

A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF MEDIA TOWARDS CHILDREN IN INDIA

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Introduction

We live in an age of information and media. The information around us is huge and has many forms with power of changing our lives completely. Just like a coin, it has two sides. The positive side and the negative side. The entity which brings this information to our lives is 'the media'. So we can say that media has direct effect on our lives.

A grown up person may decide what is good or bad for him and may not fall in the trap of this negative side but this is not the case with the children. It is said that 'A child's mind is blank like a slate. Whatever is written on it stays there permanently.' Eventually, this slate helps the child to create his character. Many such characters together form our society. So if we need good society with good characters, we need to have the control on negative media. We need to protect our children from negative media.

What negative media means is any form of media portraying violence, drunkenness, sexuality, death, disease, sad or terrifying news to children which will have negative impact on their thinking. Keeping such negative media away from children is not easy because now children have much easier access to media than ever before and they are getting used to day by day. A much wider variety of content of the media is available to them just at their fingertips due to the technology available today.

Meaning of Media

In India 'Freedom of speech and expression' is a fundamental right under Indian Constitution.

'Media' means a medium of providing information and entertainment. 'Media' referred to a group of sources of information and entertainment which includes Newspapers, Bulletins, News Agencies, Television (including broadcasting and Cable Television), Radio agencies, Documentary and General Movies: that reaches a number of people.

Media is the major source of information especially news, education, entertainment, fashion and trends. It may also be a way of communication whether local, national and international.

Categorises of Media as follows:

"Newspaper" has been defined as, ' A Newspaper is a printed publication, usually issued daily or weekly, containing news, reports, advertisements, articles on various subjects, etc. A person starts his day by reading a 'newspaper', which bring the whole world in a definite no of pages, containing from local news up to the international news.

"Television" has been defined as; 'A Television' is a system for reproducing on screen visual images transmitted by radio signals or cable'. "Radio" is defined as; 'Radio' is an apparatus for receiving, broadcasting, or transmitting radio signals'. These two mediums are not only a fountain of the news for the public but at the same time most important and most reliable mediums to provide entertainment to the public at large. That's way they are the most popular and most used means of information as well as entertainment. Whatever is the status of a person or his earning capacity, he is using at least one of these mediums for his entertainment. It is not only the choice of young but also the old, even household ladies also needed it in their free time when everyone is out for their work.

Those working people who don't have that much time to read newspaper daily early in the morning can get the news highlights directly from their television sets or radios. In the present days the television set is not an 'Idiot box', now it has some common sense (not particularly) but by way of a number of channels including the news channels, music channels, entertainment channels, educational channels, sports channels and special channels for movies. Television is now part of the consciousness of millions of households throughout the country, particularly the young, who spend hours watching a variety of programs. Radio was very much

popular even in the early age, in the present time it just become a media of music entertainment. Now with the discovery of Fm radios now it is gaining its popularity again. On this one can enjoy the music for whole day and in between can get some advertisement and news headlines, as well as some educational programs also.

“**Film**” has been defined as, ‘ a series of moving pictures, usually shown in a cinema or on television and often telling a story’. This medium is different form the others three forms of mass media, as in this medium the only motive is entertainment. Most of the films are based on some special theme, or story. Since beginning till today most of the films are based on the theme of love, romance, was or history etc. but now the theme of the movies are changing a little bit and they start including the current issues with the former ones.

All the above types of speech and expression do not enjoy their freedoms unfettered. There is once concept named, Censorship. The genesis of ‘Censor’ is as old as the institution of family, because in each and every family no one is allowed to utter whatever he wants.

Impact of media on children

Media has the power to influence what children do or think. The word ‘what children do or think’ is vital for this point of view. As Media, is the medium for information and entertainment, it becomes a very necessary part of our life. Therefore, it influences on the life of children at large in their day-to-day activity.

1. Media access available to children:

Ninety-nine per cent of young people ranging 9 to 17 years old have used the Internet. Parents are less convinced that the Internet provides educational value to their kids’ lives, while kids continue to be out there and on their own in their exploration of a media that is global, interactive and unregulated.

Children have much easier access to media. A Television and DVD player is present in almost every house; same has the case become with personal computers too. With the rise of smartphones and tablet computers the access to media has become even easier. Magazines are

available easily. Now Children choose the easy way they have to put a movie into a DVD player, open a magazine, click on a website, or turn on the television.

2. Positive influence of media on children

Media offers children many opportunities to learn and be entertained. It has beneficial influences on children, such as learning and remembering knowledge easier, for example, they can learn from movies/videos.

With the new technologies it's now possible for children to access this useful information at any time. For example, there are many education websites available 24/7 to children which they can access from computer/mobile for educational content purpose.

The concepts which are difficult to understand can now be taught to children using graphics and animated video. The audio-video combination makes it easier for children to grasp the concept quickly. A student with clear concepts will always perform better. Thus Media is helping in enhancing the student quality.

With the help of media it's now possible to merge education and entertainment and use it for the benefit of the children.

There are many educational shows aired on Television/Radio which children can watch/listen-to to increase their knowledge in the related subject. In these shows, the hosts are the best teachers from who region of country.

Television/Radio media has made it possible for such teachers to reach out to thousands of students in different region at the same time.

Some public television programs stimulate visits to the zoo, libraries, bookstores, museums and other active recreational settings, and educational videos can certainly serve as powerful prosaically teaching devices.

Thus healthy television habits could become a beneficial teaching tool.

With the help of electronic media, the learning horizon of children has been widening. Now it is not like older days where the children had to depend on their teachers only for what the teach only.

Today, children can learn the topic of their interest from web. There are many websites available with huge content related to the subject. Also there are many forums available on the internet and many groups available on social networking sites too where the experienced people help to resolve the queries of a newcomer.

Also, the electronic media has made sharing very easy for the children. On mobile smartphones, there are many Apps (application) available for free with help of which one can share photos, documents, videos with other individuals or groups.

This technology if used properly could really help children to share their required education content between them. With the help of mobile now it's easier for children to learn the new subjects as there are many apps available on Android, Windows, Apple stores which can be easily downloaded to the mobile and very easy to use.

3. Negative Influence of Media on children

Children have much easier access to media now. For example, a Television and DVD player is present in almost every house; same has the case become with personal computers too. With the rise of smartphones and tablet computers the access to media has become even easier. Magazines are available easily. Now Children choose the easy way they have to put a movie into a DVD player, open a magazine, click on a website, or turn on the television to get involved in all kinds of experiences. Some of what it teaches is not be what the children should learn, especially "violence". One can notice violence everywhere these days.

Television broadcasts an enormous amount of violence every day. There are different kinds of programs showing brutal and violent scenes. As children have some sort of vulnerability towards such stuff, they seem to grasp everything more rapidly than an average adult. The violence they watch on Television or any other media has deep impact on them. The aftereffects are the violent behaviour of children.

Children can get easily inspired by the movie character, they try to mimic the thing they see or hear. For example, they sing an advertising or movie song. They don't understand what the meaning of what they are mimicking is. Many songs have not so good lyrics associate to them specially the item songs which is the latest trend in Bollywood. All such songs are freely aired on Television, radio, websites and are easily accessible to children.

Media also effects how kids perceive what is and is not acceptable. Smoking is an example. When celebrities and role models are depicted smoking; it appears to be a normal and acceptable behaviour. So to with drug use, drinking, cell phone use when driving and physical violence

Electronic Media have assumed central roles in our children's daily lives. Children from the age of 2 years begin taking in all the sounds and visuals of any television that the parents are watching. At the age of 2 years a child begins learning up to five new words per day. At this age these children are spending an average of 2 hours per day in front of a screen. If a parent believes that just turning on a cartoon and letting their child become mesmerized by it is being helpful for that child than that parent should do some research. Even Cartoons and children's programs show violent acts.

These programs focus on teaching children visually and verbally. Many of us think that video games are just for entertainment and nothing more than that. But sadly this isn't the case. Violent video games could influence violent behaviour in children.

There are cases where video games have been blamed or held responsible for violent actions; some people fail to consider the fact that violent video games do influence violent actions.

There is one example where violent video (Doom) was listed as one of the factors that influenced a violent behaviour can be seen in the "Columbine Massacre", where two young high school students shot and killed twelve students, one teacher, and injured twenty-three others before taking their own lives. No one can say for sure why the children committed such horrific crime. Many people have come up with theories including being picked on in school, violent video game, violent movies, music, racism, Goth, problematic parents depression and more. No matter what the case may be, violent video game was listed as one of the factors that may have caused the violent behaviour.

Television is the most popular medium in which the children are exposed. It has the ability to entertain and educate. There are statistics which show that children who spend 1500 hours a week watching television get negative effects, in different aspects, such as physical, cognitive, emotional, and social.

First of all, children need to be physically well. They must exercise, as walking, playing ball, and joining sports, but television is a sedentary activity. If they spend long time in front of television, and don't exercise their bodies, there will be problems of obesity. They need healthy food too. Most of the children like eating junk food, such as candy bars, potato chips, and all that kind of stuff while they watch television.

In relation with the negatives affects in cognitive, emotional and social aspects, many children. Watch a violent program on television. Sometimes they don't know the difference between reality and fantasy, and they want to do the same that they have watched on TV. Some children have hurt other children or themselves because they tried to imitate what they watched in their favourite TV program. Another problem is that when children watch television, it turns off their brain; this affects intellectual development.

Conclusions:

We saw that media plays an important role in live of our children and is directly related in creating and developing their characters. It has a bright side and it has a dark side too so we should not just blame the media for its negative influence. We have to take in consideration it's brighter side too and appreciate it.

Also we have to consider the third side too i.e. that media, like all other art forms, simply reflects nature. As such, Not always media violence is a cause of societal violence, but sometimes it's a reflection of societal violence that has always been an inevitable aspect of human civilization.

Violence in media shows the aspects of human nature that we do not want to repeat. For example, war movies are often not meant to glorify war. Rather, they are meant to show that war is something that should be avoided at all costs. We have to understand that the media is just medium or a tool which helps our children to reach to the positive or negative content available out there.

So, it's our responsibility to 'how to use this tool for the good of our children'. The best way is that the parents should keep check on how their children are making use of this tool called media. Children should be taught about the user of this tool. There should be limits and a way defined about the use of this tool called media. Media is a great power in our hands now. And with great power comes great responsibility. We have to keep in mind that, as a parent this responsibility is ours.

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