Overall, the media professionals who belonged to government organisation had more favourable perceptions regarding the selected aspects of media education.
- Among all the aspects of media education, the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of media education and content for media education curriculum differed significantly in relation to their mass media exposure and opinion about importance of media. Teachers who had more exposure to mass media and more favourable opinion about importance of media, had more favourable perceptions regarding these selected aspects.
- Perceptions of the parents regarding importance of media education, content for media education curriculum and role of media professionals in imparting media education to students differed significantly in relation to their sex, mass media exposure and opinion about importance of media. Female parents, parents who had more exposure to mass media and more favourable opinion about importance of media, had more favourable perceptions regarding these selected aspects.
- Perceptions of the parents regarding strategy for implementing media education curriculum in schools and role of teachers in imparting media education to students differed significantly in relation to mass media exposure and opinion about importance of media. The parents, who had more exposure to mass media and more favourable opinion about importance of media, had more favourable per-

ceptions regarding these selected aspects. .

- Perceptions of the parents regarding their role in imparting media education to children differed significantly in relation to their opinion about importance of media. The parents, who had more favourable opinion about importance of media, had more favourable perceptions regarding their role. .
- Perceptions of the media professionals regarding importance of media education differed significantly in relation to the type of media organization they were working with, and their type of employment and their age. The media professionals who belonged to government organization, who were employed and the middle aged had more favourable perceptions regarding importance of media education.
- Perceptions of the media professionals regarding their role in imparting media education to students differed significantly in relation to their sex and the type of media organization they were working with. Among the media professionals, those who were female and those belonged to government organizations, had more favourable perceptions regarding their role.
- Perceptions of media professionals regarding strategy for implementing media education curriculum in schools, role of teachers and role of parents in imparting media were not significant in relation to all the selected variables.

### Conclusion

Overall, and aspect wise, teachers, parents and media professionals had more favourable perceptions regarding media education for children in standards VII to IX

Further, aspect wise, teachers, parents and media professionals had more favourable perceptions regarding the strategy suggested for implementing media education in schools. They favored the idea that media education should be integrated with other courses. Among all the selected aspects of media education, perception of teachers, parents and media professionals regarding the role of parents in imparting media education scored highest intensity index.

The roles of parents, teachers and media professionals are indeed vital. The need for strengthening children's critical faculties in choosing the right media has never been urgent as now. By approaching media issues, with critical thinking activities, students can be given the tools to think rationally for themselves in a media-driven world. Interactive media education can provide children with the ability to express themselves through different forms of media – a valuable skill for the present, and the future. The content for media education curriculum for VII to IX standards should include overview of media such as different types of media, role, influence and function of media, critical analysis of media, discussion on media related issues, analysis of media advertisements and production of different types of media.

There is a need for collaboration between teachers, parents and media professionals to develop a common understanding about media education. This understanding should not only be developed among the three groups, but other members of the society should also be a part to this. The school authorities should take initiative in incorporating media education in schools for students in VII to IX standards.

### Suggestions

Bodies such as NCERT should introduce media education in the school curriculum of VII to IX standards as an integrated subject.

Government regulators should provide funds for adequate infrastructure facilities, equipments required for implementing media education in the schools for VII to IX standards on regular basis.

The researchers, media professionals and educational

planners all should be involved in developing a resource guide emphasizing various activities and techniques for imparting media education.

Government regulators should provide funds for adequate infrastructure facilities, equipments required for implementing media education in the schools for VII to IX standards on regular basis.

Parents should talk and discuss about media messages at home. Discussion is essential for protecting children from media violence.

Teacher should apply critical thinking strategies in the classroom while teaching media education to students in standards VII to IX. If students are encouraged to think critically about the media messages, this will stimulate open questioning and encourage students to be intellectually curious about the world.

Media clubs can be setup in the schools which will provide students a platform to not only understand media but also express themselves through media by playing an active role by discussing the content of media, writing editorials, features on any particular issue, screening of good films, video, listening to good audio programmes, organising talks on media related issues to provide students opportunity to interact with the media professionals.

Media professionals should guide NCERT to design the content for media education curriculum for VII to IX standards, orient teachers and parents regarding imparting media education through workshops, training programme and produce media education programmes for students.

#### **CITED LITERATURE**

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