

Impact of Mass Media on Children's Behaviour

SEEMA OJHA

Assistant Professor

Department of Home Science, Govt. M.S. College, Bikaner (Rajasthan) India

ABSTRACT

Through this paper, I have shown the impact that mass media has on children and their behaviour. The impacts are both positive and negative, with social media coming up as an emerging tool to modify children's behaviour, which needs to be modified. Parental guidance and supervision, along with providing proper care and nourishment to the children, can prove to be the mediating factors to decrease the negative effects of the influence of media seen in children.

Key Words : Mass media, Children behaviour, Parental guidance

The term mass media describes the wide variety of communication channels—including radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and digital platforms like websites and social media—that are utilized to concurrently reach enormous audiences. It is essential for influencing cultural and social norms, disseminating information, and forming public opinion. Mass media have changed over time from traditional print and broadcast formats to highly interactive digital platforms that enable the instantaneous creation and sharing of material. It provides entertainment, educates audiences, informs the public about current affairs, and keeps an eye on institutions and governments. But there are drawbacks to mass media as well, like the propagation of false information, media bias, and the possibility of influencing public opinion. In an increasingly digitized and connected world, the influence of mass media on children's behaviour has emerged as a crucial field of study. Children's views, attitudes, and behaviours are greatly influenced by mass media, which includes television, movies, social media, video games, and internet platforms. Children's exposure to media content can have both beneficial and detrimental effects because they are still developing cognitively, emotionally, and socially. In order to steer children toward

healthy growth, parents, educators, and legislators must comprehend these impacts.

The educational potential of mass media is one of its most important benefits. Children's knowledge, linguistic abilities, and creativity can all be improved by top-notch educational programs and digital content. Interactive media, like instructional games and applications, can foster cognitive growth and problem-solving skills. Additionally, children can develop empathy, global awareness, and open-mindedness through media exposure to a variety of cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. Literature shows that the use of screen-based media in early childhood can have both positive and negative impacts on children's cognitive and socioemotional development (Edyta Swider-Cios, 2022). Positive behaviours like cooperation, kindness, and respect, for example, can be reinforced by programs that teach moral ideals or social skills.

On the other hand, children's behaviour is negatively impacted by mass media in an equally significant way. The exposure to violent content is one of the main issues. Increased aggression, desensitization to violence, and imitation of hazardous behaviours may result from repeated exposure to violent media, according to a number of studies. By far the greatest amount of psychological

research on the media has concerned the impact of televised violence and violence contained within video games on children and concluded that exposure to Media and video game violence leads to increased aggression, an effect that has been demonstrated both as a short-term consequence and long-term effect of excessive exposure (Rajput, 2014). Younger children are more likely to emulate what they see on screens because they may find it difficult to tell fact from fiction. Additionally, children's self-esteem and body image may suffer as a result of the media's frequent portrayal of unattainable ideals of success, beauty, and lifestyle.

The effect of media on kids' social behaviour and communication abilities is another important concern. Overuse of screens can decrease in-person contact, which can result in social isolation and poorer interpersonal skills. Youngsters who spend a lot of time on digital gadgets might not have as many opportunities to play physically, collaborate with others, and solve problems in the real world. Additionally, the proliferation of social media exposes kids to peer pressure, cyberbullying, and the need for social validation, all of which can lead to behavioural changes, anxiety, and depression.

Children's habits and lifestyle decisions are also influenced by the media. Children's advertising frequently encourages unhealthy eating, consumerism, and consumerist mindsets. Children may consequently acquire unhealthy eating patterns, heightened product desire, and a propensity to link enjoyment to material belongings. Long-term media use is also associated with sedentary behaviour, which can exacerbate health problems like obesity and sleep disorders.

Media literacy and parental supervision are essential for reducing the harmful impacts of mass media. Children can learn to critically assess what they see and consume if their parents actively monitor and discuss media content with them. A balanced lifestyle can be achieved by limiting screen usage and promoting substitute pursuits like reading, playing outside, and spending time with family. By including media literacy instruction in the curriculum, schools can help kids comprehend and evaluate media messages.

In conclusion, children's behaviour is greatly influenced by mass media in a variety of ways. It presents

hazards that may have an impact on children's psychological, social, and physical well-being, even though it provides worthwhile chances for learning and growth. To guarantee that children benefit from media while reducing its negative impacts, a balanced strategy that incorporates responsible media use, parental participation, and educational efforts is crucial. In order to establish effective strategies and regulations, future studies should keep examining changing media patterns and their long-term effects on child development. In order to assist kids in navigating today's digital environment safely and ethically, media literacy and parental monitoring are crucial. The ability to access, analyze, assess, and produce media content is known as media literacy, and it helps kids discern between trustworthy information and deceptive or dangerous content. By guiding rather than just limiting children's media use, parental supervision is essential to the development of these skills. In order to assist their kids, comprehend prejudice, stereotypes, and the intent behind media messages, parents can keep an eye on what their kids watch, set reasonable screen-time limits, and have conversations with them about the stuff they consume. This combination strategy fosters critical thinking and ethical digital behaviour while shielding kids from dangers like false information, cyberbullying, and harmful influences. In the end, children become more self-reliant and knowledgeable media consumers when their parents actively monitor and instruct them.

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