

7. Publicity and Public Education



Healthy Information for a Healthy Mind

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Main Issue

The public recognise the importance of stepping up publicity and public education to combat the harmful effect of indecent and obscene articles, in particular in relation to new forms of media with growing popularity among youngsters.

Focal Question:

Do you consider public education an effective way to protect youngsters from harmful effect of obscene and indecent articles?

Detailed Discussion

(1) Existing Measures

- 1.1 To combat the publication of obscene and indecent articles, education and publicity are as important as enforcement.
- 1.2 The public see the need to enhance parents' role in managing their children's access to obscene and indecent articles, particularly in respect of the Internet. Indeed, in response, TELA has strengthened both its enforcement and educational efforts in respect of the Internet.

(2) Areas for Improvement

2.1 It is imperative to educate children and youngsters, so as to build up their resistance to harmful materials to which they may be exposed. Public education can have a major impact to raise awareness and help protect children and youngsters from harmful obscene and indecent materials. To achieve greater effect, a number of measures may be introduced, for example -

- to formulate a systematic plan on publicity and public education;
- to call for the co-operation of various sectors of the community, including the IT sector, the education sector, parents and social workers target at youth related matters to work on public education in the long run;

- to allocate more resources to provide additional support for parents, schools, teachers and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the field of education.

2.2 For long-term publicity and public education, different strategies may be adopted, for example -

- (a) To adopt a two-pronged approach focusing on parents and students and pooling of resources for stepping up educational efforts, particularly in respect of the Internet:

Parents As parents have a key role to play in managing children's access to obscene and indecent materials particularly on the Internet, we may consider according priority to this area. One example might be the promotion of the use of filtering software to parents.

Students Enhance parents' and children's awareness of the provisions of the COIAO and promote the healthy use of new forms of media to safeguard young people against objectionable materials transmitted thereon.

- (b) To deploy additional resources to step up publicity and public education, including subsidising NGOs and schools to organise activities to promote the COIAO.
- (c) To focus limited resources to subsidise schools and NGOs where there is perceived to be greatest need to organise talks and workshops for parents, for example, to encourage and provide guidance to parents to install and use filtering software for the protection of their children from harmful materials on the Internet.
- (d) To provide assistance to teachers, for example, to develop interesting teaching kits through joint efforts of the Government, educational institutions and youth groups.
- (e) To collaborate with the IT industry to explore ways to enhance filtering software and to encourage Internet service providers to provide filtering service for their subscribers.
- (f) To enhance co-operation with IT industry to promote awareness of the COIAO on the Internet.

- (g) During normal inspections, TELA's enforcement staff to enhance its work in public education and promote the COIAO.

Reference Questions:

How do you step up publicity and public education to promote the COIAO in order to strengthen youngsters' resistance to harmful materials? What are the roles of parents and other stakeholders in the work?