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ROLE OF MEDIA IN AUGMENTING VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENT YOUTH AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Use of wide range of social media, particularly by adolescent youths, is on an increasing trend. Children who watch many hours of violence on television, while they were in school days tend to show higher levels of aggressive behavior when they became teenagers. Adolescent group normally watch and actively take part in various issues popping up in social media. More or less they spend considerable time on actively interacting with these social Medias. Among children, there is a natural tendency to imitate what they see. They are generally less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. Often children turn to behave in aggressive manner. News on violence also contributes to increased violence, mainly in the form of imitative suicides and acts of aggression. Video games are clearly capable of producing an increase in aggression and violence. In nutshell, the paper attempt long-term longitudinal studies which may be capable of demonstrating long-term effects in Indian contest. Social media post on controversial remarks against any religion, community, deities, eminent personalities have greater repercussion. The study reveals that most of the adolescent youth have disturbed lifestyle. This has resulted in adverse changes in their behavioral pattern and are highly prone to the violence. The focus of the media should be to develop a conducive atmosphere in the society.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated to find out excessive use of Social Media by adolescent youth in Indian Context and consequent change in their behavioral pattern. This aims to document the explore the present pattern so as to focus on remedial measures.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media plays major role in the day to day life of every person. Social media share common interests, activities and personal relations. Use of internet, Television, WhatsApp and other social media, particularly by adolescent youths are on increasing trend. In a democratic set up there exist heterogeneity among the people, this often results in conflicts and violence, sometimes leading to huge communal violence and loss of properties and human life. India currently has a population of 1.36 billion, which is 17.1 percentage of the world's total population. The median age of the population in the country is 27.1 years, as such India is known as a **"young country"**. Out of this population, 230 million or 70 percent are active social media users. The life expectancy is 69 years in India

(Pragati, 2019). Being a big democratic country having median population at a younger age of 27.1 years, study on the behavioral pattern of young generation is considered to be an imperative need of the hour.

Kaiser Family Foundation (US) survey found that children aged 8 to 18 years had an average media usage time of 6 hours and 21 minutes daily (Victoria, Ulla, & Donald, 2010) Children who watched many hours of violence on television during their elementary school, tend to show higher levels of aggressive behavior, when they became teenagers (Huesmann, Eron, & Dubow, 2003). These group listen, watch and actively take part in social media on various issues. More or less, they spend considerable time on actively interacting with these social Media.

"There is tendency of children to imitate what they see. Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. Children may be more fearful of the world around them. Children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others" (Bandura, 1986). Television news on violence also contributes to increased violence, particularly in the form of imitative suicides and acts of aggression. Video games are clearly capable of producing an increase in aggression and violence in the short term, although no long-term longitudinal studies capable of demonstrating long-term effects have been conducted. By observing these participants into adulthood it is found that the ones who'd watched a lot of TV violence when they were 8 years old were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults (Huesmann. & Taylor, 2006).

The major media what people normally use are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and so on. Social media post on controversial and derogatory remarks against any religion, community, deities, eminent personalities have greater repercussion. Such posts uploaded in social media shared by people could create tension in the society, which usually turn into violence.

Media violence is a visual portrayal of acts of physical aggression by one human against another. This definition of media violence does not include off-screen poisonings that might be implied, but rather it refers to visually portrayed physically aggressive acts by one person against another (Huesmann et al., 2003) .

High magnitude of media exposure on adolescents have effect on their behavioral problems, social isolation, use of alcohol, sexual initiation etc. The study focuses on media effect, in terms of instigating physical aggression of one human being against another.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the use of social media by the adolescent youth.
2. To study on the nature of violence reporting by social media.
3. To crystallize the level of incidence of violence in different age groups.
4. To identify the possible relationships with media and violence in youths in India.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

With the outbreak of internet access, in the year 2018 the number of social media users in India stood at 326.1 million. Nevertheless, the social network users in India are expected to be almost 448 million in 2023. Facebook remained the popular choice among the social media platforms as of 2017. Internet penetration stands at 41% today but it's surprising to see that the country's average age (27.1 years) is more or less reflected on social media as well (Pragati, 2019).

On average, Indian users spend 2.4 hours on social media in a day which is slightly below the global average of 2.5 hours a day (Varun, 2020). Around 290 million active social media users in India access social networks through their mobile devices.

Amanda and Michael (2008) in a review of online social networking profiles by adolescents indicated that Social Networking profiles involve individuals creating and maintaining personal Internet sites, allowing authors and other users to post content, thus creating a personal network. Adolescent social networking in the past five years

has rocked from a niche activity into a phenomenon that engages tens of millions of Internet users. The study proposes that online social networking profiles posted by adolescents contain intimate, candid and observable self-disclosure and peer interaction that can be analyzed creating an overall picture of adolescent behavior, highlighting specific areas needing additional research and addressing implications for parental monitoring and intervention (Lenhart, 2009). Boyd (2007) says that gender appears to influence participation on social networking sites. Younger boys are more likely to participate than younger girls (46% vs. 44%) but older girls are far more likely to participate than older boys (70% vs. 57%). Older boys are twice as likely to use the sites to flirt and slightly more likely to use the sites to meet new people than girls of their age. Older girls are far more likely to use these sites to communicate with friends they see in person than younger people or boys of their age.

Misbehavior and occasional outburst are said to be natural. However, repeated disruptive behavior is the sign of advent of behavioral problem. Disruptive behaviors include repeated tantrums, arguments, hostility towards parents or authority figures, and bullying behavior such as picking on small or younger children. It also includes causing or threatening harm to pets, other people or themselves. In older children and teens early sexual activity, smoking, alcohol and drug use can be signs of a problem (Tanwar & Priyanka, 2016).

Bjorkqvist (1985) exposed 5 to 6-year-old children to either violent or nonviolent films. Compared with the children who had viewed the nonviolent film, those who had just watched the violent film were rated significantly much higher on physical assault (hitting other children, wrestling etc.) as well as other types of aggression.

India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released crime statistics for the year 2017. NCRB provided crime rates in terms of crime per lakh population (NCRB, 2017). This can be considered as an accurate reflection of the law and order situation in a state rather than absolute numbers that do not factor in the size of the state. Bureau has categorized data on crimes under various heads such as murder, kidnapping and abduction, crimes against women, children, senior citizens, economic offences and cyber-crimes. Some of this data is used as secondary data for the analysis and interpretation.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research approach used for the study is mixed research method combining qualitative and quantitative research method. Sampling frame used for the study is the whole of India selected at random. Secondary data is used relating to different parts of the country have been used. The survey questionnaire circulated by Google questionnaire circulated through the media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Qualitative research method is also used as a study method. The number of violence reported, relation of this was found out with the media used by adolescent youth and their involvement in violence.

Secondary data is acquired from various publication and statistics reported in various related web sites through surfing online. Primary data is also collected through a survey using Google questionnaire among various categories media users. The survey questionnaires were sent as a link through Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google mail etc. The questions were also posted in various WhatsApp groups. The total responses to the questionnaire were 1680 Nos. received from various parts of the country.

Analysis of the data is made through innovative research tools such as Spreadsheet, SPSS, etc. The final result is interpreted from the outcome of the results of the analysis.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the survey questionnaire sent through electronic media 1680 respondent took part. The age-wise structures of respondents who are using electronics widely are as follows:

The media, classified broadly into three viz. Electronics media, Visual media and Printed media, in order to ascertain the popular media among the respondents. The results are shown in Figure 1.
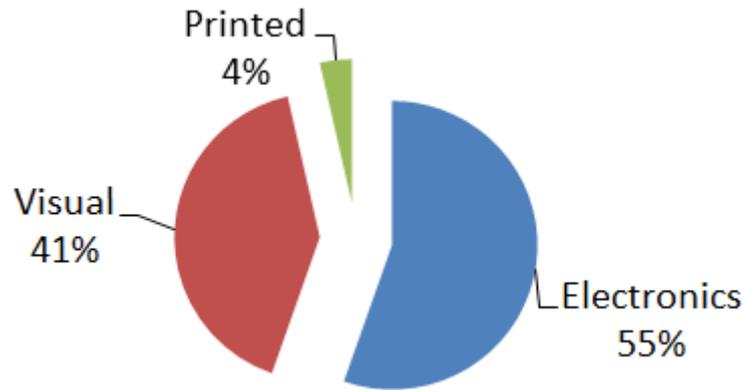
N – 1680

Figure –1. Forms of Media used by Public

The results envisage that 55% of the people is using Electronics media widely, which is followed by 41% of Visual media such as Television. Use of printed media in the present world has considerably reduced, which is only 4% now. This may be because of the reason that even the daily newspapers are available on digital format.

The responses on different types of devices used by the people gave an interest result. The results revealed that 95.8% of the respondents are using smart phones, 3.57 respondents use computers and finally only 0.63% as using tablets which are difficult to carry while travelling. This make it clear that people prefer smart phone as the social media, as it is highly useful while moving and all the information are available instantaneously on the finger tips.

Subsequently the age-wise distribution has been analyzed from the data collected through the survey and the results of the analysis is given at Figure 2.
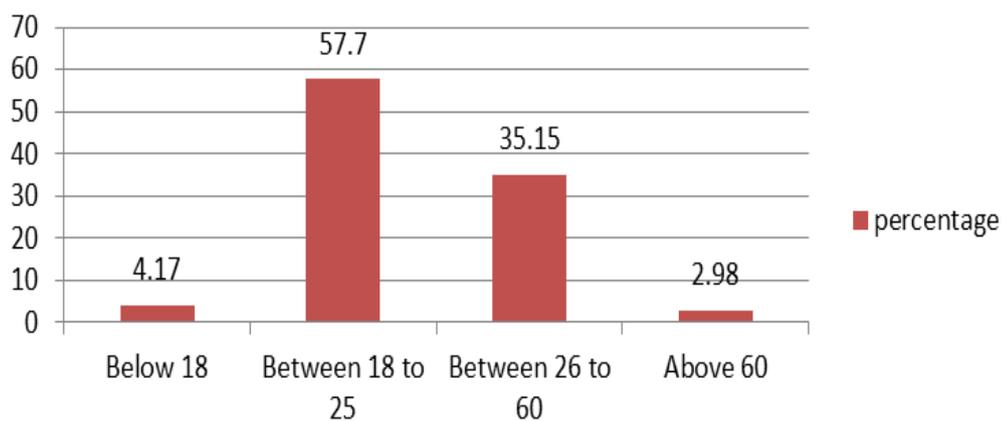
N 1680

Figure-2. Age-wise distribution of persons widely using internet media

The results reveal that the majority of internet media users like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc. are between the age group of 18 to 25 (57.7%), which is followed by the age group of 26 to 60 (35.15%).

The attitude of respondents was measured in terms of three types of activism such as political, religious and neutral. The results show that 75% users are engaged in political activism, 14.9 % in religious and neutral are only 10.1%. As such, it is evident that majority of the users are highly sensitive to the political pressure and aggression related to this.

It is also worth to note that the results of the survey reveal that 63.1% users are active in games instigating violence such as fighting, shooting etc. Only 38.9 % respondents are using games for leisure or for mental happiness.

The results statistics on univariate and bivariate analysis shows the mean age as 19, and there is strong relationship between age and fearlessness on doing crime as p 0.01 which is lesser than p 0.05.

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It is evident that cities have a greater propensity to crime; megacities cities have a higher crime rate than smaller cities. The *1994 Statistical Abstract* of the United States, for instance, found that metropolitan cities had 79 percent more crime than other American cities and 300 percent more violence than rural areas. Further, New York and Los Angeles, the largest US cities, had crime rates that were approximately four times higher than other metropolitan areas.

In the Indian context, very less amount work has been done to establish causality behind urban crime. Even though there is no clear-cut conclusion that could be drawn. This study tries to interpret as follows from secondary data drawn from NCRB statistics and taking into account other contributory reasons.

The IPC crimes reported as per NCRB statistics in major cities and UA which are categorized as North India and South India is given at Table 1:

Table-1. IPC crime rates.

				Crimes per lakh population
S No.	Name of City/UA	Crimes	Name of City/UA	Crimes
	North India		South India	
01	Delhi	1306	Chennai	221
02	Patna	751	Kochi	809
03	Jaipur	683	Hyderabad	187
04	Lucknow	600	Coimbatore	144

On a close scrutiny of the data it can be seen that the amount of Crime is six times more than Chennai, likewise if we compare Jaipur and Hyderabad the crime rate is only 1/3 at Hyderabad. Lucknow and Coimbatore have this same trend. Thus, it is clear the crime rate is very high in north India as compared to south India.

In order to have more comparison, violence like fatal attack resulted death is also compared in major cities/UA of the country in broad two categories as North India and South India and the details are at Table 2:

Table-2. Fatal attacks resulted in deaths.

				Crimes per lakh population
S No.	Name of City/UA	Crimes	Name of City/UA	Crimes
	North India		South India	
01	Patna	9	Kochi	1
02	Jaipur	3	Hyderabad	1
03	Nagpur	8	Bangalore	3
04	Indore	3	Kozhikode	1
05				

Source: NCRB (2017).

Patna has 9 such crimes whereas in Kochi it is only one. Jaipur had three fatal crimes reported per lakh population whereas the rate in Hyderabad it is only one. Nagpur it is 8 per lakh population whereas in Bangalore it is only 3. Again, this data reveals that north India have high rate of violence.

Another type of crime compared between north India and South India is crime against women. The comparative data as obtained from NCRB, 2017 is at Table 3.

This data on Table 3 also reveals the rate is very much high in north India compared to south India. The active media users in all these cities are very high compared to other cities in the country. People living in these highly prone areas of media are one of the elements which stimulate the criminal tendency in the people. The variation in North India and South India may be due to the factor the literacy is high in South India. This also should lead us

to investigate other sets of causes – propensity to criminal behavior of different sets of people, fear on law etc.

Table-3. Crime against women.

Crimes per lakh population

S No.	Name of City/UA	Crimes	Name of City/UA	Crimes
	North India		South India	
01	Lucknow	179	Chennai	15
02	Delhi	152	Hyderabad	1
03	Jaipur	128	Surat	28
04	Kanpur	118	Coimbatore	7
05	Indore	130	Kozhikode	33

The campus violence and incidences happened at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is one of the best examples to highlight effect of media in spreading the violence or unrest to different parts of the country in a lightening manner. On the very next day of outbreak of aggression/violence the effects have been reflected in many campuses throughout the country and also at world class universities abroad by Indian students. Television media also had played a major role in spreading the violence to the campuses through their focus program of discussions.

Another important event that happened was women entry to Sabarimala temple. The whole agitation to restrain from the implementation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India was organized through Facebook and WhatsApp media. Live coverage by visual media worsened the situation.

Likewise, in the last Parliament election campaign internet media through Facebook and WhatsApp played a very important role. As such, during these years WhatsApp had come up with some limitation to forward the post or messages to different persons or groups. The Facebook group of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the biggest Facebook group of the Country.

In a study of students of Jamia Milia on usage of social media on internet shows the results as given in Table 4:

Table-4. Facebook friends in a university campus.

Facebook friends Range (Nos)	% of students
52-250	25
251–500	50
501–1000	18.8
Less than 50 or more than 1000	3.1

The study shows that in a University campus in India (Jamia Milia) 50% of the students have Facebook friends of 251 to 500 and 25% of students have Facebook friends from 52 to 250. This is an indicator that, the media is highly active in the campuses of Universities in India.

While studying the Facebook group membership, the data in JNU campus is given in Table 5:

Table-5. Facebook group in a university campus.

Facebook group range	Percentage of students
1–5	31.2
6–20	62.5
No groups	3.1

To the tune of 62.5% students have Facebook group membership of 6 to 20 nos. and 31.2 % have one to five group memberships. This being the situation of University campuses in India, even small issues can be turned into large scale aggressions and violence within a very short period of time.

Internet media also allow posting of photographs and chatting for a longer period of time. Chatting for a longer period of time the adolescent youth are highly prone to falling in love/affection with opposite sex, particularly in a scenario that both parents are working and a feeling of loneliness is very much prevalent among youth. Younger age girls trapped in to the sex rackets are a common incidence now a days. This may happen with the black mailing of girls with a threat of posting sexy photographs in social media which might have created through morphing. Many suicides, murders, physical violence, throwing acid are very common in adolescent youths.

Now a day we can see a common attitude by media users. Whenever there is an accident rather than helping the victims, everyone tries to take video or photos of cold blood to put them on media and to gain a post which may become viral. Posting videos on beating cows, harassing the women etc. are very viral on smart phones.

Now, let us analyze the Television media. Presently the television media crave against curtailment of freedom for reporting in India. But what the television media is doing in the present world. Focus discussions on certain issues telecast throughout the country and abroad, create apprehension in the minds of audience. In order to gain Target Rating Point, the television media sometimes try to exhibit issues on violence with exaggerations which again creates a sense of unrest among people. The best example is the 26/11 Taj Hotel attack by terrorists which has telecasted live. This telecast has been misused by the terrorists by passing on to terrorists trapped inside the hotel to fight against Indian army personnel.

All the above discussions show that internet media have a great amount negative effect on the adolescent youth of the country.

6. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that most of the adolescent youth has disturbed lifestyle due to more concentration on social media on major part of their day.   These phenomena tend to disrupt their sleeping schedule, studies, outdoor games, eating habits and socialization process etc.   In turn this pattern will give rise to adverse changes in their behavioral pattern and are highly prone to the violence and destruction. The solution to this problem is either to raise the cost beyond the reachable limit or serious measures to curtail the usage only to limited times.

The messages that once become viral in social media are difficult to stop. Such messages include disturbing images, videos and confidential information. Hence majority of the people are in favor of serious restrictions on this by putting censoring authorities to check the posts before they were made public. This screening has become more complicated now, as use of codes like Manglish and Hinglish are very much common. As such, if the censoring has to be effective such codes should not be allowed in the media.

In a democratic country it is obvious that the media has also been deeply implicated in the production of communal violence. It is found that certain types of media elements have highlighted for communal violence. Once communal violence breaks out the media plays an important role to spread the same. This act should be strictly controlled for safeguarding the integrity, preserving law and order situation in the country.

In nutshell, it is advocated that internet media has to be used for the creative development of the society for social developmental activities such as use for education or for gaining information, making and up-keeping relations etc., rather than misusing media for the negative acts such as violence and unrest among adolescent youth.

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