

## **Editorial**

# **MEDIA AND CHILDREN: ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH AGENDA IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT**

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It was an interesting experience to edit a special issue that captures the voices that research 'media and children' in the context of Global South, in general, and India, in particular. Our co-editor, Dr Nancy Jennings along with her co-author, Asita Bali discuss the limitations in the field of children's media research in a special commentary titled, "Significant Difference, Cultural Difference, and Cultural Humility in Children's Media Research'. They argue that more international collaborations in this space should be the way forward. They point at the critical need for 'children and media' (CAM) scholars to come together and represent a diversity of contexts. It was very insightful to note the authors' invocation to resist WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) frames of reference and have more conversations on research outside the western world.

Ayesha Rashid and Abhishek Roy's article titled, 'Children, Digital Media and Well-being: A Case Study of School-going Children of Shillong, Meghalaya', adds to the preceding conversation on non-western frames by engaging with school children from the Indian state of Meghalaya and documenting their digital media usage patterns. It delves into children's and parents' perspectives and focusses on their discourse pertaining to children's safety and mental health in the digital media environment.

'Exploring the Impact of Social Media Influencers on Children: A Study of Parental perspectives', by Shad Ahmad Khan and Soni Sharma documents parents' viewpoints to discuss the impact of social media influencers on their children who are less than 18 years of age. 'Reality Television and Children's Receptivity: Examining Audience Perspectives' co-

authored by Shafey Anwarul Haque and Sohaib Alam deliberates upon the impact of Indian reality television show 'Bigg Boss' on children by analyzing their parents' perspectives. It is important to note that parental viewpoints still have a significant role in researching children's perceptions in the Indian context and studies that document children's voices directly are fewer.

Gamen Palem and Bala Krishna Gaddagama study children as content creators in the categories of DIY, unboxing, walkthrough, product review and shop visit videos. They use a case study approach in their research article titled, 'Children as Content Creators: Exploring Opportunities and Navigating Media in the Digital Age'. They study eight children who are digital content creators and another five who are part of the NFT ecosystem. However, the study raises the critical need for more innovative theoretical frameworks to respond to these paradigmatic shifts.

Kanika K Arya and Manish Verma deconstruct the representation of mythological themes in Indian animation for children in the article, 'Exploring the Mythological themes in Indian Animation Films for Children: A Textual Analysis'. The study serves a two-pronged purpose. One the one hand, it offers a detailed framework of

textual analysis of animated content produced for children; and on the other hand, it contextualizes this analysis in the larger social and cultural discourse around mythology and value-system.

Mudita Mishra and Kuldeep Brahmbhatt explore hybrid-mode content for children on streaming platforms in their article, 'Exploring the Landscape of Entertainment on Netflix for Young Consumers: Celebrating Surrealism in Children's Content through Adoption of Hybrid Modes of Filmmaking'. They focus on some shows on Netflix that incorporate a combination of live action, 2D, 3D and stop motion animation formats to create multi-layered and nuanced viewing experiences for children. The authors, interestingly, theorize concepts of children's agentic viewing practices and their negotiation with multiple realities and surrealism in the process.

Overall, this thematic issue explores diverse contexts to observe the current discourse on the relationship between media and children. The epistemological, theoretical and methodological versatility of this compilation provides an insightful perspective on the domain. However, it also raises pertinent concerns about the gaps in researching with children, particularly, in the Indian context. The

issue also indicates a policy study gap with reference to research on media and children. There is not a single paper in this issue which has come from any grant opportunity and that is a glaring gap. This is an under-

researched area in the Indian context, particularly, and would benefit greatly from such thematic academic compilations as well as more international collaborations and funding support.

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