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Impact of Media on Certain Psycho-Social Factors among Rural Adolescents in Thiruvarur District

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Abstract

Media is a channel of communication through which news, promotional messages like advertisements, education, entertainment, other data are disseminated. Media includes all broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, Television, radio, internet, etc. These media play a very important role in building a society. Any form of media intends to pass on various messages to the society, while doing so media can have both positive and negative effects. Adolescent students do face a lot of negative effects due to frequent and long exposure to any of these media such as watching television, using internet, etc. The adolescents are exposed to violent movies, television shows such as super man, Spiderman and many more to add on. This exposure is affecting them in various ways and causing several psychological problems. Considering these facts, the present study is an attempt to find out the impact of media on Attitude, Aggression, Academic Problems, Behavior Problems and Social Problems among Rural Adolescents. Convenience sampling was used to select the sample for the study. A total number of 134 rural adolescents in Thiruvarur was chosen for the study. Aggression questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992), Sodhi's attitude scale (SAS) (2014), Screening Test for Emotional problems (Erfold, Short and Freeman, 2011) were used to collect the data. Pearson product moment correlation and 't' test was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that media influence is positively correlated with social problems, behavioral problems and aggression. Media also found to influence an individual's attitude towards life. Female adolescents were found to have more social problems than male adolescents, whereas male adolescents were found to be highly aggressive than female adolescents. The findings of the study will help the researchers, parents and educationist to prevent the negative impact of media on the adolescent's behavior.

Key words: *Adolescents, Attitude, Aggression, Academic problems, Behaviour problems, Media, Social problems*

INTRODUCTION

Researchers are increasingly concerned not only with how much time children spend with the media in general, but also with how they apportion their exposure over different sources and types of media. Furthermore, interest is growing in examining how the experience with media exposure, content and context has changed over the decades in response to new media features and technologies as well as reflecting other social and economic trends. The goal was for a variety of experts to consider steps

and strategies that could move this research forward and improve its utility for helping parents, practitioners and policy makers guide young people in navigating a media rich environment.

TELEVISION

Television has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects and many studies have looked at the impact of television on society, particularly on children and adolescents (1,2). An individual child's developmental level is a critical factor in determining whether the medium will have positive or negative effects not all television programs are bad, but data showing the negative effects of exposure to violence, inappropriate sexuality and offensive language are convincing (3) still, physicians need to advocate, continued research into negative and positive effects of media on children and adolescents.

Television viewing frequently limits children's time for vital activities such as playing, reading, learning to Falk, spending time with peer and family, storytelling, participating in regular exercise and developing other necessary physical, mental and social skills. In addition to the amount of time spent in front of the television other factors that influence the medium's effect on children include the child's developmental level, individual susceptibility and whether children watch television alone or with their parents.

LEARNING

Television can be a powerful teacher (17) since if the programs that are educating serve as an example of how toddler can learn valuable lessons about racial harmony cooperation, kindness, simple arithmetic and the alphabet through and educational television form at some public television programs stimulate visits to the zoo, libraries book stores, museum and other active recreational settings and educational videos can certainly serve as powerful prosocial teaching devices. Still, watching television takes time away from reading and school work more recent and well controlled studies show that even 1h to 2h of daily unsupervised television viewing by school aged children has a significant deleterious effect on academic performance especially reading.

VIOLENCE

The amount of violence on television is on the rise (20). The average child sees 12,000 violent acts on television annually including many depictions of murder and rape. More than 1000 studies confirm that exposure to heavy doses of television violence increases aggressive behavior particularly in boys (2,21,-23) other studies link television or newspaper publicity of suicides to and increased suicide risks (24-28) physician who see a child with a history of aggressive behavior should enquire about the child's exposure to violence portrayed on television. A meta analysis of the varied research base on this issue has shown that exposure to media violence has demonstrable long and short term effects on the likelihood of aggressive or violence; trivializing its effects; consequences and moral significance and desensitizing the viewer or participant to its Impact. The short term effects include changes in behavior (such as reductions in helping behavior or increased willingness to co inflict punishment in an experimental setting) thoughts and emotions, the long

term effects include increased likelihood of engaging in physical assaults or spousal abuse.

NUTRITION

Because television takes time away from play and exercise activities, children who watch a lot of television are less physically fit and more likely to eat high fat and high energy snack foods (9) Television viewing makes a substantial contribution to obesity because prime time commercials promote unhealthy dietary practices (15,29) the number of hours of television viewing also corresponds with an increased relative risk of high cholesterol levels in children (8) Television can also contribute to eating disorders in teenage girls, who may emulate the thin role models seen on television. (8) Eating meals while watching television should be discouraged because it may lead to less meaningful communication and arguably poorer eating habits (29,30).

SEXUALITY

Today, television has become a leading sexeducator in India. Television exposes children to adult sexual behaviours in ways that portray these actions as normal and risk free sending the message that because these behaviours are frequent. Teens rank the media as the leading source of information about sex, second only to school sex education programs. Numerous studies document Adolescents susceptibility to the media influence on their sexual attitudes, values and beliefs.

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

Regardless of which metaphor is most useful for public health recommendation a strong research base is available for some important conclusions about media exposure some researchers have suggested is at least as strong as the evidence base regarding link between exposure to tobacco smoke and lung cancer (Cochrane, 2006; Anderson et al.,2003) Tobacco products are not advertising, which glamorizes smoking (28) has increased over past years Television is not the only way that children learn about tobacco and alcohol use the concern is that the consequences of these behaviors are not accurately depicted on television.

ADVERTISING

Advertising can have positive effects on children's behavior for example; some alcohol manufacturers spend 10% of their budget on advertisements warning about the dangers of drinking and driving. In addition although some health care professionals disagree about the health benefits of appropriate milk use, milk consumption has increased as a result of print and broadcast advertisements. The developmental stage of a child plays a role in the effect of commercials young children do not understand the concept of a sales pitch they tend to believe what they are told and may even assume that they are deprived if they do not have advertised products more preschool children do not understand the difference between a program designed to entertain and a commercial designed to sell. A number of studies have documented that children under the age of eight years are developmentally unable to understand the difference between advertising and regular programming .

The average child sees more than 20,000 commercials each year (12) more than 60% of commercials promote sugared cereals, candy, fatty foods and toys (12)

cartoon programs based on toy products are especially attractive advertisements targeting adolescents are profoundly influential particularly on cigarette use (4)

The Question of whether children are more resilient to the influence of television is debated frequently. Most studies show that the more time children spend watching television, the more they are influenced by it (4) Earlier studies have shown that boys may be more susceptible than girls to television violence.

VIDEO GAMES

Some video games may help the development of fine motor skills and coordination but many of the concerns about the negative effects of television (eg inactivity a social behavior and violence) also apply to excessive exposure to video games. Violent video games should be discouraged because they have harmful effects on children's mental development (7,47) parents should be advised to familiarize themselves with various rating systems for video games and use this knowledge to make their decisions.

The effect of violent video game on children has been a public health concern for many years. No Quantitative analysis of video game contents for games rated as suitable for all audiences was made until 2001 (47). The study conducted that many video games rated as suitable for all audiences was contained significant amount of violence (64% contained intentioned violence and 60% rewarded players for injuring a character) Therefore current rating of video games leave much more for improvement.(43)

INTERNET

Parents may feel outsmarted or over whelmed by their children's computer and internet abilities, or they may not appreciate that the "new medium" is an essential component of the new literacy, something in which their children need to be fluent. These feelings of inadequacy or confusion should not prevent them from discovering the internet's benefits. The dangers inherent in this relatively uncontrolled 'wired' world are many and varied, but often hidden these dangers must be unmasked and a wise parent will 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. The physician is in a good position to encourage parents and children to discover the internet and to use it wisely.

The internet has a significant potential for providing children and youth with access to educational information and can be compared with a huge home library. However, the lack of editorial standards limits the internet's credibility as a source of information. There are other concerns as well.

The amount of time spent watching television and sitting in front of laptops can affect a child's postural development (48) Excessive time spent at a laptop can addictive behavior.(9) although rare. Some children with seizure disorder are more prone to attacks brought on by a flickering television or computer screen. No study suggests that television viewing causes weakness of the eyes. It may be different when a child is closely exposed to a computer screen for long periods, although there are no definitive references to support this.

Other concerns includes pedophiles who use the internet to lure young people into relationships. There is also the potential for children to be exposed to pornographic material parents can use technology that block access to photography and sex talk on the internet ,but must be aware that this technology does not replace their supervision or guidance .

There is a wealth of information on coping with the vast resources of the web, both good and bad. Above all, parents should be encouraged to appreciate that there is potential for more good than bad as long as one has the knowledge to tell the difference.

ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is said to be the stage in a person`s life between childhood and adulthood. It is the period of human development during which an individual moves from the dependency to independence, autonomy and maturity. Adolescence involves a process which extends over significant period of a person`s life. Adolescence presents many challenges as physiological, biological, psychological and social changes are confronted. According to WHO the age range of 10-19 years referred to the period of adolescence. WHO defines adolescents as person between 10-19 years of age and many studies through the world have adopted this age range as the standard the present study unless otherwise stated specifically will conform to the WHO age range of 10-19 years when referring to adolescence. The size of the adolescence population in the world commands attention: they numbered nearly 1.1 billion in 1995 of which 913 million lived in developing countries.

Countries in the Asian region represent about 60% of the world population of which 20% are adolescents. Most countries in the region are currently experiencing an increasingly larger adolescent population, although the rate of that increase is decreasing. The biological and cognitive changes which have been described not only present challenges directly, but also have a significant impact on psychological functioning. Additionally, there are major psychological challenges for the young person with regard to a central feature of adolescence which involves the formation of a new identity. The adolescent is no longer a child; a new person is emerging. The adolescent developmental stage is therefore, characterized by emotional reactivity and a high intensity of emotional response. This makes it difficult for adolescents to control and modulate their behavioural responses, which at times may be inappropriately extreme.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature review is considered as the most important phase of the any research process as it allows learning from previous researches and also saves time, efforts and money. A logical and systematic review of the literature made completion of study possible. The refore researcher reviewed studies conducted on media and abroad.

The Purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of media on attitude, violence of emotional problems among on rural adolescents. Literature review revealed that one of the major concerns amongst the researchers all over the world the impact of media never ending appearance of social roles is sometimes a problem for

cultures that differ in their values from the destination where these programs begin. Ideas about family, interaction, marriage, gender, sex and roles are not the same as projected in television programs as they are within the native country.

Hemamalini et-al(2010) states that through violent images are portrayal in chutti T.V is no relationship between these images and children violent behavior comparing to the television news channel and other adults focused other channels mostly in native channels the T.V so not have any mooring towards Indian culture since they are foreign productions It is stated by authors that it is very difficult to dissociate violent images from the surroundings violence in which the children are captive. Authors state that the programs that adults watch from in which the children are not spared are more violent images that chutti T.V for some children aggression is an expression that gives vent to their emotions. Authors state that children could be aggressive if he or she is hyperactive. This requires a need to channelize the aggression depicted in T.V images so that it is expressed in a society acceptable manner. Authors explain that children should be discouraged to watch T.V one hour before they go to bed.

Ahluwalia and singh (2011) revealed in his study that TV competes with family, school and society and religious institutions to provide role models and information that affect children's beliefs, values and behavior attitude and life style. This Study was conducted to make note of T.V viewing Patterns amongst Children from middle and upper middle socio economic Strata of the urban society. A sample of 400 children of 8 to 16 years of age, across the region of Punjab was selected. Both the authors found his study that on an average children watch 2 hours or less T.V daily and most of them indulge in bedtime T.V viewing. They watched TV Primarily for entertainment and for learning. Children most preferred program was children show / serials followed by cartoon / animated program

Daud et.al (2011) in his study state that television advertisements in general and those involving some celebrities have immense and long lasting impact on youth's life style, religious values, family bonding and their decision making for buying various items. Authors State that some of the effects are really damaging for our society which are generally based on combined family system established religions and cultural value and where majority of people cannot afford to purchase the products, which have severe temptation for youth in the race of show power

Gurleen and Sukhmani (2011) Conducted a study to know the TV Viewership Patterns amongst youngsters in North India .The major objective of the study was to identify the frequency and time spent on watching television by young population of India. In recent year. Youngsters are even named as "active media users". The Study was conducted to make role of various television viewing habits among youngsters of Northern India and to identify the factors, which encourage television viewership among youngsters. Factor analytic approach was applied on 14 Statement to find the reason for television viewership. The results indicate that 41.2 respondents watch 3-5 hours of television. Further the result shows that most of the Indian viewers as expected watch television as a leisure activity or their favorite pass time.

Latif and abideen (2011) conducted a study on effects of television advertising on children. A Pakistani Perspective. Questionnaire was distributed to 450 Parents of children aged between 9-14 years in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshwar, and cities of Pakistan. Convenience sampling technique was used and the testing of hypothesis reveals that television advertising increases the consumption of food that is unhealthy low nutritional values and high in sugar, fat of salt (SFS) In children subsequently, it was found that TV advertising increase un necessary purchasing and materialism in children.

Singh and Ram (2011) Conducted a Study on impact of television commercials on children's attitude the main objective of the study know the attitude of the towards television commercials. On the basis of gender, Significant difference has been observed in relation to variable named most TV Commercials are Poor in taste and very annoying (5% level of significance) which shows that boys and girls differ significantly as far as TV Commercials taste and annoyance is concerned. The results also shows a significant difference on the basic of education, significant differences has been found

Ravi and Devadas (2012) Conducted a Study on TV viewing Pattern among women. This Study Helps to Identify and analyse the Positive and negative aspects of TV viewing habits of women. The main objective of study is to find out the Television viewing Pattern of women and to examine the influence of television on Social contacts and behavior of women the results Shows the duration of TV Viewing Varies from more than 8 hours a day to 3-8 hours and less than 3 hours a day. The television viewing has minor effect in people's social engagement; TV viewing has an impact on Women's life styles as well as majority of women believes that TV Viewing will improve their Social Contacts.

Pegu and Kum (2013) revealed a Study Conducted among College going girls. The main objective is to explore the various sources of influence information and changing of college girls attitude towards the consumption of fashion products. The result of factor analysis suggest that advertisement Play the most significant role in determining College girls attitude towards consumption of fashion Products As indicated by the results, The most suitable media to disseminate information pertaining to fashion products are fashion magazines and television. However, the results of the study also suggests that social groups, direct experience and direct marketing efforts are some other important indicators in determining college girls attitude towards consumption of fashion products.

Studies on social media

The realm of Social networking sites is increasingly emerging as the Subject of research in the field of Social Sciences. Many Studies have been conducted around the world to investigate how these sites may influence Issues of Identity, Privacy Social capital, youth culture, education and interpersonal relationships.

Englander (2016) Proclaimed that internet usage is negatively associated with academic performance of student users and destructive impact of internet usage is far more momentous than its advantages. Internet addiction has come forth. As a result of striking boost in internet usage over the past few decades. **Nalwa and Anand (2003)**

Proposed that addicted users prefer using internet setting back their personal and professional responsibilities and this ultimately leads to poor academic performance.

While using SNS issues of privacy, identity protection and e professionalism must be paid attention as proposed by **mattingly (2010)** but a contrasting finding was given by **sengupta and chaudhuri (2010)** that SNS memberships are not correlated with online abuse of teenagers.

An academic research was conducted by **Wilson (2009)** through which he proposed that university results are harmfully affected by Facebook usage. Like wise, **khan (2009)** found that Facebook users had poor performance in exams. **Pasek and hargittai (2009)** examined Facebook usage by undergraduate and Facebook use in relation to grades. The study revealed that there is no negative relationship between the use of Facebook and grade point average. The study did caution against using any medium of communication or online SNT too much, as over usage of technology can detract from college students.

Kirschner and karpinski (2009) states that users of social networking sites devote lesser time to their studies than the non users and subsequently had lower grades in their academic courses. Further **karpinski (2009)** says that among various unique distractions of every generation, social networking sites have been proved as the major distraction of current generation.

Kuppuswamy and narayan (2010) studied the impact of social networking sites on the education of youth the study finds that social networking websites have both positive as well as negative impact on the education of youth, depending on one's interest to use It in a positive manner for his or her education and vice versa.

In this era the development of technology and its accessibility has enabled rapid expansion and popularity of social networking sites. Consequently this global phenomenon is affecting interpersonal relationship of research work to be carried out involving interpersonal relationships and social networking sites. As such the present study primarily focuses upon adolescents in the rural background. Adolescents are the mass users of these sites and hence it becomes important to analyse them in relation to their social networking sites usage and the impact it causes has on their attitude and aggressive behaviors.

In order to have a dearer view it is highly essential to have knowledge of existing studies with regard to social media. As a result this aids to better formulation of the present study and a proper understanding of the diversified opinions existent. It is noteworthy that not many studies have been undertaken regarding interpersonal relationships of adolescents and social media in the Indian context. Hence it is far more important to analyse the influence of social media in particular in relation to interpersonal relationship in the Indian context.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of media on attitude towards parents, attitude towards discipline, attitude towards life, aggression, academic problems, social and behavioral problems of rural adolescents
2. To identify gender difference on media influence among rural adolescents

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis 1: Usage of media would be positively related to attitude towards parents, attitude towards discipline and attitude towards life.

Hypothesis 2: Usage of media of rural adolescents would be positively related with aggression

Hypothesis 3: Usage of media of rural adolescents would be positively related to academic problems, social problems, behavior problems.

Hypothesis 4: Girls and boys would significantly differ in their media usage

Method

The research adopted mixed method using both qualitative and quantitative measures due to the non-availability of a standardized questionnaire or tool to measure usage of media. Convenience sampling was used to choose 134 rural adolescent students out of which boys 96 and 28 girls. The sample included rural adolescent's student studying in Class VI, VII, VIII, IX from Kendriya Vidyalaya in the district of Thiruvarur.

Measures

The following self-report measures were used in the present study.

1. **Screening Test for Emotional Problems** – self report (*Erfold, short and Freeman, 2012*) consisted of 40 items, assigned to each of 5 subscale (a) Academic Problems (b) Social Problems (c) Behaviour Problems (d) Depression and (e) anxiety
2. **Aggression Questionnaire** (*Bussy & Perry, 1992*) is a 29 item rating scale assessing the level of aggression of an individual with 5 response categories. Internal and Test Retest Reliability was established total score range from .72 to .89 and construct validity was established.
3. **Sodhi's attitude scale** (*Sodhi, 1990*) consisted of 20 items measuring attitude in 5 areas namely attitude towards, teachers and parents, discipline, Life and humanity, Country, Religion in Yes or No format. Test retest reliability ranges from .72 to .86 validities is found to be .70
4. Self-constructed open ended question was asked to obtain data regarding the usage of media and its impact.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration was followed throughout the research. Participation in the research was not forced and it was based on the willingness of the students. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained. Neither any risk nor danger was involved to the participant during the process of data collection. Participants were well –informed about the nature and the purpose of the study.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses were carried out to using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. Pearson product moment correlation, Independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation coefficient of the study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	MI	AP	SP	BP	ATP	ATD	ATL	AGG
MI	14.37	1.89	1	.13	.25**	.19*	.04	-.08	.27**	.24**
AP	5.22	2.81		1	.44**	.51**	.12	.32**	-.66	.24**
SP	3.72	2.65			1	.49**	.04	.34	-.003	.23**
BP	2.90	2.19				1	-.16	.23**	.15	.27**
ATP	7.30	1.35					1	.009	-.14	.14
ATD	4.27	1.45						1	.12	.21*
ATL	10.16	4.0							1	.25**
AGG	78.6	20.22								1

Note: N=134** p < .01 level of significance *p < .05 level of significance

MI- Media Influence, AP-Academic Problems, SP-Social Problems, BP-Behavior Problems, ATP- Attitude towards Parents, ATD- Attitude towards Discipline, ATL- Attitude Towards Life, AGG- Aggression

Results revealed a positive relationship on usage of media with social problems, behavior problems, attitude towards life and aggression among rural adolescents. This could be due to the reason that, in recent times the usage of media is on raise and it has no definite purpose for the usage unlike the earlier times. Media was initially used for information gathering and in today’s scenario it’s been used more for entertainment, social connectivity, commercial purpose, and so on. This is one of the reason for people getting addicted to social media’s and television. Also, televisions nowadays are targeting one sector of the population and there is no much scope of learning, knowledge enhancement for children. They are in no measures to inculcate moral values, discipline but rather, telecast commercial acts and reality programmes which bring in competitive mentality among the adolescents. The increase in the usage of gadgets also let to the increased use of violent mobile games among children and adolescents. This is quite evident with the inclusion of mobile and internet addiction as a disorder by World Health Organization. People tend to lose connectivity and contact with their family members and friends and are more prone to use media as a source of their connectivity not having a goal or purpose in life. This leads to increase in social problems, behavior problems and aggression among rural adolescents.

Table II

Comparison of male and female rural Adolescents on social problems & Aggression.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ value
Social Problem	Male	96	3.34	2.631	2.71**
	Female	28	4.72	2.514	
Aggression	Male	96	81.32	20.23	2.54**
	Female	28	71.39	19.17	

Significant at 0.01**

Results revealed significant difference between male and female adolescents on social problem and aggression. Female adolescents were found to have more social problems and male adolescents were found to be more aggressive than female adolescents. These difference could be due the exposure and cultural factors which inhibits rural adolescent girls to have certain restrictions in their communication with other people outside the family. This may affect their socialization process and could be reason for having more social problems than male rural adolescents. In contrary, male adolescents were found to be more aggressive, this could be attributed to biological reasons. Also, they have the liberty to express their anger and it is more acceptable compared to female adolescents

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