CHAPTER – VI

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A survey was conducted among 1015 children of sixth standard boys and girls studying in government, aided and private city schools of Salem city and their parents (605). More than half the number of parents (57%) said that they told stories to their children at home. This was confirmed by their wards: 81% of the kids said that they were used to hearing stories from their parents and grandparents. However they believed that cartoon programs also told them stories while another 25% did not feel that cartoon programs told them any stories. According to Wong (2007) television acts as a story teller for children nurturing the cultural values embedded in its content (as cited in Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1986, p. 18; Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). Two third of the parents accepted that television acted as a story teller to their children. But they did not agree that television has replaced them (parents) in
terms of storytelling while another 40% believed that television has replaced parents as a story teller.

Many stories (55%) told by the parents were humorous, with one third of them being purely moral based stories; others were adventurous and horror based. Whatever may be the genre, most of those stories (90%) had moral values. 68% of the parents specifically told the moral at the end of each story. They believed that telling morals at the end was part of our culture.

In addition, a large segment of the children said that they followed those moral values. In fact, more number of girls (89%) stated that they followed the morals which were conveyed through the stories. Chi-Square test was applied to find whether there was any significant relationship between gender and the morals that the children claimed to follow and it was found to be significant. \( x^2 = 6.938 > 6.635 \text{ at } 1\% \text{ level of significance}. \)

Similarly, there was significant association between medium of instruction and the students following morals. More number of (88%) English medium students claimed to follow the morals than Tamil medium students. \( x^2 = 6.832 > 6.635 \text{ at } 1\% \text{ level of significance}. \) However there was no significant association between the type of management and children following morals.

However children’s television viewing time was far more than the time they spent listening to stories from parents. According to TAM Media Research
2010, children spend approximately 5 hours (per day) watching television which increases by 4% every year. However in the present study, 37% of boys and 46% of girls said that they did not watch television during weekdays. Almost one fourth of the boys and girls did not watch television during weekends also. On the other end, a considerable 12% of them watched television for more than 5 hours during weekends. There was significant association between gender and duration of watching television programs during weekdays. Boys watched television for longer hours than girls. ($x^2=26.303>6.812$ at 1% level of significance.)

50% of boys and 50% of girls watched English cartoon programs and another half did not. There was no significant association between watching English cartoon programs and gender. Sixty percent of the respondents watched those programs purely for entertainment whereas forty percentage watched just to pass time. None of them watched television for information or for study purposes.

Though more than half the number of respondents (57%) watched only children’s channels, they were interested in other television genres like comedy, music, movies, science and nature also. Among them, a vast majority watched pogo (86%), their second favourite channel being cartoon network. Three fourth of the respondents preferred school life based programs in particular.
With regard to the appropriateness of cartoon programs to the age of the children, 64% of the parents of boys and girls felt that the contents of cartoon programs were suitable for their children. Among them, only 49% were aware that majority of cartoon programs are made in foreign countries.

66% of the parents watched television programs along with their wards. Among them 61% are the parents of boys and 70% are the parents of girls. This was confirmed by the children. 64% of the parents and children were from joint family system and 67% of them were from nuclear families. Chi-Square test was applied to find out whether there was any significant relationship between type of family and parents watching television programs along with their children. There was no significant correlation between the type of family and parents watching television programs along with their children. Similarly there was no significant correlation between the income level and parents watching television programs along with their children.

Only one third of the parents, whether from joint families or nuclear families discussed about the television programs with their children. The others did not have the practice of discussing the programs with their wards. Also, there was no significant correlation between the income level and parents discussing about television programs with their kids. 13% of the parents discussed only if their children found any difficulty in understanding the visual or the dialogue.
With regard to specific cartoon programs, Chhota Bheem and Ben10 were the most popular programs among children of this age group which was reflected both in the pilot study as well as in the main study. Sixty percent of the respondents liked both Chhota Bheem and Ben 10. The reason for their preference was said to be the good character of Bheem and Ben.

Majority of them were not able to identify the right age of neither Bheem nor Ben. It could be conceivably because their activities are more like adults/super heroes than like children of 9 or 10 year old. Forty percent of the respondents assumed the age of Bheem to be ten whereas the other forty five percent thought that he was twelve years old based on his activities and dialogue. Only nine percent of them thought that it was nine which is the age of Bheem according to the story.

In the case of Ben10, nearly thirty percent felt that his age was fourteen, twenty eight percent considered it to be twelve years, and twenty percent thought that it was sixteen. Only nineteen percent of them said that he was ten years old which is the actual age of Ben according to the story.

Almost all the children (93%) understood that Bheem was an Indian. But only forty three percent of the children identified Ben to be an American. This could be because of the language which Ben speaks. Since Ben 10 is dubbed in many regional languages and during this process a lot of colloquial terms are used which are popular among school students. They don’t differentiate
Ben as a foreign character. Rest of them thought that Ben was an Indian. As the story line promotes, majority of the children perceived eating ladoos was the reason for Bheem’s victory along with his good character, self-confidence and divine power. With reference to Ben, technology was considered to be prime factor for his victory followed by self-confidence and magical powers. Eighty percent of the children understood that those cartoon characters were fictional and not real. Still they accepted that they were influenced by those imaginary characters.

More than half the number of parents felt that cartoon programs did not influence their children. They did not find any behavioural or attitude changes in their children. However one fourth of the parents believed that there was an influence of cartoon programs on their children. They thought that there was a change in the habits of their children after watching cartoon programs, irrespective of the gender.

More number of parents of boys (50%) felt that their children are disturbed by the habit of watching cartoon programs. Relatively less number of parents of girls (40%) had the same complaint. There was significant relationship between gender and cartoon programs disturbing student’s regular work ($x^2 = 9.265 > 7.815$ at 5% significant level). Television viewing occupies children’s time. The previous study stated that if children spend more time watching television, they must be spending very less time for other activities.
This phenomenon is common in nature (Gunter & McAleer, 2005). Again there was significant difference between the parents of different gender and their perception about cartoon programs being a disturbance to the regular routine of their children. That is, parents of boys felt the influence of cartoon programs on their children more than the parents of girls. Parents were equally divided in terms of their opinion regarding the effect of cartoon programs on their children’s studies in particular. Almost half the number of parent respondents believed that cartoon programs affected their kids’ studies very much, irrespective of the gender.

With regard to imitation of cartoon characters by children, the sample was again almost equally divided - with 52% of children stating that they did not imitate the cartoon characters and 48% of them saying that they imitated the cartoon characters they saw on small screen. Their parents also agreed with their statement saying that their children imitated the characters – some of them always and the rest occasionally. And there was no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to their imitation behavior of cartoon characters.

Three fourth of the respondents (69.7%) called their friends and siblings using pet names based on the cartoon characters/programs. Parents of the students also stated the same. Three fourth of parents of boys and 65% of parents of girls said that their children called their friends and siblings using pet names
based on cartoon characters/programs. There was significant association between gender and assigning pet names. More boys called their friends using pet names from cartoon characters than girls \( (x^2=10.219 > 6.635 \text{ at } 1\% \text{ level of significance}) \).

Parents of almost fifty percent of boys and girls stated that cartoon programs never influenced their purchase behavior and that their kids did not pester them to buy things with cartoon characters. Other parents stated that cartoon programs influenced their children in the purchase of commodities; they bought products with cartoon characters—always or occasionally.

All the respondents (100%) irrespective of the gender had some or other product with cartoon characters on it. The products included school bags, lunch boxes, pencil boxes, stationary, purse/pouches, exam pads, play things, stickers, tattoos, sports articles like cricket bat, puzzles, games and personal things like watches, dresses, fashion jewellery, and eatables printed with cartoon characters.

Almost one third of the parents recognized cultural values in the cartoon programs whereas the others did not agree that cartoon programs carried any cultural components. Similarly 37\% of them said that cartoon programs never reflected our culture while another 32\% of parents felt that cartoon programs reflected Indian culture. Three fourth of the parents stated that they explained about Indian culture to their children. 50\% of parents did not feel that our
native culture was influenced through cartoon programs. But the rest believed that our culture is being influenced through cartoon programs.

A large segment (64%) of the students did not know the exact meaning of culture; Majority of them were not able to express the meaning of culture in terms of symbols or behaviour though they were able to identify things/behaviour/values etc., associated with our culture like dress, festivals, customs and some values such as forgiveness, respecting elders, hospitality and unity; they were able to differentiate variables related to our culture from foreign culture.

One of the objectives of the study was to find out whether children knew the meaning of culture and to examine whether there was any association between the awareness about culture and gender, awareness and medium of instruction, awareness and the type of management. The proportion of boys (42%) who knew the meaning of culture was higher than girls (38%). It was found that there was significant association between gender and awareness of culture ($x^2=10.153>6.635$ at 1% level of significance).

On the other hand, three fourth of the respondents from Tamil medium schools were not aware of the meaning of culture. But, almost half the number (45%) of English medium students knew the meaning of culture. There was significant association between medium of instruction and the awareness about culture ($x^2=40.633 > 6.635$ at 1% level of significance).
Similarly, 40% of the respondents who were studying in private schools knew the meaning of culture whereas majority of the government (66%) and aided school respondents (71%) did not understand the meaning of culture. Again there was significant association between management of school and the awareness about culture ($x^2=9.490 > 9.210$ at 1% level of significance).

Majority of the children (87%) called their mother as amma and father as appa (79%). Rest of them called their parents as mummy and daddy. This cannot be attributed directly to the viewing of television in general are watching cartoon programs in particular, because many parents of the middle income and lower middle class segment insist that their children call them as mummy and daddy. They put them in private English medium schools in spite of all their difficulties just because they want them to speak in English. Naturally the least they can expect from their children in terms of spoken English is the gesture of addressing them as mummy and daddy.

In Asian countries youngsters generally do not call their elders by name. A respectful address of uncle, aunt, elder brother and elder sister is added to the name. They add sir or madam when talking to an older or senior person. Western countries do not use such terms. Youngsters may call their elders by their first names and no offense is taken. In the study also only fifty percent of the respondents called their sisters and brothers using the relationship (anna, akka, thambi, etc.). The other half called them by their names. Friends were
also addressed by their names only. Often they used the terms like da and di among themselves.

In most Asian countries when a person greets another he brings the palms of his hands together. It is a traditional Indian custom. In western countries the most common greeting is by shaking hands. It is accompanied by ‘how do you do?’ spoken by both persons. Greeting also exchanged by mentioning the time of the day like “good morning”, ‘good afternoon’ and so on.

Almost all the children preferred Indian food. However among them around fifty percent of them liked food items belonging to other culture also. The other half did not like foreign food. Eighty percent of the children identified pizza, burger and noodles as food items not related to our culture. They were aware that pattu pavadai, dhothi and sari were part of our culture. However the remaining students thought that Jeans and T-Shirt were the traditional dress of Tamilnadu. This could be probably because these dresses have become so common among both youngsters and adults of today. Almost three fourth of the respondents have said that they used to cut cake on their birthday and went to temple as a family.

Most (90%) of the boys and girls were preferred eating Indian food. There was no significant association between gender and children’s preference for Indian food. Similarly there was no significant association between the medium of instruction, type of school management and preference for Indian
food. There was significant association between medium of instruction and the preference for eating western food (62.394>6.635 at 1% level of significance). There was significant association between type of management of school and the preference of eating western food (17.373>9.210 at 1% level of significance).

Majority of the respondents (mean value of 1.4007) identified veneration to elders as one of the Indian cultural values. Similarly, a large number of children considered hospitality also as one of our cultural values (mean value 1.6671). According to the respondents, unity(1.8028) and forgiveness (1.3249) were also our cultural values. Only 13% of respondents stated that using hi-end technology and latest products (20%) as part of our culture.

Parents also identified veneration to elders (48%) as the foremost Indian cultural value. Forgiveness (39%), unity (20%) and hospitality (8.6%) were also quoted as vital components of our culture. However 20% of them said that using hi-end technology and using latest products (15%) were also part of our cultural value system. Parents quoted that culture was expressed in terms of festivals, religious customs, language, dress, traditional life style and through values like discipline, hospitality and forgiveness.
FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor Analysis was applied in this study to find out the underlying dimensions in a set of statements relating to the cultural traits that the children followed in their day to day life through a set of 37 statements (items). The 37 variables in the data were reduced to 13 factor model and from that table, six factors namely, Materialism, Gender equality, Respect to elders, Culture, Individuality and Modernity were identified and analyzed. Each factor was categorized by gender, medium of Instruction and type of school management. t-test was applied to find whether scores differed significantly between different gender and between students of English and Tamil medium. One way ANOVA was applied to find whether the mean scores differed significantly among private, aided and government school students.

The mean materialism scores differed significantly between boys and girls (t-test value 8.738 > 2.581 at 1% level of significance); Boys seemed to be more materialistic than girls. The mean materialism scores differed significantly between Tamil and English medium students (t-test value 2.789 > 2.581 at 1% level of significance); English medium students were found to be more materialistic than Tamil medium students. The materialism scores differed significantly between the students of private, aided and government schools (F-value 8.402 > 4.626 at 1% level of significance) and more number of aided school students were materialistic than others.
There was no significant association between boys and girls in terms of mean veneration to elders scores. There was no significant association between Tamil and English medium students and mean scores of the variable respect to elders. The veneration to elders scores differed significantly between the students of private, aided and government schools (F-value 3.382 > 3.005 at 5% level of significance). Children of private schools seemed to show more respect to elders than aided and government school students. Report from previous study has stated that Parents Television Council (2006) found the child cartoon characters treat their parent characters with great respect.

The mean of gender equality scores differed significantly between boys and girls (t-test value 2.665 > 2.581 at 1% level of significance). Girls treated the other gender, that is boys equally. But it is not the case with the boys. The mean of gender equality scores differed significantly between Tamil and English medium students (t-test value 2.546 > 1.962 at 5% level of significance), signifying that English medium students were more gender positive than Tamil medium students. The gender equality scores differed significantly between the students of private, aided and government schools also (F-value 9.135 >4.626 at 1% level of significance). Children of aided schools were found to treat the other gender more equally than the students of government and aided schools.
There was no significant association between boys and girls with respect to hospitality. There was no significant association between Tamil and English medium students with respect to hospitality. The hospitality scores differed significantly between the students of private, aided and government schools with respect to the value of hospitality (F-value was 6.753 > 4.626 at 1% level of significance). Again aided school students were practiced hospitality more than students of other types of schools.

There was no significant association between boys and girls with reference to individuality scores. On the other hand there was significant association between Tamil and English medium students (t-test value 7.722 > 2.581 at 1% level of significance.) Similarly there was significant association between the type of management and the individuality scores (F-value 14.568 > 4.626 at 1% level of significance). Government school students were more individualistic than others.

The mean Tolerance scores differed significantly between boys and girls (t-test value 7.722 > 2.581 at 1% level of significance). Surprisingly boys were found to be more tolerant. They also differed significantly between Tamil and English medium students (t-test value 2.419 > 1.962 at 5% level of significance); English medium students were had more tolerance than Tamil medium students. Among the students of private, aided and government schools, private schools were found to have more tolerance than the others (F-
value $5.407 > 4.626$ at 1% level of significance). To sum up though there were differences between boys and girls, between English medium and Tamil medium students, between government, aided and private school students in their behavior in terms of following Indian cultural values, all the students follow those values in their day to day life.