



The Adverse Effects of Family Serials and Movies on the Emotions of Middle Childhood

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Abstract

The impact of movies and television on children has been a highly debated topic for years on end. These mediums have demonstrated positive effects on children, encompassing aspects like awareness, knowledge, values, and etiquette. But it can't be denied that with every positive there exists equally negative effects. The negative impacts of movies and television have been looked at by professionals over the course of years and varying results have been obtained. The impact of these media varies depending on the target audience, shaped by internal and external factors like personality, environment, childhood experiences, trauma, and the perception of values and morals. This paper is intended to find out the adverse effect of family serials and movie on the emotions of Middle Childhood. The findings reveals that the content, dialogue and the themes of most of the Family serials and movies result in adverse effect of the students at various age level.

Keywords: Family Serials, Movie, Emotions, Middle Childhood.

1. Introduction

Despite the bulldozing entry of video games, social media or web series, the most popular entertainment medium in non-urban Kerala is still television serials. Hence, it plays a crucial role in the socialisation process of viewers. The impact of long hours of watching television will be substantial, even though it differs depending on age. For instance, prolonged viewing of television serials is affecting more children than adults. The recent rise in the aggression phenomenon among children may be due to the influence of the serials they are watching. As television serials have enduring significance for the cultural narratives of the associated society due to their intrinsic nature, they can influence the approach of children to anything they do. Hence, the pervasive influence of television serials on the social fabric of Kerala society needs to be studied in depth. As children are highly receptive to the characters and mannerisms of their favourite stars, whoever and wherever they are, it is important to note that exposure to television poses a substantial risk of adverse effects [1]. As children develop character in the totality of offline and online environments nowadays, increasing accessibility to

those entertainments that have inappropriate content is a matter of concern. Such contents gradually lead to the normalisation and conditioning of undesirable behaviour, which could later become apparent in their lives. This is particularly pertinent for children from low socio-economic backgrounds, who may already face challenging living conditions that could push them towards unethical and illegal means to fulfil their material needs. It is unfortunate that a culturally vibrant, educationally rich and legally cautious Kerala society is neither responding nor concerned about such a grave issue. A casual observation shows that around thirty-five serials are shown on average a day on all Malayalam channels, including those dubbed from Hindi and other languages. Housewives and children are the principal viewers of these serials. As both of these communities are highly interconnected and constitute a majority in the whole society, it becomes imperative to address and, if necessary, regulate the content for a healthier societal impact.

1.1. Research Problem

It is generally observed that criminal behaviour is getting more glorified in the family serials on



television channels for a considerable period of time. Compared to any other themes, those that exemplify violent emotions are getting more audience and promotion; hence, they are getting prime time slots in all channels. Most of these serials are repeated during the day time too, ensuring 'nobody is left behind'. The glorification of criminal behaviour in serials can lead its regular viewers, especially children, to idealise and seek to emulate these actions, perceiving them as pathways to a glamorous and fulfilling life. Children in middle childhood, as they are depending on parents even in their selection of television programmes, may mimic the actions and even the language used by the characters in the serials. This could lead to an increase in undesirable behaviour, potentially fostering criminal tendencies within the concerned societies [2]. Hence, there is an urgent necessity for attention and focus on understanding and documenting, with their desirable as well as undesirable consequences, the contents presented in the television serials of Kerala channels.

2. Literature Review

The role and relevance of television programmes in the contemporary world are well explored in western societies [3]. Even though hardly anyone disagrees with the potential of television on the capacity building of children, the adverse impacts of watching it for long hours were equally recorded in diverse studies (Krahe, et al., 2011; Hopf, Huber, & Weifs, 2008). As children spend a sizeable amount of their time watching television programmes, particularly serials and cartoons, parents and others must be careful in providing the right kind of orientation to the children regarding the cultivation of television habits, choice of television programmes and corrections if they reproduce the content in an inappropriate manner (Anderson & Pempek, 2005) [4]. Similar studies were rarely conducted in India (Kumar, 2016; Khandai & Agrawal, 2012) [5]. But studies on serial contents, particularly about those in regional languages, and their particular impact on the mannerism, words used (Sanju & Shaji, 2016) and other behavioural aspects of children are hardly conducted here.

Hence, the present study is expected to address this research gap on the impact of television serials on middle childhood children [6].

2.1. Research Objective

- To study the role and influence of television content on society, particularly Middle children.
- To study the changes in character of middle childhood children who regularly watch popular family serials on television.

2.2. Key Research Questions

- What is the narrative structure of popular family serials shown on television?
- What kinds of characters are getting prominent/highlighted/repeated/ glorified in popular family serials showing on television?
- What is the nature of the dialogue presented in popular family serials shown on television?
- What kind of visuals is getting glorified in popular family serials showing on television?

3. Research Design

Research tool and why: As we are studying the quality of content in serials and its impacts on middle childhood children, we need separate tools for both. In order to look into the content of serials, the textual analysis method is suitable. It can help to scrutinize the narrative structure, characters, dialogues and visual elements of the content. To study the impact on viewers, it is better to employ audience reception techniques. Through focus group discussions and personal interviews, we can collect information on the way viewers respond to the serial contents and their interpretations of the same.

Sample Size: In order to study the serial content, we are selecting 'Manimuthu' (Malayalam) screening in Mazhavil Manorama and selected (Hindi) screening in national level or regional languages as samples. To study its impacts on middle childhood, we can take a total of fifty children in the age group of 6–12 years. They will be interviewed personally. Similarly, fifty adults, who are a mix of teachers or



mothers of middle childhood children, will be used for focus group discussions. It will make sure that all those respondents to personnel interviews are regular viewers of the same serial. The same condition will not be mandatory for those in the group discussions, but they need to be familiar with the particular serial. Both males and females will be included in both types of samples.

Sample Strategy: Ten children and ten adults each can be selected from one tehsil of Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthittah, Ernakulam, Malappuram and Kannur districts to ensure regional representation. Considering their age, children are better suited to be interviewed in residential neighbourhoods. The adults' discussion can also be conducted in similar circumstances. The contact details of all respondents will be saved for future clarifications.

Ethics: Expected risks are related to the age of the base sample and understanding their language. The best strategy is to meet them in their comfort zone and in the presence of their close ones. The study may help establish binding and receptive regulations on inappropriate serial contents.

Limitations of the Study: The study does not take any other language than Malayalam and Hindi, as it will be difficult to do content analysis. The study does not consider gender in particular.

Conclusion

Given that children are highly impressionable, it is evident that exposure to television and movies poses a substantial risk of adverse effects. Children grow and develop through their environment and with the increase in accessibility to entertainment they have the possibility to observe inappropriate content. Such content can lead to normalization and conditioning of undesirable behaviour, which could later transpire into their lives. This is particularly pertinent for children from low socio-economic backgrounds, who may already face challenging living conditions that could push them toward unethical and illegal means to fulfil their material needs. The glorification of criminal behaviour in media, such as movies, can lead children to idealize and seek to emulate these actions, perceiving them

as pathways to a glamorous and fulfilling life. They may visualize the possibilities of material content through the actions done in movies and not just that, they have high tendencies to mimic behaviours such as actions and even the language used by the actors. This could lead to an increase in undesirable behaviour, potentially fostering criminal tendencies. Consequently, there is a heightened necessity for attention and focus on filtering the content presented by television and movies to mitigate these detrimental effects. Appropriate measures should be taken from the side of Government and Child Right Commission to monitor the script, dialogue and screenplay. All most all the parents and caretakers expressed their concerns regarding the messages spread by the films and TV serials. As said by the Social Learning theory by the Bandura (1977) showed that children imitate each other because they observe the actions of others and copy them. When asked about why individuals use drugs these students mostly gave similar answers such as: for reducing stress, to move away from certain issues, for concentration, focus, etc. These responses are quite interesting as it was evident that they came to such conclusions on the basics of things that they have heard or seen. With further conversations, I understood that a lot of them came to such an understanding through the influence of media. It has to be understood that media includes movies, series, shows, social media and the influencers in those platforms and even celebrities. But what fascinated me the most was this particular question a young student had asked me. His question was quite simple and straightforward. He asked "If celebrities and influencers can be open about the use of drugs then why can't we also?". To this I was baffled myself. I somehow managed to answer his question but this later made me think. He was right in his ways of his question, why do we not talk about these influencers and celebrities who have used drugs openly in a larger case? Media through their years have covered such incidents and stories about celebrities and their inappropriate relations with drugs but at the end of the day it gets forgotten. Forgotten by everyone but not our young generation. They observe, learn and



imitate. They are our future and their actions will impact the nation and its destiny. Media has opened up new gateways to entertainment, but what about their influence on the youth? For many years movies have proceeded to glorify the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Glorification can be a vile and harmful representation of evil of the world. Movies these days depict heroes drinking and smoking as an act of heroism. They place a seed of curiosity, motive and idea on the minds of their viewers. Depiction of these heroes resorting to alcohol due to a heartbreak and loss. All of these are an inappropriate representation of the harmful effects of drugs. An adult viewing these would have the knowledge and morals to understand the glorification but it's not the case for the youth. They admire, praise and worship these heroes. A Lot of them base their whole personality on them and even after knowing this why continue on? Use of drugs is no simple matter, it destroys lives, families and everything around it. We should be educating our youth on their harmful effect and not their glory.

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