

Final Project
Effects of Media Violence on
Children



[M.A. Programme]

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the last two decades, ever-larger parts of the world were swamped by TV sets and satellite channels. In 1996, 7 out of 10 family units global were estimated to own a TV set. This represented a 100 percent



raise in terms of channel growth, hours of television watched and television sets craved by family units since the end of the 1980s. In accumulation to satellite television there were videos and DVDs. Furthermore, computers with Internet connection are spreading, particularly among well-to-do households and countries, and the video and computer game business has become the fastest growing and most profitable entertainment business aimed at children and young people. Cell phones are multiplying exponentially. The hotheaded media growth is accompanied by a gigantic increase of conventional publicity and an abundance of new forms of commercial exposure.

The altering and converging media backdrop has strengthened public debate as considers both wishes and worries. On the one hand, the media flood, which is increasingly sovereign of time and place, has

provoked opportunity of greater freedom of choice, equal access to information for all, and helping means for classlessness and vigorous citizenship. On the other hand, there is also fear of, i.e., regularity of the media output; more violent entertainment; discriminating portrayals of gender, social groups, cultures and nations; pornography; and direct infringements on the Internet. This could have undesired consequences for consumers, not least children and young people, besides risks of media addiction and an unnecessary point of reference towards more consumption.

At the same time, the enlarging media equipment in the richer households/areas of the world, where many children and young people have their own TV sets, DVD players, computers, mobile phones, etc., have meant that parents know less about and mediate their children's media use to a lesser level than before. Children have emotional relationships with media but several children express lack of communication with their parents about the media.

TOPIC

The here anticipated research project on **"Children and Media Violence"** is to generate pointers for Media Public Responsibility so that, carefully all these understandings, deeds, affirmations,



free from guilt and the rhetoric's of individual, political and ethical viewpoints.

Pakistan is deeply involved today in an exercise to analyze and understand the reasons for the prolonged ethnic clash which has overwhelmed the nation for more than two decades and established a deep-rooted culture of violence within the society due to overrun effects. It is difficult for us to understand how a society which was raised in the great tradition of sub continent could turn as violent as it enters into the 21st century.

No country in the world has been able to protect itself from the modernization process that developed in different shapes at different times. Pakistan too has been subjected to this process since independence and even before that. The immigrants introduced a new political system, a new economy, a new infrastructure and new values in the name of modernization. However, we have been trying since independence to give a more narrow essence to the modernization process. This is very much mirrored in the institutions we have created for governance, culture, education, management of the economy etc.

But we now understand that something has gone incorrect. The silence, harmony and much cherished social values have been plagued by turpitude, which is regularly reflected in aggression in settling human problems. In this situation some questions arise: is this modernity that we have been desperately chasing a fantasy? Is it a systems failure? Has our failure to put in place a system to effectively respond to human expectations generated by the modernization forces contributed to the present dilemma of

society? Has media played any part, deliberately or unconsciously, in highlighting and securing this situation?

In the hunt for an answer to this critical catastrophe, people from different disciplines often try to attribute the causes of the problem by inclination towards their own field of erudition and specialization to a certain extent than by accepting a holistic approach. Based on such thinking, they try to set down linear approaches to the solutions. For instance, biologists assume that violence, especially of males, is the result of evolutionary variation and can therefore be channeled but not conquer; psychologists, in compare, believe that violence is learned and, therefore , nonviolence can be learned through the process of socialization; jurists believe that a lack of awareness and absence of the risk of authorization are the causes of increasing violence; sociologists point to structural tensions; moralists believe that the degradation of moral values in the face of alien cultures is the root cause of violent behavior. They often find an easy escape from the problem by pointing a finger at the media and its persistent influence, or something else which does not subscribe to their own translation of "society",

In the meantime, violence continues to amplify exponentially. Melko, for example, notes that while there have been only two major conflicts in the developed world, since 1945 more than 14 million people have been killed in the Third World alone. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that in 1989 there were over 17 million refugees in the world who are largely victims of internal conflicts and another 20 million

internally displaced persons. There are those who even suggest that this total may double in the 21st century.

The world today is grappling with a huge number of problems of immense complexity. Many countries in the Asia, Africa and Pacific regions have lately experienced different forms of violence or are still in the midst of such awful actions. In these circumstances, we often see the mass media directly and indirectly broadcasting and popularizing different forms of violence.

Unluckily, this is so constant in such a diverse region as the Asia Pacific. However, multiplicity should not be seen as a threat, but rather as an enhancement of human community. The encouragement of diversity and pluralism can lead us to cooperation and collaboration within and outside of our countries. If cultural dialogue is institutionalized, many existing differences and conflicts at the international and regional levels could be settled harmoniously. In this respect, the media have a major role to play in increasing the awareness of the audience with a view to nurturing tranquility and mutual respect between peoples.

Fresh communication technologies can help discussion take place globally. Advances in mass media and satellite communications are breaking down the conventional hurdles among nations and their different cultures, helping to renovate our planet into a "global village". In spite of these technological wonders, the diversity of human culture is, and will continue to be, a reality.

The challenge before us now is, how can we serve the public interest in the best way, with the objective of making an encouraging difference in societies?

In order to explore these questions and come up with action strategies, the Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development, together with several partners, namely the Embassies of Switzerland, Germany and France, with the Goethe Institute Inter Nations, British Council and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, brought together high-ranking officials, decision-makers, media professionals, scientists and university

scholars from different and diverse cultural and theoretical backgrounds, in November 2002. The constructive and interactive three-day seminar looked into the areas where media could contribute to reduce violence and facilitate crisis management.

This journal is the conclusion of the ideas and strategies presented and discussed at the seminar. The presentations contribute to the analysis of the role of media in crises and discuss some of the issues related to violence and modernity. We attempt a rethinking of modernity in all its diverse forms, in the context of the occurrence of violence in modern society. This rethinking depends on a new hypothetical estimation of modernity as well as examination of case studies and practical data to arrive at a healthier understanding of violence and modernity and the role of mass media.

As a result, the publication is not restricted to either a purely theoretical

discussion or an analysis of pragmatic data, but aims at integrating both with a view to coming up with common strategies in dealing with the challenges to promoting dialogue and peace nationally, regionally and globally. We hope that this attempt is valuable to media professionals and scientists in their efforts to promote a peaceful world.

Evolution as we know it centering largely on the communication revolution that has steered in the age of mass media. Globalization has encouraged new forms of communication on the financial, political, social and cultural fronts. In this new world order, the media play a momentous role in providing information from corner to corner geographical borders.

People all over the world now have ways to sounds and images from distant places -within their own country or far beyond. Products of mass culture distributed by a few great media corporations footed in the USA, Europe and Japan make their way regularly into our homes together with local products of large media corporations.

As an opening of information, media exercises much power both to support and destroy, to manipulate and reform. It is not just a provider of entertainment but is increasingly a vendor of social change and development. Television is not the only medium our children are exposed to but it is the most undeniable one. It is cheap and accessible and, at seemingly no cost, delivers entertainment right in our living room. With children spending an average of 3 hours daily in front of the television, it is easily the most popular out-of-school activity. Thus, it has become the medium with the most telling

effect on the way our children think and behave, in shaping their habits and attitudes and how they view the world.

But when violence is a leading part of that media, what could be the impact on children? When children grow up into the real world, where violence is only part of daily life experiences, what is the relationship between violence in real life and the

Violence they see on screen?

When we talk about violence, we take it to mean any anti-social behavior with the intention to harm a living being. The most common form of violence is physical violence but we must also



include verbal abuse, intimidation, and aggressive humor and other forms of aggression, All these types of violence are seen on many television programmes to which children are exposed. A wealth of research that has been done on this subject and it has been well established that there is a strong relationship between media violence and the learning of aggression. It has also been established that the continued exposure to media violence leads to desensitization, meaning that people are no longer upset or aroused