

GLOBALISATION AND MENTAL HEALTH : IMPACT OF CARTOONS ON CHILDREN

Dr. Shruthi.T .Associate Professor,Department of English.

Government First Grade College Peenya Bengaluru-560058 ,Karnataka ,India

shruthitalneri@gmail.com

Abstract: Globalization today is a fact of life. It can be viewed as a global movement characterized by an increase in the movement of individual information, commodities, and money, leading to development along with it. It has resulted in faster, greater technological advancement with rapid and more efficient means of travel, leading to a cross-cultural amalgamation and better knowledge in various areas, including health in general and mental health in particular.

"Once upon a time"—this was the catchphrase of our generations, the start to all the stories we heard growing up; stories told and retold by our grandparents and parents. There was a time when on Sundays people sat in front of the TV, just to relish the epic serials like Ramayana and Mahabharata, elders and children alike. But in the 21st century, we rarely hear that phrase or see that scene, cartoons having conquered the place of these stories. Gradually escaping everyone's notice the place was taken by Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse. Children, who learnt their first moral lessons and imbibed the cultural significance of their motherland, slowly became the consumers of western media.

Key Words: Cartoons, entertainment, behaviour, cartoon characters, TV addiction, mental health

Times changed in India; there was a great revolution that took place in the field of television and entertainment industry. From a single channel covering all media to hundreds of media for just one purpose, we evolved. The liberalization era started; many channels came into existence, but among them, the one which encroached on a major scale were the cartoon channels.

Here, the objective of this paper is to determine the effects cartoons have on behavioural changes among children and discuss if the violence, dangerous tricks, and attitude among the peer group are triggered by cartoons? Or if it is parenting the main reason that is impacting the behaviour and development of the children. The main focus of this research is the effect on the cartoon series that are televised regularly

The term "cartoon" originated in the Middle Ages when it was referred to as a preparatory drawing for a piece of art. It was in the 19th century that the cartoons became humorous illustrations in magazines and newspapers, and from the 20th century forward, cartoons have been referred to as comic strips and animated films. With the rise of television, different channels started airing cartoons.. Cartoons are mostly based on fantasized stories aimed at creating an imaginative world in the viewer's mind. From being used as a form of protest against an authority to entertainment to people of all ages, cartoons have come a long way.

Cartoons are of different genres, i.e., action, comedy, educational, etc. And their main target audience are children and teenagers. The basic purpose that cartoons serve is to provide entertainment and education on certain topics of life meanwhile teaching valuable life lessons and morales. But are the cartoons of today fulfilling their role as they should? Are they teaching the things they should or conveying the wrong things.

But, on research and analysis, much to our dismay, such does not seem to be the case. This research covers the effect of cartoons being televised in today's world, the purpose of such shows, and finally, their impact on children's behaviour.

Growing up we all had role models and most probably our first role models are some character seen in the television or read about in a book. Today, every child is trying to live up to the character they are inspired by and pushing themselves to be like them in every way and it is imperative that these .Noticing any child , we can observe that the child wakes up in the morning wearing Disney character pajamas, their bedsheets, bedspreads, and everything will be of a cartoon character. These cartoon characters ae integrated into the child's life in one or the other way.

But when it comes to the matter of behaviour of these children you notice a pattern. Children of age group 3 and above are heavily influenced emotionally and mentally influenced by these cartoon character. They try to follow their actions and imbibe themselves in the essence of these characters, usually believing whatever shown on a cartoon is true and right.

For example, Doreamon is a famous cartoon where Nobitha has a friend called Doreamon with gadget which fulfills all his wishes. Stating my personal experience, watching this cartoon, my 7-year-old daughter started to speak in Nobita's classic slow drawl and became so lazy that she started to ask me, "Amma, don't we get any gadgets in the market that can help me out in doing my homework?"

This kind of cartoon influences the children more and more in a negative way sometimes even giving them the wrong message. Chotabheem, Shiva and Krish(roll no. 21)— are some of the characters fighting with the evil character with the help of their magical powers. While the message might be right i.e fighting fo the cause of evil the visuals and the way of punishing seems to gore and harsh. Another horrifying things that we observe is that these characters make fun of their fellow friends, sometimes of their appearance, sometimes because of their actions, usually bulling the ones who are depicted as weak ,one such cartoon where this is seen is the favourite Motu Patlu. Some of these cartoons teach the children to differentiate and judge their own friends based on their appearance while actually they should be promoting equality. These kinds of attitudes of their lead characters definitely affect the children ,affecting their mouldable minds in the wrong way. As they are in the age where they don't have the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, this might have a negative impact. I am not here stating that violence was not present in the older cartoons, but now the violence is more vivid, a perfect example being "BATMAN BEYOND,' where a villain is strangled with a pole until he goes

lifeless. How will this affect the mind of a 5 year old? Wont it think that while its hero does it, it is right for him to do it as well?

The effect of violence on children's behavior: There are consequences for children who watch all kinds of cartoons, from fantasies to the more realistic ones. They affect them in some cases, teaching antisocial behaviour or reinforcing aggression. Pro-social activities in cartoons usually have very defined character groups. The good and bad guys who fight to either save or destroy the world. The evil characters want to destroy the world, and they are generally not very nice to people, while the heroes are there to save the world and, at the same time, to be kind and helpful to others.

According to psychologists, violence among young children is more than older teenagers in a household. Researchers found that media aimed at children as young as seven, which included a number of cartoons, had the highest level of violence and antisocial activities henceforth proving that it is evident that cartoons have a high chance of having a bad effect on the development of a child's behaviour and mentality. Cartoons serve as a good medium for the education of a child, but the bad effects outweigh the good ones.

Following are the effects that are perceived to occur on children who watch cartoons:

Imitation of Cartoons by Children: Children who watch a lot of cartoons on TV tend to show the same behaviour in their daily lives. This problem is very serious, as the child imitating the action he sees in cartoons, could harm others as well as himself. The reason is that mostly the imitation is done of violent scenes in cartoons in which it is done for justice and a child tends to repeat it. Research conducted by the American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) shows that children who watch realistic and frequently repeated violent shows are more likely to repeat that behaviour in their own lives [1]. The account of the following parent shows such a type of behaviour found in their child. "There was a time when one of my sons began to play pranks on his little brother quite frequently, and I failed to understand the reason behind this sudden change in his behaviour. One day, however, I found him watching 'The Cramp Twins' and understood the reason for all this bullying." Hassan also said that he has become conscious of the cartoons that his sons watch since that time. 1 (Alia Bibi & Roshan Zehra, 2012) showing that imitations of cartoons can sometimes even lead to serious and dire consequences.

Apart from this, there are also some positive effects. By watching educational cartoons and films, children learn so many things. Infants and toddlers also start learning different words, objects, and their meanings. They can improve overall cognitive knowledge and vocabulary. Children learn to interact in various languages with the help of TV media. Cartoons are a good source of education and knowledge, helping children learn the values of this world.

But outweighing these advantages, these days cartoons tend to show a lot of violence and obscenity. That is the main reason why children should be monitored while they are watching their favourite cartoon shows.

Organizations like the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) put ratings on cartoon shows and movies in order to inform the viewer of the content of their material. Ratings like G, PG, and PG-13 are prescribed by the MPAA, which regulates the content of the film. Parents should use these ratings in order to determine the type of content that their children are watching. In light of the above discussion, it is evident that children should be regulated by their parents for what they watch, reason being that the children are at the learning phase of their lives, and much cannot be expected from them except them picking up the knowledge given by the media. It is thereby the responsibility of the parents to regulate the kind of cartoon programs their children watch, as it has great effects on their whole lives.

The cartoons should be made with a sense of responsibility by the makers. They should have a definite & constructive purpose behind them. The creators of these shows should know what audience they are targeting and try to make them age relevant and avoid unnecessary scenes. Cartoons should portray the culture and the norms of the society in which they are being displayed.

Conclusion: Which is right and which is wrong-these are things which have to be taught to children which usually decide their future actions and decisions. The responsibility of the parents is more in convincing children what to watch and what not to watch. Sometimes parents themselves become responsible for the TV addiction of their children; just to do their work, they engage children in watching TV. But they should be careful about the things their children are watching. Nowadays there are so many options to control the children from watching unwanted cartoons. They should also spend more time with children. Building reading habits among the children is one of the most important things a parent can do. Technically they can also rate the cartoon programs. This facility is available in the USA and the UK. They can block the channels that they feel are not good for children, putting a timetable to watch TV along with book reading. There are many ways in which a parent can make his/her child grow as a good citizen, as physical and mental health are more important for a good citizen. Cartoons have been around for a long time, and the effect that they have on children's behaviour is very imminent. It's the responsibility of parents that they should gift a good citizen to this world.

- References**
1. (Alia Bibi & Roshan Zehra, 2012) <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-128111-Effects-of-cartoons-onchildren%E2%80%99s-psychology-&-behaviour-patterns>
 2. http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-11-18/mumbai/30414655_1_cartoon-character-mezzanine-floor-simran
 3. <http://www.tv.com/news/boy-dies-after-friend>

Copyright & License:

© Authors retain the copyright of this article. This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), permitting unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.