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Workshop Report

By

Victor Valbuena
Workshop Report

WORKSHOP ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA
4-8 August 1992   New Delhi, India

Organized by

Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre
Singapore, Republic of Singapore
and
Indian Institute of Mass Communication
New Delhi, India

With support from

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/
International Programme for the Development of Communications
and
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Prepared by
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Workshop Director

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WORKSHOP ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA

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Indian Institute of Mass Communication
New Delhi, India

Summary Workshop Report

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the proceedings of the five-day regional Workshop on Media Education in South Asia held at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in New Delhi, India on 4-8 August. The workshop was organized by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC) and IIMC, with support from UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), New Delhi.

The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To increase awareness of media issues in South Asia among educators and media practitioners;

2. To promote the need for media literacy cum education;

3. To develop a core of media professionals who can initiate local media education programmes; and

4. To develop draft teaching-learning materials supportive of media education in the home, classroom and community.

(See Appendix A for the workshop programme.)

The New Delhi workshop was planned to complement an earlier Workshop on Media Education in ASEAN organized by AMIC in Manila, Philippines in October 1990, in collaboration with the Philippine Association for Media Education (PAME) and the Center for Social Policy, Ateneo de Manila University. The Manila workshop, supported also by UNESCO/IPDC, reviewed the media situation in the region, the opportunities and challenges in educating the public about the media and how they influence people and society, and recommended guidelines for developing media literacy and media education programmes. Post-workshop activities resulted in the development, pre-testing and development of prototype teaching-learning materials on media education for the South-East Asian Region.
This series of media education workshops responds to a need for critical awareness, understanding and use of the mass media in developing countries in light of global trends and developments in information and communications. Media education is a critical issue in the Third World, in view of increasing literacy which makes possible access to the print media, the exponential growth of communication media and messages, and the growing influence of television and video.

As pointed out in UNESCO's Draft Medium Term Plan (1990-1995), the audio-visual and print media are very important determinants of literacy and there is a need "to develop objective appreciation of the media through media education, to maximize the benefits of media use, especially among young people, and to improve knowledge of how the media function in different societies."

PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-two participants attended the programme. They included communication/media educators, newspaper journalists, video documentarists, film teachers, marketing executives, community leaders and consumer activists. They represented schools, media institutions and non-government organizations.

The participants from Bangladesh included the editor of a Bengali language daily, a senior sub-editor active in the consumer movement, and an assistant professor of journalism and communication from the University of Dhaka.

The participants from India included a senior professor of mass communication from Chandigarh, an associate professor from Poona with a UK doctorate on media education, a female media educator from Bombay with specialized US training in radio-television-film, a Cambridge-trained media coordinator from Bangalore, a public relations executive from Calcutta, a video/documentary producer from Madras, and three professors from the Institute of Mass Communication.

The sole participant from Maldives was a telecommunications and computer software engineer. The Nepalese group comprised a community-based consumer activist, an assistant newspaper editor, and a university lecturer.

From Pakistan came two Stanford University-trained academ-ics: the former head of the mass communication department of the University of Karachi who is now Director of the national press institute, and another former professor from the Graduate School of Business Administration of the University of Karachi who is now director of a private human resource development centre.
The Sri Lankan participants included a newspaper editor, a marketing consultant, and a consumer expert who is the first and so far only female Director of Marketing in Sri Lanka.

One female participant-observer came from the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), London.

A few of the participants, particularly those from India, had considerable experience in media education. For the majority, however, the workshop was their first opportunity to explore the concept and challenges of media education. They were selected primarily for their potential to initiate media education efforts in their own countries and individual institutions.

(See Appendix B for a list of the participants.)

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mr. Ashok Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, inaugurated the workshop. In his address, he reviewed recent developments in the media scene in the South Asian Region and discussed the need for evaluating the media closely and its influence on various audiences.

Prof. P.C. Joshi, Chairman of IIMC, also addressed the meeting. He called for a more critical look at the media and its social, political and economic contexts, and exhorted the participants to promote media ethics and social responsibility.

Dr. Heinz Bongartz, FES Representative in India, also delivered some remarks at the workshop. He emphasized that the process of media education goes a long way in promoting the participation of community members in media development, leading subsequently to their overall development. He also touched upon the role of media in economic and social development and the issue of media ethics.

Dr. J.S. Yadava, Director, IIMC and Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary General, AMIC welcomed the participants on behalf of the organizing institutions and elaborated on the objectives and significance of the workshop.

(See Appendix C for the opening speeches.)

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

During the first part of the workshop, participants presented papers on the media environment and media issues in South Asia, and case studies of media education initiatives in the region. The media issues discussed included media ethics and social responsibility, media recreation of reality, representa-
tion of gender and other stereotypes in the media, values and lifestyle formation through the media, and media and consumerism. An open forum and discussion session followed the paper presentations.

(Copies of the participant papers are in Appendix D.)

SMALL GROUP WORKSHOPS

The second part featured small group workshops. The objectives of these small groups were to:

1. Identify local frameworks / institutional structures for introducing media education and contextualize it in terms of the media realities in the region;

2. Define media education and its component subjects / issues from a regional, Asian perspective; and

3. Develop some guidelines for media education programmes for various target audiences.

The participants discussed the possibilities for integrating media education concepts, subjects and programmes into the curricula of primary and secondary schools, teacher-training programmes, journalism and mass communication education departments, and other media-related disciplines such as advertising, marketing and business administration. They also looked into the development of media education seminars for parents and community leaders, as well as a media education programme for media professionals.

During these discussions, the participants noted that media education as advocated in the West is mass media-oriented, and focused primarily on critical viewing of film and television. They stressed the need to develop more culturally-relevant media education programmes in Asian countries, taking into account the level of socio-economic development, and existence of both mass media and viable grassroots and traditional media in these countries.

To provide overviews on media education efforts in other countries, as well as to facilitate intercation in the discussion groups, participants were provided background reading materials and other relevant hand-outs.

(Copies of some these materials are in Appendix E.)
The main outputs of these working groups were suggestions for culturally-relevant teaching-learning materials on media education for secondary schools, mass communication schools, business and marketing institutions, media practitioners and community groups.

(Workshop outputs are found in Appendix F.)

CLOSING SESSION

The workshop had a simple closing ceremony. Dr. Victor T. Valbuena, Head of AMIC's Seminars and Institutional Development Programme and Workshop Director, briefly summarized the workshop proceeding and outputs. He also acknowledged the contributions of institutions and individuals, including the participants, in making the workshop successful.

Dr. J.S. Yadava, IIMC Director, also noted the support of collaborating institutions and wished the participants a good journey back home. Together, Dr. Valbuena and Dr. Yadava handed out certificates of participation to the individual delgates.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop, using a questionnaire requiring them to rate certain aspects of the programme on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is lowest and 5, highest. In addition, participants were requested to write their comments on some of these aspects.

Eleven participants returned completed questionnaires. Of the others who did not, three were unable to do so due to illness contracted on the last day of the programme; four had to immediately proceed to the airport after the workshop closing; the others were participants from IIMC who did not attend all the sessions and were therefore not in a position to assess the programme as a whole.

Following is a summary of the evaluation:

Quality of the Programme. The participants gave this aspect a rating of 4.18. Most of the participants who returned the evaluation questionnaires commented that the workshop was a good programme on the whole.

One participant said that it was an excellent programme and that the inter-disciplinary approach used in the workshop was useful. Another added that the programme was a useful exercise in providing the participants with the correct perspective of media education as well as in outlining a general strategy.
One other participant, a newspaper editor, said that the programme "opened new vistas for me." He came to the workshop, he said, knowing practically nothing about media education.

Presentations by Participants. This received a rating of 3.81. One participant said that it would have been more fruitful if the initial presentations were on media education and the growing international movement in the subject, instead of media issues.

Another mentioned that the programme could have been more streamlined with less papers and more time given for defining concepts and the philosophy of media education.

Workshop Facilities. This aspect merited a rating of 4.00. Participants were generally satisfied with the facilities at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

Workshop Organization. The participants rated this item 3.90. In general, participants said that the workshop was well-organized.

Five commented that the organization was excellent; one added that this was particularly true both in terms of conference structure and facilities, as well as comfort of the participants.

Another said that "The IIMC did their best and AMIC provided solid back-up."

Hotel Accommodation. There were initial problems in accommodating all the non-Delhi participants at the hotel despite confirmed bookings, due to the delayed departure of a foreign tour group. Despite this minor irritant, the participants still rated this item with a 3.81.

Most were satisfied with the room accommodations; some said, however, that it would have been better if they were housed in a less expensive hotel.

Time Allocation for Presentations. This item also merited a rating of 3.90.

Participant Contribution to Workshop Discussions. The group gave this item a rating of 4.0, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the inputs of their fellow participants.

The participants said that they were satisfied with the number of participants. One said that there was a right mix of media educators, practitioners, and researchers. Many commented, however, that there should have been a few more media practitioners particularly from television and film, and that "they would
have helped in projecting more experiences and work parameters from their perspective."

Two said that there could have been more interaction between participants. Another said that more detailed work could have been achieved if the other participants were more aware of the parameters of media education.

Opportunities for Exchanging Ideas with Fellow. This item also rated a 4.0. While the group generally felt satisfied with the workshop structure for exchange, two said that they should have had more free time, particularly outside the workshop sessions, for interacting with fellow-participants.

Cooperation within Groups. The group rated this item 4.09.

Relevance of Workshop to Your Work. This item received the highest rating: 4.63, indicating that the group saw the programme as beneficial to their work. As one participant said: "The media in general would benefit from such an important subject."

Over-all Value of the Workshop to You. The item got a 4.09, indicating that participants regarded the workshop highly.

Suggestions. Apart from giving ratings and comments, the participants also suggested post-workshop activities, including the following:

1. Organize follow-up workshops to pursue further the issues and recommendations raised in the Delhi meeting.

2. Organize further regional and national workshops on media education, using guidelines arranged by this conference.

3. Participants should organize themselves into a network and actively participate in action-oriented media education programmes.

4. A promoting body should be organized for the purpose of mounting media education campaigns in each country in the region.

5. UNESCO could come up with a programme to facilitate and initiate various countries efforts in media education.

6. Establish a Documentation Centre as base for accessing materials on media education in the Asia-Pacific Region.
CONCLUSION

On the basis of participant evaluation of the workshop, as well as on feedback received from individual delegates, the Workshop on Media Education in South Asia was a qualified success in meeting most of the expectations of participants.

In terms of its stated objectives, the workshop also proved successful in raising some of the most critical media issues in the region, in increasing the awareness of the participants on the need for media education in South Asia, in identifying persons and institutions who can now initiate media education projects in their own countries/institutions, and lastly, in generating some outlines for the development of teaching-learning materials on media education relevant to the region.

FUTURE ACTION

As recommended by the participants, a follow-up workshop will be organized by AMIC to refine the guidelines and begin actual development of the teaching materials suggested during the New Delhi workshop.

A small working group will meet in Bangalore, India on 9-11 September 1992 to review the Delhi outlines, flesh them out, and identify individuals and institutions who will eventually produce the materials. The meeting will be held at the Media Centre, a local institution active in media education.

UNESCO/IPDC has committed funds for the development and production of the media education materials. FES New Delhi, on the other hand, has also set aside funds for the publication of the workshop papers into a book on media issues in South Asia.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Workshop on Media Education in South Asia would not have been successful were it not for the material and moral support provided by several institutions and individuals.

UNESCO/IPDC provided the core funding to organize the workshop as well as to develop and produce the teaching-learning material suggested by the Delhi meeting. The UNESCO Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur facilitated the release of funds to enable AMIC to implement the project on time.

FES - New Delhi provided additional funding for the workshop as well as for the publication of the seminar papers into a book. FES has also assigned an in-house specialist to edit the book. Dr. Heinz Bongartz, FES Representative and Mr. Kabir Seth, Administrative Officer and Accountant, personally attended to many of the local administrative details pertaining to the workshop.

IIMC provided excellent workshop facilities and secretariat support. Dr. J.S. Yadava and his staff, particularly, Programme Officer Mr. K.S. Babu, ensured that the participants' needs were attended to during their stay at the Institute, and in New Delhi as well.

AMIC wishes to thank all these institutions and individuals for their assistance and goodwill.
WORKSHOP ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA
New Delhi, India  4-8 August 1992

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote increased awareness of media issues in the South Asian Region;

2. To promote the need for media literacy cum education in the region;

3. To develop a core of media educators who can provide leadership and initiate action in promoting media education in the school, community, and among media practitioners; and

4. To develop draft teaching-learning materials supportive of media education activities in the home, classroom and community.
A. The Need for Media Education

Media Education is a critical issue in the Third World, in view of increasing literacy which makes possible access to the print media, the exponential growth of communication media and messages, and the growing influence of television and video.

UNESCO defines Media Education as "all ways of studying, learning and teaching at all levels (primary, secondary, higher, adult education, lifelong education) ... and in all contexts, the history, creativity, use and evaluation of media as practical and technical arts, as well as the place occupied by media society, their social impact, the implication of media communication, participation, modification of the mode of perception they bring about, the role of creative work and access to media."

As pointed out in UNESCO's Draft Medium Term Plan (1990-1995), the audio-visual and print media are very important determinants of literacy and there is a need "to develop objective appreciation of the media through media education, to maximise the benefits of media use, especially among young people, and to improve knowledge of how the media function in different societies.

B. Background and Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop will address the over-all issue of the locus of the media in the social, cultural, political and economic development of developing economies in the South Asian Region. It will attempt to do this through paper presentations, group discussions, and workshops designed to produce recommendations on as well draft outlines of teaching-learning modules on media education, which could be used both in in-school and community media literacy and education classes.

The workshop will complement an earlier workshop on media education for the South-East Asian Region organised by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), Singapore and implemented in Manila, Philippines in October 1990, in collaboration with the Philippine Association for Media Education and the Centre for Social Policy, Ateneo de Manila University. The Manila workshop, supported by UNESCO/IPDC, reviewed the media situation in the region, the opportunities and challenges in educating the public about the media and how they influence people and society, and recommended guidelines for developing media literacy and media education programmes.
The workshop responds to a need for critical awareness, understanding and use of the mass media in developing countries in light of global trends and developments in information and communications.

The workshop will bring together a group of communication/media educators, media practitioners, and community leaders for the purpose of assessing the media situation and need for media education in the South Asian Region, and developing teaching-learning materials for media literacy and education, applicable for in-school and out-of-school situations.

C. Workshop Method and Procedure

The workshop will be implemented over five days. The first two days will be devoted to paper presentations on the burning media issues in the South Asian Region today; the role of the home, school, community, and the media itself, in responding to these issues; and the need for media literacy cum education to educate the public on the role and influence of the media in society.

The third day will focus on specific case studies of media literacy cum education strategies that have been initiated in the countries of the South Asian Region, and discussions on how these same strategies may be disseminated and adapted across the region.

The last two days will be devoted to small group workshops to develop draft teaching-learning materials on media literacy cum education.