DIGITAL DIVIDE: A STUDY AMONG GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT:
Background: A student's education depends upon their socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors. There is not any equality amid Indian children on these factors. In addition to these factors, Digital divide also creates gap in knowledge with the students who have not access to Internet and Smart Phone compare to the students who have access to Internet and Smart Phone. The objectives of this study are to study the access to Internet and Smart phone of Government School and Private School Children, their habit of Smart phone usage and their Media behavior.
Method: The study design used here is descriptive research method. Surveys and In-depth interviews were adopted for data collection. The children from a CBSE School and a Government School in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu have been taken. To study the children under the concrete operational stage, as an average, children studying in the fourth grade are selected.
Results: government school students media habit, access to technology, usage of social media and the use of mobile applications are indifferent from the students of Private students.
Conclusion: In addition to socio economic status, digital divide also riven the society and creates more inequality. The difference between have and have not been making difference in the knowledge of children.

One group of children participate in digital environments whereas another group is still don't have access to Internet. This study observed that Private School children are receiving good education and learning more things from School as well as from home by using smart phone and Internet. But Government school children

are not getting enough facility from school as well as from home. In addition to, they don't have technical assistance or smart phone usage in their education.

During pandemic time like covid 19, children from this Private school were attending online classes, but children from this government school were not able to attend such classes. Teachers of Government School send study materials through WhatsApp where parents don't have smart phone and internet facilities. Like economy, we see a huge difference in education sector also. Due to advanced technology, children from low socio-economic profile are not able to compete with high socio-economic profile. Parents from Government school understand that education is must for their children. Due to lack of resources and facilities they struggle to give better education and extra knowledge to their children.The Digital divide builds more inequality among these children, especially in their education.

*Keywords***:** Digital divide, Children, Smart Phone, Internet.

INTRODUCTION

The internet is quite helpful for many things, such as advantageous electronic trade, quick data sharing, connection with other societies, attentive aid, and amusement (1).

A Smart Phone combines the service of the internet and mobile phone. People of all ages are using mobile phones. Watching the elders, children also dependent on Smart phones or Tablets for studies, games and entertainment. So mobile becomes an integral part of our lives. Not like the previous one, the children of current generation get education from various sources including online classes. They get extra knowledge by studying through some educational Mobile Applications, watching videos in you tube etc. Even the world is going digitalization, not all the people have access to Internet and Smart Phone.

At the 2020 Digital India Awards, Tamil Nadu received a gold medal for "Excellence in Digital Governance - State/U.T" (2). Though tamilnadu is advanced in digital field and governance, there are also people from rural areas in tamilnadu still dont have access to Internet and smart phone due to economical and educational reasons. This research is a study on digital divide among government school and private school children in tamilnadu.

Background of the study:

Nowadays, children's succeed in school and in later life depends on their understanding of and ability to use digital technology to obtain information, examine ideas, learn new concepts and skills, interact with others, and come up with novel solutions. If there is inequality in accessing these technology, then there will be a

huge knowledge gap among children even they are from similar background. If they are from different economic background and there is digital divide too, then knoweldge gap will be more. This study studies the digital divide between those kind of different background children who belong to same village.

Area of the study:

In this research, the study area is located in Chengelpet district. It's just behind the Mahindra world city, India's first completely integrated commercial city is Mahindra World City in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu. But the study area is a rural one. The name of the village is Anjur. Two schools, a government and a private school, located here are taken for the research. Just a street dividing the school, but huge differences between the people residing here in the means of education and economic status.

Objectives of the study:
1. To study the access to Internet and Smart phone of Government School and Private School
2. To understand their habit of Smart phone usage
3. To know about their Media behavior.
4. Impact of media on their social behavior.

To find out these objectives, relevant literature study is must. The following are some research studies and finding of those studies.

Review of literature:

The term "digital divide" was first used to refer to the technical gap between rich and developing countries, or the "global divide," but it rapidly evolved into the term "social divide" to refer to the digital exclusion of specific individuals or groups of individuals inside countries (3).

The so-called "digital gap," which is defined as a stratification in Internet access and usage, is inextricably linked to the idea of socioeconomic inequality, a well-known sociological term (ibid). Inequality's resuscitation and reconfiguration Class, status, and power distinctions in the dynamics of digital divides Sheffield University's Bridgette Wessels. Concerns concerning the formation of new disparities and the reproduction of existing inequalities are being raised by the growth and rising usage of digital technology in economic, political, social, and cultural life on a worldwide scale. (4).

He claimed that the digital divide, which is one of the biggest barriers to progress, is expanding dramatically. This digital divide draws an invisible line between the wealthy and the poor, men and women, educated and illiterate, as well as between those who are connected and those who are not. (5).

The contemporary disparities and divisions in our networked and informational society are frequently conceptualized as a "digital divide" (6).

While some kids use PDAs and have unrestricted access to the internet and information, a considerably larger percentage of kids don't have the right permission to use cell phones, the internet, or information. Even though cell phones are needed for communication now, many people still shun PDAs and the internet. The majority of organisation specialist co-ops in a nation where a sizable portion of the population lives in abhorrent poverty only provide unlimited calls and internet access to those who can pay a few hundred rupees upfront, while the poor who reactivate their associations for Rs. 10 and 20, lose at least 30% of their money and must make decisions for Rs. 6-7 or Rs. 12-14 separately. Given their occupations and pay levels, a sizeable section of the populace still finds it difficult to contribute two or three hundred dollars up front for their mobile association. If they are unable to reinvigorate their mobile relationships with decision-making, spending on advanced cells and the web will remain a pipe dream. Due to this, there is a significant difference in adaptation and web usage amongst people who live in various socioeconomic circumstances. This distinction in asset gifting is reflected in the children's knowledge of contemporary mobile, web, and consequence use. The "advanced divide" refers to this disparity in internet access and usage among users. Young people have gotten used to advanced cell usage as Internet usage has become less expensive and there are also educational applications. A group of young people who are even unaware of modern cell phones is there at the same time. The so-called "computerized partition," which is defined as a division in how people access and use the internet, is inextricably linked to the notion of socioeconomic inequalities (7)

According to van Dijk and Hacker (2003), the Advanced Separation is a puzzling and dynamic wonder that may be defined in a limited way as a form of demarcation manifesting itself through erratic Internet access and USAGPE. Common methods of estimating this concept include access to the Internet (vs. no access), the number of locations where it may be accessed, the Internet-use skills of the users, the amount of time spent online, and the variety of activities carried out carefully. The "advanced divide" has increasingly been conceived (and calculated) as differences between people who use and don't use the internet, regardless of its various configurations. Since a notably twofold grouping restricts advanced separation study, it is obvious that scholarly

analysis should go beyond considering access (8). Our data point to a decreasing or perhaps closing digital divide for low-income children in Shanghai, but the urban-rural barrier may be contributing to the problem. Children from low-income families without access to the internet reported considerably poorer scores on all dimensions of digital literacy, including academic achievement, aspirations, perceived efficacy, self-esteem, and connections with family and peers (9).Graham talks about a time in the digital world when people feel alienated by the information economy (10). "The differences in access to advanced correspondence innovation represent the fundamental level of computerised partition. The second level of the computerised gap could be characterised as the intensity or variety of ICT use. The amount of time spent online, how frequently you use it, and your reasons for doing so may all be contrasted; these factors all lead to the second degree of advanced separation. Students' use of the Internet may vary depending on their family's financial condition, as well as their increasing computer skills and status-related interests, due to variances in the sorts of technology that are available to them. (11). The suggested analytical framework also demonstrates that attitudes and values about computers are equally crucial to success as knowledge, access, and use. Parents' willingness to utilize their personal computers at home with their kids for educational purposes may be a sign of how positively they feel about the opportunities that technology provides for learning. The results of the current study also demonstrated that, in addition to parental attitudes toward home computers and HLE, the family socio-economic level (SES) remains a significant predictor of utilising ICT opportunities. It is argued that because of the professional networks available to parents with higher job level, the social status of the family at least partially captures the family's beliefs and attitudes regarding ICT (12)

Research Method:

To study the objectives of this study, data from the children of Private and Government school children are collected through a Survey and In-depth interviews. Under purposive sampling the schools are selected. The samples of children are selected under Piaget's theory. According to Piaget's theory, the concrete operational stage is the third stage in cognitive development. This period spans the time of middle childhood—it begins around age 7 and continues until approximately age 11—and is characterized by the development of logical thought. Thinking still tends to be very concrete; children become much more logical and sophisticated in their thinking during this stage of development.

To study the children under the concrete operational stage, as an average, children studying in the fourth grade are selected for this research. Fourth grade children from a CBSE School and from a Government School in Chengelpet district, Tamilnadu were taken. The Strength in Government School is very low. In every Primary school, they have

maximum 10 students, together, for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade. So, to get minimum data (25 students) children from three Government Schools are selected. Data were collected from 25 students from a Private (CBSE) School and 24 students from Government School. A survey was conducted among the students through a close ended questionnaire to know their Socio-economic profile, their Smart phone and Internet usage. In addition to this, to study the impact of Mobile and Media usage on social behavior, Interviews with five parents from Private School children and five parents from Government School children were also conducted.

Findings:

Data from the Survey:

1. **Total number of Children:**

    Twenty-five children (fourth grade) from Private School and Twenty-four children from Government School were taken. In Government School sixteen children from fourth grade and eight children are from third and fifth grade together.

2. **Annual Income of the parents:**

    In Government School, among 24 families, eight family's income per annum is below 50000 and 12 family's income are between 50000 to one lakh per annum (Other children don't know the income of their family). In Private School, among 25 families, two family's income is below 50000 per annum. 17 family's income is about 5 lakhs per annum (Other children don't know the income of their family).

3. **Joint family/ Nuclear family:**

    Families of 11 children from Government School and 18 children from Private School are living in Joint family. Others are from nuclear family.

4. **Education of the parents:**

    12 mothers of Government School children are studied below 10th standard. Eight fathers are studied below 12th standard. Private School children's parents' education level is tenth standard to Post graduation.

5. **Owing Mobile Phones:**

    In Government School, out of 24 families, 12 families have Smart Phones. In Private School, out of 25, 22 families have Smart Phone. Seven children

from Private School having their own smart phone apart from their Parents' mobile phone.

6. **Purpose of mobile use:**
        Four children from Government School and 14 children from Private School use Educational Applications like Language, Puzzle other learning applications in Mobile. Both the school children use the social media and you tube equally.

7. **Duration of mobile usage:**
    Time spent on mobile is below one hour by four children from Government School. Children from Private School spent more time on mobile moderately. Eight children are using mobile phones below one hour, 13 children are one to two hours, and two children are more than two hours.

8. **Mobile games:**
    While studying the mobile game behavior, five children from Government School and 16 children from Private School play games in mobile.

9. **Free time activity:**
    While asked about their free time activity among Government School, 15 children watch television and 9 children play with their friends. In Private School, children watch Television, playing with their friends, reading books and playing mobile games.

10. **Distraction from studies:**
        While asked whether the mobile habit distract them from doing homework, 4 children from Government School and 10 children from Private School said yes and 4 children from Government School and 13 children from Private School said No.

Data from In-depth interview:
    Five parents from each school children are interviewed. From Private School parents' interview, the researcher come to know that, Children use mobile phones for games, puzzle and language applications. They watch art & craft, science, food and travel videos from Youtube in Smart television. Parents restrict the time spend on mobile and used to watch television with them. Some children use Parents' Ipad or tablet to read books from Kindle. The results from Government School parents'

interview are; they don't have smart phone or smart television. Parents are strict with their children's education, so they restrict television watching time for their children. One of the parents of Government school children told, "We are not educated and we are all suffering economically. We don't want our kids to be like us. Studies are more important. So everyday evening two hours I used to sit with them and make them to study. Then I allow them to watch television". Children use school computer during class hours to watch videos in You tube. Some children play mobile games by using their neighbor's mobile. Children prefer to watch videos like, how to catch a bird or fish in you tube.

Interpretation:

From the data of Survey and In-depth Interview with Parents, the study reveals that, Smart Phone is still a dream for many people. Children taken as sample under this study are living in same village. Just a street is dividing their residential and these schools. But the difference in lifestyle is huge. Most of the children studying in this Private School are migrants and settle down in this village. Same time, children who are studying in that Government school are innate of this place.

The students studying in CBSE schools have well socio-economic status and have good education. In addition to that, they are using Internet and Mobile applications to develop their knowledge, extracurricular activities and art skills. But students in Government School don't have good socio-economic status and their education level is also low. A Government School teacher told, "I'm the only teacher for third, fourth and fifth grade students. I'm handling all the subjects for them. We have a computer in our school. Our students learn to browse and the use the computer and internet nowadays". We come to know that their access to Internet is limited. They don't have computer or internet facility at home and in school also, there is only one computer for all the students in school.

One of the Government School students spoke about using mobile phone, "I don't have smart phone. But I use my neighbor brother's phone. As I don't know English, I search through voice message in you tube. I and my friends used to see videos like how to catch a bird". Children from Private School mostly use you tube for learning art and craft. Using Mobile phone for games are more among children from Private School. While studying the children's reason for attraction in mobile games, government school children attracted by graphics and private school children by concept and graphics. Children of both the schools use Mobile for you tube, games equally. The content they watch and understand is totally according to their lifestyle and education.

Considering Media usage, children from the both the schools have the habit of watching television. Children from Private school watch cartoon programs, food and travel programs or national geographic channel. They have interest in science related content. Children from Government School used to watch Television serials with their mother. Parents from the both the school children restrict media usage, children are asked to spend more time for studies.

Conclusion:

As the novelty of innovation wore off, however, observers realized that some types of people were more likely to use the Internet than others, and that, generally, groups with higher levels of Internet access were similar groups (white men living in cities) with higher levels of access to education, pay, and other resources that help people succeed (13). A special issue of triple - Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society on "Marx is back: The importance of Marxist theory and research for critical communication studies today," edited by Fuchs and Mosco (2012), further demonstrates the enduring value of a Marxist perspective for critical communication studies. This method is essential for comprehending how dominating groups emerge in the communications industry and how the mechanics of capital accumulation perpetuate social inequality. According to this viewpoint, the digital divide could be viewed as a method by which social inequalities are (re)produced (not to mention consumed) in the digital age via the new communication tools.

Technology only produces positive results when there are already strong, capable human forces in existence (14) Inequality is everywhere in our country in all forms. While one group of people in India is adoring "Digital India" even during pandemic time, another group of people still in dream for internet access. In addition to socio economic status, digital divide also riven the society and creates more inequality. The difference between have and have not been making difference in the knowledge of children.

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