

A Study of SWAYAM Prabha DTH TV Channel (*Kishore Manch*) in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools of India

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Abstract

Technology undergoes constant evolution. As newer technologies emerge, they absorb and integrate the capabilities of the outgoing ones. However, this doesn't render the earlier technologies obsolete. They persist and can be utilised to achieve valuable educational outcomes. The objectives of both technology and education align in a way that fosters synergies, enhancing children's learning experiences. Television, a technology that continues to endure, possesses unique features. Combining both audio and visual elements, it stands out as a powerful tool for delivering diverse information effectively. Educational television, in particular, serves as a crucial device for disseminating education widely among the masses. In this paper, the awareness, accessibility and perception of Swayam Prabha DTH TV Channel 'Kishore Manch' was studied across various States/UTs of the country using both qualitative and quantitative data. The results indicated that there was limited awareness about the channel. Accessibility of the channel in the sampled States/UTs is still a challenge. The perception of teachers towards the channel was positive but there is a scope of improving the production quality of educational programmes. Additionally, challenges such as discontinuity in series telecast need addressing, along with the endeavour to captivate students' interest in DTH TV. As the efforts are underway to expand the initiative of educational TV in India, the paper seeks to discuss the results of the surveys about this expansion.

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INTRODUCTION

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has permeated almost every part of human civilisation. Learning too has been impacted in big ways. From organising classrooms to integrating technology into pedagogy, from educational administration to distance and blended learning, technology is being used extensively to achieve the desired outcomes. Disseminating the information through television, radio, internet, handheld devices, etc., has been used for the past many years. Among all these technologies, the importance of television cannot be under-estimated even today, especially in countries like India where the digital divide still exists. In 1959, television was introduced in the country as an educational project supported by UNESCO and the Ford Foundation.

It started as a social communication experiment, with small tele-clubs organised in Delhi and community television sets. Educational television was introduced in 1961 to enhance middle and high school education. Its experiments in teaching of Science, Mathematics, and language proved successful and received appreciation from many UNESCO experts (Kumar, 2000). Later, when India launched its first Indian National Satellite System (INSAT-1 [A]) on 10 April 1982, a countrywide national telecast service became available. Initially, programmes for students and teachers were telecasted in two States,

viz., Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Subsequently, more advanced series of INSAT satellites were launched, including INSAT 4 (A) in 2005, which significantly boosted the country's DTH television services. In the year 2000, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD now Ministry of Education (MoE)) of the Government of India launched a satellite channel *Gyandarshan* exclusively devoted to education, was launched to boost the educational telecast. In 2004, EDUSAT a special satellite as the world's first satellite meant for educational purposes. It covered the entire part of the country and provided radio/television broadcasts, night downloading facilities and video—conferencing facilities.

Through all these initiatives, the educational telecasts have entered the Indian classrooms. National institutions such as UGC, IGNOU, NCERT have undertaken several initiatives to telecast educational programmes through various educational channels for both school and higher education. One such initiative has been the SWAYAM Prabha, which was launched in 2017 by the Department of Higher Education (DHE), MoE, Government of India (GoI) to telecast high quality educational programmes on a 24×7 basis. SWAYAM Prabha is a bouquet of 34 educational DTH TV channels using GSAT-15 satellite. Different institutions got the responsibility to

develop quality educational videos based on their expertise. NCERT was nominated to telecast the video content for school education from Classes 9–12. NCERT named this channel as the *Kishore Manch* (KM).

Such large initiatives require research-based studies to understand various dimensions of the project and their impact on teaching and learning. Research indicates that good television shows, like good books, can enhance children's comprehension of the world around them. Students will continue to watch educational programmes for additional learning opportunities. Though there is the internet to provide educational content; there are a large number of students who don't have access to devices or bandwidths. For them, educational TV is a valued tool for delivering curriculum-based content. A UNESCO document (1974) emphasizes the importance of television for education, "Television has the advantage of providing a synthesis of all the available aids to learning. It meets virtually all other techniques including flexible language of the film. There is also the value of the medium for the tele guidance of teachers and instructors in new methods". A number of experimental studies have reported that children who watched episodes of educational television demonstrated improvements in educational domains immediately afterwards (Bogatz and Ball, 1971; Singer and Singer, 1981; Davis, 1989; Hall et al., 1990; Rice et

al., 1990; Huston, 1992; MacBeth, 1996; Singer and Singer, 1998; Crawley, 1999; Anderson et al., 2001; Naigles and Mayeux, 2001; Wright et al., 2001; Zill, 2001; Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 2004; Fisch, 2000). As an organised, sequential, and methodical supplement to formal school instruction, School Television (STV) launched a project in October 1961 for Delhi's Secondary school students with the goal of raising the quality of instruction given the city's lack of laboratories, space, equipment, and qualified teachers. Teachers appreciated STV as a tool for teaching and presentation of content (Kumar, 2000).

Educational television can have both beneficial and detrimental consequences. Numerous studies have examined the harm that television causes to society, especially to children and teenagers. Canadian Paediatric Society (2002) points out that frequent viewing of television limits children's time for vital activities such as playing, reading, learning to talk, spending time with peers and family, storytelling, participating in regular exercise and developing other necessary physical, mental and social skills. By the mid-1980s, there was considerable increase in the volume of commercials on television. With extremely few upkeep costs for the user, a one-time investment in a radio or television results in a longer-term advantage. In order to reach and connect with isolated and dispersed communities, it is necessary to take

a new look at the time-tested media of radio and television. Even less studied is the status and awareness of the educational television channel.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1: What is the outreach of Swayam Prabha channel *Kishore Manch* across various States/UTs of the country?
- RQ2: Do the States/UTs of the country are aware about the *SWAYAM Prabha/Kishore Manch* project?
- RQ3: Do the States/UTs have the accessibility for *SWAYAM Prabha/Kishore Manch* channels or any other educational television channels?
- RQ4: What is the perception of teachers towards the use of educational television/*Kishore Manch Channel* in the school?

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are to—(i) Study the awareness and accessibility for *Kishore Manch Channel* (*SWAYAM Prabha*) in secondary and senior secondary schools of India; (ii) Study the accessibility of any other state educational television channel in

secondary and senior secondary schools of India; (iii) Study the perception of principals, teachers and students for *Kishore Manch* channel.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, the status and utilisation of *SWAYAM Prabha 'Kishore Manch (KM) channel'* was studied across the nation. For this, both types of data, i.e., qualitative and quantitative were collected and so a mixed research method was followed. Attempts were made to collect data from the State-level functionaries of all States and UTs (36 in number) who have had the administrative authority to run Secondary and Senior Secondary Government and Government aided schools in 29 States and 7 Union Territories (UTs) of India. Besides this, purposive sampling of the teachers were also done to study the perception towards the *KM Channel*. During the literature review, it was found that very little research has been done on educational television in India. Also it was found that no study was done on *SWAYAM Prabha*. All the tools were developed by the researchers: questionnaire for States' functionaries and questionnaire for school teachers. Researchers have collected the data in a phased manner for this study.

Table 1

S. No.	Name of the Tool	Sample	Type of the tool	Description of Tool
1.	Questionnaire for State's Functionaries	Director, school Education; Director, SCERTs and State Project Director (SPDs), RMSA	Questionnaire	The tool consists of total 7 items (both objective and subjective) related to the awareness and accessibility of channel no. 31 <i>Kishore Manch</i> . The tool also focussed on gathering information about any other state educational television and reasons for utilisation and non utilisation of contents of <i>Kishore Manch</i> in their States
2.	Questionnaire for Principal	School Principals	Questionnaire	The questionnaire consists of four areas— (i) Infrastructure (ii) Accessibility and Awareness (iii) Perception on <i>Kishore Manch</i> (iv) Difficulties and suggestions about the programs of <i>Kishore Manch</i>
3.	Questionnaire for School Teachers	School Teachers	Questionnaire	The questionnaire consists of five areas— (i) Infrastructure (ii) Accessibility and Awareness (iii) Perception on <i>Kishore Manch</i> (iv) Quality of programmes (v) Difficulties and suggestions about the programs of <i>Kishore Manch</i>

The validity of the tools was established through content validity. The items of the tools were reviewed as per the objectives of the study and also in context of language like issues of grammar rules, coherency, and expression properties. The drafted tools were finalised in a two-day workshop. Experts from the area of research and mass communication were invited to provide suggestions and finalise the research tools developed for the study.

The tool for functionaries of the States/Union Territories (UTs) was sent to all the 36 Directors, School Education; Directors, SCERTs and State Project Directors (SPDs), RMSA through e-mail (along with the online link) and posts. After this the researchers approached some purposely selected teachers of Secondary and Senior Secondary Government and Government aided schools in the State of Haryana and Rajasthan to determine their perceptions of the use of the educational TV channels. Data were collected in 2018.

The delimitations of the study were two-fold. Data were dependent upon the responses received from States/UTs by email. Size of the samples posed a limitation on the study. There was a time lag in collecting data in Phase 1 and 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Objective 1: To Study the Outreach of Educational TV Channel Kishore Manch Across the Country

Data were received from States, viz., Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Data were also received from Union Territories (UTs), viz., Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu and The Government of NCT of Delhi. 11 responses were received by 11 SCERTs, 1 from RMSA, 2 from Directorate of school education, 6 from DIETs of West Bengal, 78 from schools of Haryana and 4 from schools of Rajasthan.

Objective 1.1(A): Awareness about the SWAYAM Prabha Project by MHRD

- Responses towards the awareness of *SWAYAM Prabha* indicated that the majority of states and UTs have had awareness about the *SWAYAM Prabha* project mainly through official channels, official meetings, *SWAYAM Prabha* Website, NCERT website and CIET website. Majority of states had awareness about the Kishore Manch channel from the NCERT Website, Newspapers and *SWAYAM Prabha* website. The stated reasons for being unaware about the project were: lack of communications about the

project in exhibitions/lecture/talks/official communications; lack of adequate advertisements on TV/Radio/Newspapers and lack of adequate information on the social media sites. Other possible reasons were: lack of adequate promotion of the *SWAYAM Prabha* project by the MHRD on its website; unavailability of these channels across privately owned DTH TV network and educational TV being no longer popular among the educationists.

Objective 1.1(B): Awareness about the *Kishore Manch* Channel

- Almost 70 per cent of the States/UTs responded that they are aware about *Kishore Manch* Channel under *SWAYAM Prabha* project and there were various reasons for their awareness. Most prominent reason is through NCERT Website, Newspapers and *SWAYAM Prabha* website. Some also responded that the awareness is due to the MHRD website, CIET website, colleagues, official meetings, radio, lecture/talk, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Youtube) and official communications.
- Like above, the stated reasons for lack of awareness could be the same.

Objective 1.2(A): Access to *Kishore Manch* Channel in the Schools of State:

Schools in Bihar had access to *SWAYAM Prabha* due to the teacher training through the channels allocated to National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) out of the *SWAYAM Prabha* initiative. For this almost 1000 secondary and senior secondary schools had the facility for NIOS channel. Rest of the states had no access to *Kishore Manch* channel in their respective schools. Though the state of Punjab had no access to *Kishore Manch* TV channel, they have had the facility of EDUSAT content through satellite network (ROT) in 3289 Government High and Senior Secondary Schools.

SPECIFIC REASONS FOR NON-ACCESSIBILITY OF THE *KISHORE MANCH* CHANNEL IN THE STATE

The sampled states/UTs have provided many reasons for the non accessibility of *Kishore Manch* in the state. The reasons were discussed here:

- Difficult geographical conditions and no availability of D2H at home.
- Lack of infrastructure in the schools to telecast the channel. In the UT of Daman and Diu, there was no such problem of infrastructure as it was present in all the schools. There were other reasons for non-accessibility.
- Few states responded that there was lack of awareness about its

existence and there has not been much publicity and awareness about this channel.

- State Government has not provided any down linking and up linking services or direct to home services to the schools.
- Two of the States responded that DoE has not provided any facility in schools to subscribe to the *SWAYAM Prabha* channels. However SCERT Chandigarh was utilising the NCERT KM channels for the students of D.El.Ed. and in service training programmes.
- In case of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, they responded that the islands of the territory were remotely located where connectivity was a concern. It was difficult for anyone to access the educational sites.

Arulchelvan and Viswanathan (2006) reported that a small percentage of 14.61 per cent respondents in Tamil Nadu watch UGCCWCR programmes while a huge population of students 85.39 per cent do not watch the programmes. The researchers suggested that, “top priority should be given to strengthen the educational usage of the powerful electronic media and creation of awareness among students about educational media should be taken up on a massive scale with a sense of urgency”.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE CHANNEL AWARENESS, VISIBILITY AND QUALITY OF THE CHANNEL IN STATE WAS ALSO PROVIDED DURING DATA COLLECTION

- Special budget provision should be provided for each school of state to avail D2H set with LED TV.
- There is a need to work as a mission in this direction. The information and instructions should be given to the State Government regarding the channel.
- Promotion and orientation is necessary for popularising the channel in schools by sending regular information/letters with brief details; advertising in newspapers and through popular TV channels/*Doordarshan* channel as well as in *Akashwani* telecast before some popular programme; awareness should be imparted to the teachers in the in-service training programmes at SCERT; circular can be sent to educational institutions and adequate information should be spread through social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Google ads. They suggested that the components of visibility is important to the schools for the complete utilisation of the channels.
- The NCERT or CIET should take initiative to make them accessible in schools of the region.
- Some other suggestions were received from Rajasthan SCERT:

every Saturday telecast may be planned on a fixed time in presence of a teacher. The programmes should be separate for different age groups and common issues can be taken covering national and regional issues. Different methods should be used for the contents such as talks, drama, folk dance/tales, quiz, etc. Feedback sessions for analysing programmes may be organised and research-based interventions may be planned.

- In Punjab, the programmes were telecast on EDUSAT Network (ROT-Receive only Terminals consisting of set top box, antenna, display screen, etc.), which were established in 3289 Government High and Senior Secondary schools across the state. They sought the advice to extend Punjab EDUSAT Network on Government DTH/DD network.

Objective 2: To Study the Accessibility of Any Other State Educational Television Channel in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools of India

- State of Rajasthan responded that the state was having an ICT satellite Education channel, which was started from 15 January, 2015. *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) of the State had been given the responsibility to provide the content in Hindi from 10:05 AM to 1:30 PM. The technical

operations of the channel were done by Compucom software limited, IMFS and infrastructure was provided under ICT Phase IV and V. The channel was made compulsory for schools to show in the classroom. This was not available on local cable networks or DTH networks.

- State of Punjab had also its channel on which programmes were telecast on EDUSAT Network (ROT-Receive only Terminals) that was established in Government High Schools and Senior Secondary Schools across the state. The timings of the telecast was 7 hrs (9.00 AM—3.20 PM) and the languages of the programmes were Punjabi and English. The channel was managed by Punjab Edusat Society (O/o Director General School Education, Punjab). The facilities were received through Receive Only Terminals (ROT) and Satellite Interactive Terminal (SIT) in the schools.
- Besides this all the other States responded that they didn't have any educational television channel for school and teacher education in the respective State.

Peddharkar (1988), Kumar (1990), Mishra (1990), Kumari and Ali (January 1991), Govindaraju (1996), and Rao (1998), among others, have extensively documented the factors contributing to the underutilisation of UGC programmes and the pervasive apathy toward the use of television

in higher education. The consensus among the majority of researchers is that several challenges impede the effective utilisation of educational television programmes. These include insufficient awareness about the programmes, the indifferent attitude of teachers, the unavailability of television sets, inadequate space for viewing, power shortages in colleges, the complexity of language used, and shortcomings in the delivery methods of the programmes. Addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness and utility of educational television programmes.

Further, some States/UTs discussed their plans for starting an educational TV channel of their own.

- Almost all the States responded that they were planning in this direction to start the channel in their states. In Uttarakhand, CIET-NCERT is providing budget to start a State level channel.
- In Bihar, facilities of educational films were shown through a projector in the schools in secondary and senior secondary Schools. Earlier, State Institute of Educational Technology (SIET) helped in this endeavour. SIET was no longer operational.
- Daman and Diu had no such plan as the UT was affiliated with the Gujarat State Education Board and the UT followed BISAG channel, broadcasted by the Gujarat State for Primary and Upper Primary school.

- Delhi had received a proposal from MHRD regarding Educational TV Channel for UT and the proposal will be placed before competent authorities.
- There was no educational TV channel in Tamil Nadu. However, they had a plan in place to start an educational TV channel in collaboration with (TACTV) Tamil Nadu
- In Meghalaya, most of the schools didn't have the facilities for TV sets.
- Andaman & Nicobar responded that they cannot start the channel as the UT is remotely located from mainland as well its own islands, where the development has not been taken enough to start an educational TV channel.
- In Punjab they wished to extend Punjab EDUSAT Network on Government DTH/DD network or if any other option and asked advice for this.
- Rest two states have responded that they have planned for the channel and two states have not yet initiated.

Objective 3: To Study the Perception of Principal and Teachers for Educational TV/ Kishore Manch Channel

Positive perceptions of the *Kishore Manch* channel came to light in relation to the improvement of students' learning levels, the provision of a pleasurable viewing experience,

and the assistance in fostering a personal interest in learning and the enrichment of classroom instruction. But 50 per cent of schools agreed that it affected viewers' spatial abilities, viewers' imagination, viewers' task perseverance, brings in visual reinforcement for conceptual clarity, hinders the learning because the telecast is in discontinuity in case of series of programmes, affects the learning because the queries of students and teachers are not attended to by the subject experts and affects learning because the attention span of the students is decreased due to long duration of the programmes. Also 50 per cent of schools were undecided if educational television generated any interest towards the learning because the format of programmes often was incompatible with the needs and learning styles of the students. Moreover, the programmes were largely based on demonstration. Similar results were observed by Crawley et al. (1999). They revealed that while television as a medium does not always have a detrimental impact on attentional skills, it can teach particular concentration techniques when presented and planned well. Television programmes may additionally demonstrate the immediate and possibly long-term benefits of problem-solving abilities, particularly for young viewers who watch them on a regular basis. Television can influence cognitive skills in numerous ways, both via its

content and its formal components, or cinematic codes. Also, watching television affects viewers' ability to imagine, stay on task, and have spatial awareness. For instance, Salomon (1979) has demonstrated that watching slow zooms into details of a large picture teaches children visual analytic skills. Similarly, watching changes in camera perspectives can enhance children's spatial perspective (CEC, 2010). Regarding both enrichment and syllabus-based programmes, students indicated that up to 30 minutes was their most preferred length for educational programmes. Most popular languages for ETV programming were Hindi and English. Yashobanta (2000) carried out a study on Effectiveness of the School Broadcast Programmes of All India Radio (AIR) and Educational Television (ETV) Programmes of Doordarshan with reference to school achievement of the learners. This study showed that (i) Both the ETV and School Broadcast programmes have been found to have positive effect on school achievement of pupils and it is really a matter of concern that none of the schools was found utilizing the ETV and school broadcast programmes in an institutionalised manner.

CONCLUSION

The project's original goal was to extend educational resources to remote areas, yet unfortunately, it struggled to gain significant momentum at its inception. It is

important for educational TV channel to telecast programmes based on students' needs. In a country like India, where television is a predominant source of entertainment, there is an opportunity to enlighten parents about its educational potential. Page and Crawley (2001) assert that advertisers often show limited interest in documentaries and educational programming, which may contribute to the lack of accessibility to instructional programs for the general public. This study underscores the insufficient publicity surrounding the initiative, emphasising the need for awareness campaigns. States express eagerness to launch educational channels, provided there are adequate funds and a commitment to catering to the educational needs of teachers and students at the regional level. Simultaneously, there's a need for advancements in television production and distribution technology to enhance the overall quality of educational content. Fisch (2000) suggests that children's learning can be maximised by altering the presentation surroundings and consistently reinforcing educational themes throughout television shows. In a world where the internet is presumed to surpass television,

justifying the value of instructional television becomes challenging. However, Pal's (2003) research on the effects of ETV programmes on mathematical concept understanding highlights the enthusiasm of rural and urban primary schools in Jaipur to utilise ETV for various teaching purposes, including enrichment and remediation. To further understand the impact of educational television, additional research is essential, focusing on learning outcomes and other criteria to gauge effectiveness. Exploring the perspectives of the younger generation towards educational TV programmes will provide valuable insights into shaping the future of educational broadcasting. India's diverse landscape sometimes reveals itself through a digital divide. Bridging this gap requires the strategic deployment of a diverse array of technologies. Educational television stands as a significant effort to address this disparity in learning, aiming to deliver education directly to the doorsteps of children. The recent G20 declaration also emphasizes the use of technology to overcome the digital divide, further highlighting the global recognition of this critical issue.

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