

A REPORT ON MEDIA LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Department of Mass Communication
Rajiv Gandhi University
Rono Hills, Doimukh – 791 112

Introduction

Media literacy as a term is associated with the abilities of media consumers/users to access, analyze and evaluate the media messages. It deals with developing an understanding about the role and functions of media in our society and its impact on our lives. In today's mediated society, it is always essential that we become active users of media rather than its passive and docile consumers. What it demands is a more conscious engagement with media and the information that we receive from various sources. The importance of media literacy has even become more relevant in the age of new and convergent media which have brought some powerful changes in the ways people access and disseminate information across various media platforms. Moreover, the increasing misuse of the creative potentials of the digital media has already spelled many disasters in the form of mob violence to communal clashes. Apart from that, the assumed role of media in spreading false propaganda and setting negative agenda, especially against humanity, many a time lead to a situation where we as consumers fall prey to such deceitful practices of the media later resulting in the loss of our liberty and freedom.

Therefore, as today's citizens, we need to understand the way media operates in our society and how it affects our lives so that we can use media for our positive development. Hence, it is imperative to teach the young minds how to use media for constructive purposes otherwise it can affect them morally, mentally and also emotionally. For instance, the Blue Whale Challenge, an online game that assigns players daring or risky challenges and incites children to play this game which may eventually lead them to take extreme steps for self-inflicting injuries including suicides. According to recent newspaper reports, a 14 year old boy from Mumbai jumped from a building and another 15 year old boy in West Midnapore suffocated in a plastic bag after playing this online game. In such a context, media literacy campaign to reach out to the school children would strengthen their understanding about media and make them conscious users of media and its messages. This would

empower the youths of our society and help in building a healthy democracy where there would be respect for freedom, tolerance and brotherhood.

Objectives of the Campaign

- Apprise the school children about the role and functions of media in their lives and the society;
- Enlighten the students about the do's and don'ts when it comes to the uses of media and its gratifications;
- Create awareness among the school children not to be easily carried away by false media messages;
- Motivate the school children for their ethical engagement with the media when it comes to information access and its dissemination.

Target Audience

The media literacy campaign was targeted towards school children. Both government and private schools were selected in and around capital complex for this purpose, namely:

1. Government Secondary School, RGU Campus
2. Don Bosco High School, Nonpu, Doimukh
3. Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Nirjuli
4. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Naharlagan

Campaign Organizers

The campaign was carried out by the Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University in collaboration with *The Arunachal Times* and sponsored by Indian Oil Ltd, Depot, Doimukh and E& K Restaurant Naharlagun

Campaign Schedule

The campaign was organized in the month of November 2018. The dates for the campaigns:

1. Government Secondary School, RGU Campus – November 1, 2018 (Thursday)
2. Don Bosco High School, Nonpu, Doimukh - November 3, 2018 (Saturday)
3. Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Nirjuli – November 12, 2018 (Monday)
4. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Naharlagan – November 24, 2018 (Saturday)

Campaign Modules: (1.5 hours)

- Brief introduction on media and news. (15 Minutes)
- Street Play-on the issue of the uses and misuse of media (20 minutes)
- Role Playing Activity -To understand Communication Process (30 Minutes)
- Films Screening -To show how media is being misused especially Mobile phones (10 Minutes)
- Communication Games – on how messages can be distorted, manipulated or misunderstood
- Media Quiz – to assess the knowledge level among school students on media

The event in each school commenced with an **Introduction** and purpose of the media literacy campaign. This was followed by a **‘Street Play’** cantering on the theme of ‘Mob Lynching.’ A detailed explanation of the street play with its intended message was presented to provide an understanding about the appropriate use of media. A session on **‘Fact Checkers’** was then conducted that focussed on how to analyse news or information by adopting certain elements such as Four W’s and H – What, Where, When, Who and How. Games was then organised for the students called **‘Aksharad’** – to portray how communication can be distorted, manipulated or misunderstood in its process. Another similar game called **‘Chinese Whispers’** was also played which created a lot of fun and also sent a clear message on how to analyse as well as communicate effectively. This was followed by a **‘Media Quiz’** carried out to assess the knowledge level among school students on various aspects related to

media like print media, social media and electronic media and regulations governing use of media tools and also on the media coverage of crucial events. Finally a short film titled '*Overdoes*' produced and directed by the students of the department was screened to show how obsessive use of mobile phone can create many harmful effects on the user.

Feedback

It was observed that the students of all the schools participated with a lot of enthusiasm and were confident in expressing their opinions. Awareness related to media especially social media was present in almost all the schools, but with regard to print media, they were not that aware. In some of the schools, towards the end of the event, a few students volunteered and provided a positive feedback on the programme generating a lot of interest among student community. The Principal and Headmaster of the concerned schools were appreciative of the campaign and expressed their gratitude to the Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University in creating awareness on a pertinent issue.

Conclusion

The department would like to extend our deep sense of gratitude to our sponsors E&K Restaurant and Indian Oil Depot, Doimukh for their generous financial support in carrying out the campaign successfully. We also express our sincere thanks to *The Arunachal Times* for their collaboration and coverage of the campaign event. Last but not the least we thank all the schools for giving us permission to carry out the event and also for their cooperation without which our campaign would not have been possible.

PHOTO GALLERY OF THE EVENT

Donbosco School, Doimukh



Govt. Secondary School, RGU Campus



Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Nirjuli



Students Explaining How to Fact-Check News and Information

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Naharlagun



Students of Mass Communication performing Mob-Lynching play

Media Reports



