

***Television Violence and the propensity for criminal behavior among adolescents in Higher Secondary Schools in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh***

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**Abstract:**

The youth today especially the adolescents who are considered the future of any country consist of more than one fourth of the world's population during the phases of the development of humans and there is a noticeable problem of criminal behavior and its propensity among this group of people. There are many factors that play an important role in increasing this behavior which includes gender, illiteracy and unemployment among parents, the place of residing i.e urban or slums area, to what extent they are exposed to violence within the family and many others. The paper focuses on the effect of violence on television and propensity for criminal behavior and how it can be subject to gender of the adolescents. The study reveals that gender of the adolescent plays a vital role in their criminal propensity and the violence that they see on television or movies have a negative influence on them.

Keywords: Violence on television, Adolescents, Criminal Propensity, Gender

Introduction:

**“You are the architect of your life”- Dr B.R. Ambedkar**

Chhattisgarh, a forest zone and known for its flora and fauna, was declared as a separate state in November, 2000, thereby, giving in to a long desired case for being a state by its people. The state is blessed with rich natural resources such as forests, minerals and water. This in addition to the geographically favorable location of the state along with a promising environment for industrial growth attracted huge cash flow initially. It soon emerged as the fastest growing state with a 10% growth rate per annum. So from 2005 to 2015, the poverty rate cut from 70% to 37% which brought 7 million people out of the grip of poverty. The MPI for Chhattisgarh was more than halved. However this growth did not reach the poorest sectors though. There are a few economically better off districts in the state but one fifth of the population lives in extreme poverty as per the data provided by Indicus. Raipur, Korba, Durg and Bilaspur are the districts which lead the economical development. This problem of poverty has largely affected the youth in the state. Not everyone can afford education in a private school. So in fact there are youth who do not get the opportunity for proper education as they are expected to earn a living in order to feed the many mouths at their abode.

Without proper education the adolescence are unable to identify the difference between real life and reel life so what they often see on television is considered as reality for many youths who do

not understand this difference. We know that the process of education begins at birth. A mother, considered as the first teacher of the child teaches the newborn how to lactate on her. It is this process of learning which increases and results in acquiring education which in turn is a lifelong process. The entire life of human beings revolves around gaining knowledge thus making humans a cut above animals however without proper education or the opportunities to gain knowledge this particular development is deprived. It has been observed that there are series of media reports of inhibited cases of violence and criminal behavior among youths in the higher secondary schools in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. These include cult clashes, gangs of particular religions. They have left many innocent students and workers dead or seriously wounded. There is evidence which shows increase of robbery, kidnapping assault on women, assassination among adolescence in these institutions etc. The newspapers have multiple examples of these incidence. The degree of violence among students constitutes a major problem that makes the students fearful of school because of this kind of harassment that they experience from the fellow students. Due to this ongoing problem the productivity of teachers and students performance and concentration is also affected. This problem is becoming a normal part of academic experience which students in higher secondary schools are facing and it is observed that students either join the violent groups or oppose them and face their wrath.

**Adolescence:** the word is derived from the Latin word ‘Adolescere’ which means simply to grow up. It’s a period for a child who is in the transitional phase of their development, generally occurring during the change from puberty to legal adulthood. This period is closely associated with the teenage years. The child undergoes several changes physically and emotionally during this stage of development.

### **Violence on television:**

Violence can be defined as an act which uses physical power to cause damage or harm to another individual. Violence can be of different types like Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Psychological or verbal etc. It is important to understand. The root cause of this violence in human beings could be due to various reasons:-

1. It could have its inception at home, where the child often witnesses a family member behaving in a violent manner.
2. It could be a result of someone directly abusing the individual or the individual is compelled to indulge in a sexual activity against his/her wills.
3. It could be a result of someone trying to make someone feel low.
4. It could be the result of someone trying to threaten.

These causes often lead to a child displaying violent behavior or act. These acts are also influenced by extraneous factors such as the friend circle, the upbringing, and media plays a

crucial role in the violent behavior of a child. For instance, a child who watches movies involving violent acts or behavior may try to imitate it in real life. Education plays an important role in a human's life. An educated person will know the difference. He will be able to understand the difference between right and wrong on the country; an uneducated man will consider the violence shown through media as reality and be highly influenced by their acts. These acts vary from substance abuse to murder. Hence media plays a significant role on the minds of adolescents which often drift them away from their target. Movies made in Hollywood and Bollywood have largely contributed to this effect. Movies which flaunt the lavish lifestyles of gangsters and Communists motivate the youth to commit crimes. Movies like D Company, Godman, Gangster and many others have shown the dark side of crime. The thirst for power and the lust for money often pushes these youth into the dungeons of crime and the quicksand of the crime world which they do not realize is a one way process where there is no turning back.

### **Criminal propensity:**

'Propensity' is a habit of an individual to carry on self or behave in a specific way. We all have our propensities that are things we usually do for instance, lions have a propensity to roar, and a cuckoo has a propensity to lay its eggs in a crow's nest. While humans have a propensity to enjoy various pleasures in life.

In the year 1990, two famous criminologists named Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi worked on an important theory which later culminated to 'A General theory of Crime' which defined crime as a deed of coercion or fraud initiated in search of vested interest. They disagreed with the fact that all crimes that are conducted are an amalgamation of criminal options and little self control. These two criminologists proposed that a child's degree of self control is usually affected by the upbringing ways of the parent, equalizes by the time the child turns 8. Thus they recognized that the upbringing of a child played an important role in the life of an individual. It is this way of parenting skills which laid the foundation stone of whether the child would commit crimes in future or not. Children who are brought up in a healthy environment at home, while nurturing values and love and care along with trust are less prone to commit crimes than a child who is subjected to neglect and abuse. Their theories were criticized widely however were quite popular among American Criminologists.

Another theory to explain criminal propensity is the SAT (Situation Action Theory). It is a general theory that tries to understand the crime committed as its causes. It was developed in order to understand the relation between the individuals who have committed the crime and the influence of the background or environment that the individual was in and the cause or reason the crime was committed.

The basic ideas of such theories were that a person's integrity and strength of mind are the main factors that dominate his or her crime propensity. An individual with strong integrity and

strength of mind will tend to avoid or indulge in an act of crime than someone who has less self constraint when exposed to unlawful activities.

Researchers have been working tirelessly to identify the relationship between aggression and Criminal propensity in teenagers. They have put forth some important reasons and aspects. They are: -

1. **Devastating Incident:** - An incident like death of close relative, frequent fights at home, parental separation can often result in aggression and can further lead to an act of crime.
2. **Violation of one's emotions or trust:** - Teenagers are often subjected to abuse which could be verbally or physically. This violation or abuse is generally done by someone they know and are often silenced when they try to speak out. This leads to buildup anger and often comes out in the form of aggressive behavior.
3. **Psychological problems:** - Teenagers who suffer from various psychological problems often display aggressive behavior.
4. **Therapeutic illness:** - In many cases, a medical problem triggers aggression in teenagers. These trigger points can be diagnosed by proper treatment and can be cured.
5. **Drugs and Substance abuse:** - Many teenagers often get addicted to habits like consuming alcohol or drugs these habits often start as a show-off and eventually the teenager gets addicted. Withdrawal from these substances often leads to aggressive behavior.
6. **Pressure from friends and inferiority complex** – Teenagers often get involved in acts of crime and exhibit aggressive behavior under the influence of their friends. This pressure also culminates in inferiority complex.

### *Review of Related literature*

- **Studies related to Television Violence**
- ❖ **Pal, S. (2018)** in her research examined the case of a woman who was violated and murdered in 2017. She highlighted the way the media projected the deceased as the culprit and the criminal as the victim. This negative coverage of the media changed the outlook on the masses forwards this case and the deceased was projected as a promiscuous woman. The media constantly focused on her background of being separated thus tarnishing her image further instead of sympathizing with her. The researcher has further highlighted how these kinds of crimes are covered in a negative way by the media in order to gain TRP's and their own profits.
- ❖ **Condry, J. (1989)** in his book 'The Psychology of Television' points towards the consequences of inhumanity shown in TV shows and commercial. The author further sheds light on the root causes of such behavior.

- ❖ **Kirsh, S.** in his book ‘Children, Adolescents and Media Violence: A critical look at the Research (2006) discusses the influence of brutality in media and its footprints on the minds of adolescents. During the course of the book, the author focuses on the various effects on adolescents by dividing them in two parts namely hostile behavior other attributes related to hostile behavior, and its potential hazards on adolescents.
- ❖ **Kirsh, S. (2006)** studied the impact of violent cartoon shows on adolescents. His research estimated that violent shows often lead to aggressive behavior among adolescents. He suggests that parents should keep an eye on their wards and restrict the viewership of such violent cartoon shows.
- ❖ **Gentle, D.A. (2003)** in his book “Advances in applied Development psychology. Media, violence and children” gives comprehensive and apprized information of the impact of savagery in media. The author has presented his views in three parts. Firstly, it showcases the different analysis of brutality in the communication industry. Secondly, the book is a source of vast information to sophomores in multiple branches of education and lastly, the author suggests the need for investigation in time to come.
- **Studied relevant to Criminal Propensity:**
  - ❖ **Shastri, P. (2010)** reviewed that the Indian Government Policies have neglected the mental health issues in adolescents and it has remained dormant in implementation programs for them. This neglect has culminated in the rise of criminal behavior among the adolescents in India.
  - ❖ **Raval, H. and Becker, S. (2011)** studied a group of juveniles who were lodged waiting for their cases to be heard in the court of law and how anger played the role of catalyst in bringing out the criminal behavior in them. They also studied the role of a family and its ways of ventilating their outrage. They concluded that in many cases adolescent boys imitate the behavior of the other male members in the family. Hence the patterns of ventilating the fury are also copied which often gets these adolescent boys in trouble whereby the number of girls was comparatively less.
  - ❖ **Jain, R.B, Sharma A.K., Gupta, M. (2013),** studied the level of self consciousness among rural adolescents and their tendency towards criminal behavior. Their study revealed that the rural girls are more aware of their physical changes than the rural boys. This level of ignorance is often misled by the orthodox beliefs of the people and results in various forms of criminal acts.
  - ❖ **Singhal, V. (2014)** highlighted the increase in the rate of crime associated to culture whereby the adolescent girls are the target of heinous acts under the name of ‘honor

killings'. The study concluded that adolescent girls who are daughters, sisters, wives are killed in the name of ethics. The male members of the family are usually the ones who commit these crimes citing reasons that the girl has compromised the reputation of the family. Such crimes often go untold and the offenders get away easily with it.

- ❖ **Ismail, S., Shajahan.A, Ras, T.S.** (2015) conducted a research to identify the importance of sex education among adolescents in India. They concluded that if programs are implemented at the right time, the criminal behavior towards sex related issues among adolescents could lower down and bring about a positive attitude towards their sexual health.
- ❖ **Chaturvedi, S., Gupta, P. and Shah, D.** (2015) examined the susceptibility among adolescents and this lack of protection often makes them vulnerable to various forms of problems and abuse and which further leads to culmination of aggressive behavior and criminal propensity.

**Methodology:** The present study is a survey which was conducted on a total 800 subjects where 400 boys and 400 girls were selected from various higher secondary schools from Raipur district in Chhattisgarh.

**The tools used for the research are:**

Criminal Propensity Scale by Arjun Singh and Dr.Neelam Sharma.

**Description of the test:** The scale consists of 50 statements and each statement is followed by 5 options i.e. always, often, sometimes, rarely and never.

**Scoring table**

Type of item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Positive	5	4	3	2	1
Negative	1	2	3	4	5

**Reliability and validity of the test:**

The reliability of the test was tested by using the Cronbach's alpha method. Opinions of different experts from different fields were taken to check the validity of the test.

**Objective**

*To study the effect of Violent Television programs on the Criminal Propensity with regards to gender*

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There exists no significant difference of the effect of Violent Television Programs and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Hypothesis H<sub>01</sub>:** *There exists no significant difference of the effect of Violent Television Programs and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.*

*Table 1.1: Statistical differentials showing effect of Violent Television Programms and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.*

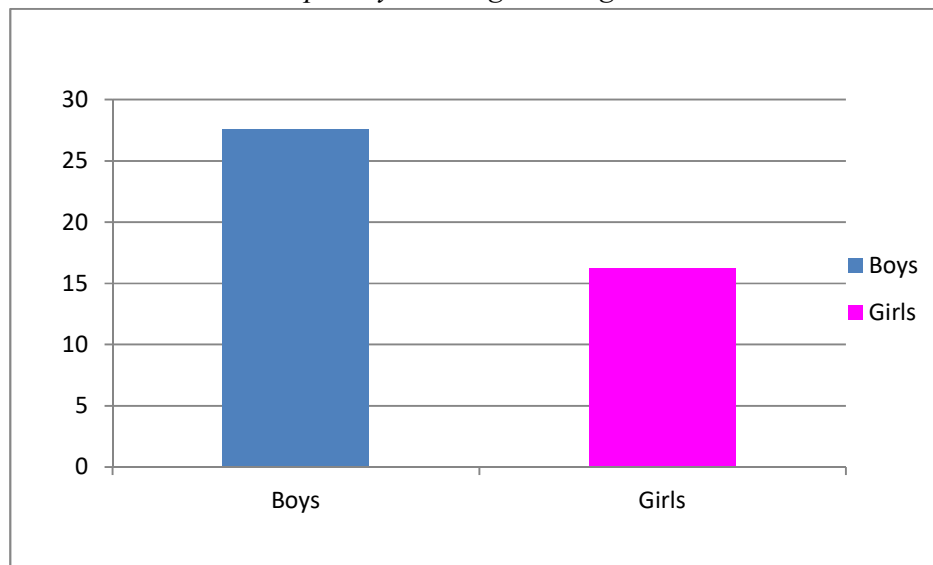
SR.No	Category	No. of Students	Mean	S.D	df	t-value
1	Boys	400	470.48	27.55	798	86.34
2	Girls	400	332.54	16.18		

Significance level =  $P < 0.05$

Standard error of difference = 1.597

The table indicates that the mean and S.D of Boys were 470.48 and 27.55 and that of Girls is 332.54 and 16.18 respectively. The t- value obtained was 86.34 (df = 798) .Thus, it is significant at 0.5 level. It indicates that our proposed hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that there exists significant difference of the effect of Violent Television Programs and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.

*Chart 1.2: Differentials showing effect of Violent Television Programms and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.*



The chart 1.3 indicates that S.D of Boys was 27.55 and that of Girls is 16.18 respectively. The t-value obtained was 86.34 (df = 798) .Thus, it is significant at 0.5 level. It indicates that our proposed hypothesis is rejected.

**It can be concluded that there exists significant difference of the effect of Violent Television Programs and Criminal Propensity with regards to gender.**

#### **Conclusion:**

The study indicates that there exist a significant relationship between the violent television content that the youths watch and the tendency of these youths to apply this violence in their everyday life .This also suggest that boys are more prone to these violent than the girls . Gaming programs such as Pubg, Free fire which are often played by boys instigate aggressive feelings and a thought of killing people gives them intense happiness. These kind of games which are played by the today's generation often lead to criminal behaviour .This is in agreement with the Bandura's social learning theory which states that people often learn aggressive behavior from television and then go out and try to reproduce them.This can also be referred to as the imitation or modelling theory of media violence. The consequences of these acts impact negatively on the learning process and the academic performance of these people who commit such crimes. The adolescents often end up as victims of violence and experience problems such as anxiety, depression, property destructions and in rare cases loss of life .It can be reasonably concluded that violence that is depicted on television is unhealthy and requires immediate attention of parents. The authorities in school should be monitored by the producers



on television and content writers and government agencies .An immediate action is needed to free these youth crime the clutches of crime and violence for a better tomorrow.

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