

"Family Communication Pattern and Parental Television Mediation on Caste Related Violence – A Study in Southern Districts of Tamilnadu"

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Introduction:

According to Warren (2002), parental mediation is defined as ‘any strategy parents use to control, supervise, or interpret content’ for children and adolescents. Such parental guidance of children’s television viewing has been considered key to overcoming television’s potential negative effects. Parental mediation of children’s television viewing is a relatively new area of research that has advanced in the social and behavioral sciences. Parental mediation has been examined in regards to violent television (Nathanson, 1999), advertising (Fujioka & Austin, 2003), TV news (Buijzen, Walma van der Molen, & Sondij, 2007), and even videogame playing (Nikken & Jansz, 2006). However, one area that has not been examined is of parental mediation towards communal harmony on television. The research on parental mediation has grown considerably, but it lacks the inclusion of interaction variables (mother or father mediation) and specific television content (caste and communal harmony) that might influence outcomes related to children and how they view media messages.

The young generation should know the social system and practices of society where will have to live. A positive television mediation of caste and related on media will shape them a better citizen in future. The caste system is a powerful institution that has shaped Indian society for thousands of years. Castes, or jatis, as they are known in India, are hereditary groupings of people by rank or social class. Traditionally, the caste into which an individual was born determined his or her rights and responsibilities, occupation, and social status, as well as the rituals he or she performed and permissible forms of social interaction with others. A person was born into a particular caste and remained in that caste until death. A basic principle of the caste system was that no one could marry or even socialize with people of other castes. Thus, for

centuries, the different castes were kept separate, even though the members often lived together in the same villages. There are still thousands of castes in India today.

When India became independent in 1947, many hoped for a "casteless, classless" society. The new Indian constitution (1949) called for "equality of status and of opportunity," and created broad categories of underprivileged groups that were to be the object of special administrative and welfare efforts. The categories were Scheduled Castes (Dalits), Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis), and Other Backward Classes, or all other economically disadvantaged groups.

Despite the efforts of policy-makers, throughout the remainder of the 20th century India's caste system continued to flourish. At the beginning of the 21st century, the caste system was still reflected in employment and voting behavior. It had also caused new conflicts, as people in the lower castes and classes struggled to be categorized as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, or other backward classes in order to receive benefits. In marriage, too, caste has continued to play a large role, determining socially acceptable partners. Observers report that many of the caste traditions have faded in the cities of India, but remain strong in some of the country's rural areas.

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, "Dalits and indigenous peoples (known as Scheduled Tribes or adivasis) continue to face discrimination, exclusion, and acts of communal violence. Laws and policies adopted by the Indian government provide a strong basis for protection, but are not being faithfully implemented by local authorities".

One has to live in a society with people of different religions, castes, sex and different backgrounds. He has to maintain love and peace between one another. Man is a social animal. He lives in a society between different people and still lives there and till then when he is about to die and our lives begin and end in the society like this. Man has to also maintain at least friendship between one another. We should stay in harmony and help everybody whether it is a beggar or a wealthy person. All are equal before God. Nobody is more or less rich than one another. Thus, communal harmony is very essential in today's lives. Communal harmony is the way to create peace among a community.

In India, Tamilnadu has witnessed series of caste related violence's during the recent past, the Dharmapuri violence in 2012 and Marakkanam violence in 2013 ironically both in Tamil Nadu. Apart from few of these incidents there were regular caste conflicts in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu which reports high rate of caste violence. The perception towards these incidents and news related to it has to be positively mediated by parents to their children. The generation next has to live in a harmonious environment. Thus the onus is rested with the parents to mould their children to live in harmony, not to become a prey for the politicians and the caste leaders.

Similarly Tamil Nadu has experienced too many communal and religious riots every year. In 2011, a series of riots were held in Paramakudi, southern part of Tamil Nadu. The reason behind the riot was the detention of a dalit party leader while heading to Paramakudi to commemorate the 54th death anniversary of Immanuvel Sekaran.

In December 2012 as many as 268 houses of Dalits of the Adi Dravida community near Naikkankottai in Dharmapuri district of western Tamil Nadu were torched by the higher-caste group. The victims have alleged that 'systematic destruction' of their properties and livelihood resources has taken place. The reason for the problem was intercaste marriage of a Vanniyar girl a Dalit boy (Shaji K A, Senthil Kumaran V, Karthick S, 2013).

Objectives: i) To study television viewing patterns of members in the family, ii) To identify the family communication patterns and parental mediation approaches in the study area, iii) To identify whether the parents are media literate enough to impart the skills to their children.

Method

(a) Sample: highly educated parents

- Population will be families of educated parents in the southern districts of Tamilnadu (Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Madurai)
- Purposive sampling is to be carried out because the study is confined to the families of educated parents in southern districts of Tamilnadu (Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Madurai)
- Sample size would be 30 Families (tentatively) in each district.

(b)Research Design:

- Descriptive research design has been administered
- Interview Schedule was administered for the purpose of data collection for both parents and children.

When conducted interview among the family members among the samples, almost majority of the family comes under 'co-viewing mediation' refers to parents' act of watching television with children without discussing television use and content, Seon-Kyoung An and D. Lee often as referred to as parents' passive mediation intervention. This is an alarming sign especially on the content of caste related violence. Followed by it is restrictive mediation, according to Warren (2005), restrictive mediation refers to parents' rules of mediating children's television viewing, such as the amount of television viewing time and the specific type of program content, sometimes called rule-making mediation. The most significant and least practiced mediation is instructive mediation, which refers to parents' talking with children about television, such as discussing television programs, content, and commercial messages, often called active, evaluative, or strategic mediation. The caste related issues and violence in media have to be dealt with instructive mediation, where it will help the kid to understand the real picture of the event and the background and hidden agenda can be properly understood.

Several researchers have argued that the most effective parental mediation approach is to use a mix of three styles of television mediation to control, supervise, or interpret television content (Austin, Fujioka, Bolls, & Engelbertson, 1999).

According to Lull J (1990) socio oriented communication emphasis on harmonious social relations and the feelings of others, it correlates positively with parental control, verbal and restrictive punishment. In concept oriented communication children are encouraged to express ideas and challenge others' beliefs. Child exposed to more than one side of controversial issues and encouraged to discuss controversies with adults. (S H Chaffee)

Fujioka and Austin (1999) demonstrated that the concept-oriented family communication style is related to parents' mediation style promoting the extent to which parents welcome open and critical discussion of what is presented on television. Families who have open communication style may be characterized by democratic, concept-oriented, and person-centered communication patterns with a low level of cohesion. Consequently, open family communication style may empower parents to use various parental mediation styles for their child's television use and perception.

In this milieu the present study has facilitated to investigate a few subjects relating to the interpersonal communication between parent and kid and the overall family communication towards the perception of caste issues which are portrayed in television.

The parental communication has enormously decreased in the families where both the parents' are employed. The gap between parents and children tend to increase thereby decreasing the time for interaction. Television viewing has been a common daily relaxing habit both for parents and kids. The channels were categorized that the viewer has an option for almost all genre of programs. In the study area almost every household has minimum of two television sets, with the one being freebee from the previous State government.

Watching news channel or news program at least once is a regular activity in a common home environment. The news program and related shows on news includes all the aspects from politics to sports. The perception towards understanding the correct meaning and identifying the inner or hidden agenda has to be identified. Parents should mediate their kids about the issues or event to clarify them on the misleading information and wrong perceptive of content. Thus it becomes necessary to know about the problems and difficulties faced by the parents to educate children on social orientation. The idle co-viewing is dangerous than the restrictive mediation.

Parent should be media literate to critically analyze and competent enough in imparting those skills to their children. In this caste divided social environment of growing caste related violence and hate crimes it is important that children and adolescents should be nurtured with

right spirit of life. The study area showed a poor level of instructive mediation, it has to increase for their kid sake to mould them a better individual to deal in the caste prone society like India.

The study is significant in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu namely Tirunelveli, Madurai, Ramanathapuram because these districts witnesses frequent caste related violence. Despite these incidents annual birth and death anniversary of caste labeled leaders are observed with rallies and meeting resulting to violence. Children and Adolescents growing in this part are more prone to perceive incorrectly and misinterpreted information. Media is in thrust of news values and fall prey to the incidents and highlight them thereby lose their balance on social responsibility on par with objective reporting. This study aimed a pilot attempt to identify the parental television mediation style and to suggest the parents for a best mediation approach on issues like conflicts to children and adolescents. Further by identifying the perception on the caste related violence and through the positive mediation by parents will lead the youth towards communal harmony and thereby make an attempt though not on "casteless, classless" society but at least to lessen the caste identification among the future generation in this part of the country which witnesses more caste violence and hate crimes.

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