Role of Stakeholders against Antisocial and Deliquent Behaviour amoung Children

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Abstract

The beneficial and harmful effects of mass media on school going children's mental and social life is explored in the paper. The prevalent messages in mass media and the impact of these messages on school going children are further discussed. It is the man himself, who is responsible for the drastic effects of anti-social and delinquent behavior among children. Therefore, it is imperative that school going children including parents and teachers become aware of its power and develop strategies to make wise media choices.

INTRODUCTON

One of the notable changes in our social environment in the 21st century has been the saturation of our culture and daily lives by the mass media. Unfortunately, the consequences of one particular common element of the electronic mass media have a particularly detrimental effect on children's well being. Mass media plays a crucial role in the life of school going children. It has both positive and negative impacts. The influence of mass media on the psychosocial growth of school going children is profound. The beneficial and harmful effects of mass media on school going children's mental and social life would be explored in the Paper. The prevalent messages in mass media and the impact of these messages on school going children would also be discussed. Different forms of mass media including Television, Music Videos, Videogames, Internet, Radio and Newspapers etc. affect the mental and social life of school going children. It is the man himself, who is responsible for its drastic effects. Therefore, it is imperative that school going children including parents and teachers become aware of its power and develop strategies to make wise media choices.

WHAT IS MASS MEDIA?

Media is all the means of communication, such as newspapers, radio and television that provide the public with news, entertainment, etc., usually along with advertising. Mass media is a powerful tool

which carries the responsibility of informing people. Any information that is published in a media has a greater impact on its audience. Mass media has the potential to shape personalities, change the way we perceive and understand the world and our immediate reality.

EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Effects of the mass media have been found to be far-reaching and potentially harmful in influencing the health-related behaviors of children and adolescents. Furthermore, time spent with media decreases the amount of time available for pursuing other more healthy activities such as sports, physical activity, community service, cultural pursuits, and family time. Some of effects of media on behavior modification among children and adolescents are as follows:

➢ Media and antisocial &delinquent behavior
➢ Media and social isolation
➢ Media and child obesity
➢ Media and eating disorders
➢ Media and smoking
➢ Media and   Alcohol drinking
➢ Media and Risk of sexual initiation

MEDIA ON ANTISOCIAL & DELIQUENT BEHAVIOUR

Children, who observe (in the media or in the environment around them) others exhibiting a specific aggressive behavior, *e.g.* hitting, are more likely to perform the same aggressive behavior immediately. Exposure to media violence has been positively related to subsequent aggressive behavior, ideas, arousal, and anger. Additionally, there is a significant negative effect of exposure to violence on subsequent helping behavior. Infrequent exposure is not likely to produce lasting consequences, but parents, particularly need to be urged to protect their children against the kinds of repeated exposures that excessive play with violent video games or immersion in violent TV programs is likely to produce.

A study reported that children having exposure to violence through media had poorer school performance and its impact on their psychosocial adjustments was detrimental. Another study from India showed that vivid display of violence through media (terrorist attack) caused stress in adolescents. Some

of the fears, tensions, bad dreams and tendencies towards delinquencies of children are a result of frequent and a regular exposure to murder-mystery movies, and stories filled with violence and torture that children view on TV and movies.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

As children spend more total time on watching TV, they spend a significantly shorter amount of time with friends as compared to those who don't. Thus, viewing television causes poor peer relationships and thereby increases the risk for social isolation, anxiety disorder, agoraphobia, and antisocial behavior, including aggression and gang involvement. While TV viewing is often perceived as an isolating activity. Violent television viewing may influence younger children to be more antisocial; resulting in their becoming socially isolated which, in turn, attracts them to more violent media. To optimize children's social development and long term mental health, parents, teachers, and pediatricians should discourage the viewing of violent television programs.

MEDIA AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Playing of video games is used as a substitute for regular physical activity, the positive association between game play and obesity is certainly plausible; however, if it is used to replace time spent on watching television or simply resting, video game play can serve to more positively affect energy expenditure. The mechanism of effect of TV exposure on overweight risk is undoubtedly multifactor. In the absence of regulations restricting food advertising aimed at children, reduction in television viewing is a promising approach to reducing excess energy intake.

MEDIA AND EATING DISORDERS

The print media promotes an unrealistically thin body ideal that, in turn, is at least partially responsible for promoting eating disorders. The frequent reading of magazine articles about dieting/weight loss strongly predicted unhealthy weight control behaviors in adolescents.

MEDIA AND SMOKING

A strong association between exposure to certain mass media messages and smoking in adolescents. The effects of mass media on attitudes and behavior, media literacy may teach youth to understand, analyze, and evaluate advertising and other mass media messages. India faced a lot of

controversy with the ban on on-screen smoking in films and television programs. Initially, ban was imposed from January 1, 2006 and then on January 23, 2009, Delhi High Court lifted the smoking ban in films and TV. There is need for evidence based guidelines for such issues.

MEDIA AND ALCOHOL DRINKING

It has been shown that exposure to alcohol advertising and TV programming is associated with positive beliefs about alcohol consumption. Although such cross-sectional studies do not prove causation (only association), it is of interest that in a 1990 study, 56% of students in grades 5 to 12 said that alcohol advertising encourages them to drink. Findings showed that girls who had watched more hours of TV at ages 13 and 15 drank more wine and spirits at age 18 than those who had watched fewer hours of TV.

MEDIA AND RISK OF SEXUAL INITIATION

Initiation of sexual intercourse by younger adolescents is associated with risky sexual behaviors and increased risk of multiple partners, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and pelvic inflammatory disease. Factors that may contribute to sexual activity among adolescents is exposure to sexual content in the mass media. In India, there are reports of messaging of sexual contents through mobiles among school going adolescents. TV programs watched by adolescents contain high levels of sexual content, include little information about sexual risks, and are an important source of information about sex. Lack of parental regulation of television programming were associated with increased risk of initiating sexual intercourse, co-viewing television and discussing television with parents were related to decreased sexual initiation in certain adolescents.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

Media Literacy: Many media literacy programmes have been developed and introduced into school curricula in an effort to encourage and develop children's critical viewing skills and more general media literacy. Such programmes appear to be effective in increasing children's awareness of many aspects of the media and making them less susceptible to negative messages.

Rating Systems: Violence ratings for television can help parents judge how violent specific programmes are without having to watch them not only parents but cable operators and DVDs or video cassette distributors can make use of it.

Parent's strategies and education: Informed teacher-parent partnership can go a long way in protecting children from media induced orientation to violence. Teachers can help students to relate to media in a realistic and wholesome fashion so that its benefits are derived and its harmful effects minimized. Parents' need to monitor their children's TV viewing habits. They have to model healthy media practices themselves including selective viewing, limited or reasonable amounts of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKE HOLDERS TO OVERCOME THE EFFECTS OF MASS MEDIA

The following recommendations are given for parents of school going children:

1. Limit the children's total media time (with entertainment media) to no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day.
2. Remove television sets from children's bedrooms.
3. Discourage television viewing for children younger than 2 years, and encourage more interactive activities that will promote proper brain development, such as talking, playing, singing, and reading together.
4. Monitor the shows children and adolescents are viewing. Most programs should be informational, educational, and nonviolent.
5. View television programs along with children, and discuss the content. It has been found that less than half of parents reported always watching television with their children
6. Use controversial programming as a stepping-off point to initiate discussions about family values, violence, sex and sexuality, and drugs.
7. Use the videocassette recorder wisely to show or record high-quality, educational programming for children.
8. Support efforts to establish comprehensive media-education programs in schools.
9. Encourage alternative entertainment for children, including reading, athletics, hobbies, and creative play at schools.
10. Remain knowledgeable about the effects of television, including violent and aggressive behavior, obesity, poor body concept and self-image, substance use, and early sexual activity, by becoming involved in the campaigns on Media. Parents and teachers should be educated about their effects.

CONCLUSION

Dangers inherent in this relatively uncontrolled 'wired' world are many and varied, but often hidden. These dangers must be unmasked and a wise parent and teacher should learn how to protect their children by immersing themselves in the medium and taking advice from the many resources aimed at protecting children while allowing them to reap the rich benefits in a safe environment. Parents should familiarize themselves with various rating systems for video games and use this knowledge to make their decisions but with caution. Parents have to monitor and control their children's viewing habits. Parents can use technology that blocks access to pornography and sex talk on the Internet, but must be aware that this technology does not replace their supervision or guidance. Teachers may need to be more aware of children and adolescents who show signs of social withdrawal and regression. Stake holders should be actively involved in the moulding of norms and values that are considered acceptable in the social environment today. To conclude, it is the man himself, who is responsible for drastic impact of mass media for his own selfishness. Therefore, it is imperative that school going children including parents and teachers become aware of its power and develop strategies to make wise media choices.

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