Media, Violence and Women

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Abstract: Media display more of opinions and sketchy perspectives than actually reporting of simple and plain facts. It is interesting to see how the chain of influence and thought is created in our world of today. In the present age, technology is considered as a great asset which is helping different avenues of life to progress. Media and ICT have made the world a really small place. Everything is accessible at the touch of a button. It becomes important to then understand that what all being made available and is opening avenues with this one touch. Sadly it is also paving way for violence. Research Paper is based on secondary sources.

Key Word: Media and ICT, Violence, Women, Social Networking, Education

Webster's dictionary defines violence as "an exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse (as in warfare effecting illegal entry into a house); an instance of violent treatment or procedure; injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation; intense, turbulent, or furious and often destructive action or force; vehement feeling or expression". As per further understanding of this definition, physical force is usually infringed by those who are comparatively stronger upon those who are weak. By laws of nature and biology, the physical design of women is such that they are physically weaker than men, which makes them the victims to violence.

As said by scholars years ago, 'the mind is a powerful thing- it can create and destroy'. Bu the important question that we need to ask ourselves is, 'What creates the mind? 'The behaviour and attitude of individuals is a mirror reflection of what is constructed in their minds, the formation of which begins from childhood. The logic is really not that difficult to understand. Just like a child hears her/his parents speak and acquire the language, so too the behaviour is also learnt. Considering the amount hours a child invests with television now a day, it would not be wrong to say that most of the learning for a child takes place through media. In fact, television is not the only medium of ICT that young ones have. They are equipped and

skilled with computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones and the latest gadget available in the market with the world full of information in it- which may or may not be censored.

It is at this age that they learn at the fastest pace. It becomes important here as to ensure what they are learning through media. Studies done by Albert Bandura and his colleagues demonstrated that viewing aggression by cartoon characters produces more aggressive behaviour than viewing live or filmed aggressive behaviour by adults. So, aggression and violence is already triggered. Additionally, they demonstrated that having children to view pro-social behaviour can reduce displays of aggressive behaviour. But the question is that is our social media able to broadcast/publish any such programme or event where pro-social behaviour could be inculcated in the children. This is one aspect. Another logic was brought forth by Gerbner and Gross (1976), in their Cultivation Theory. This theory proposed that high level of viewing television tends to make the viewer's believe that what they see is real and true, particularly seen in children. Moreover, those exposed to constant violence fall prey to the Mean World Syndrome. As per their theory the cultivation of the behaviour is as per what exists in the world.

The more violence they see the more real it is to them, be it children or adults. The ones who are affected the most are those who are in their adolescences. The confusion of being a child or adult and rejection and negation that they get from the adult generation, makes them enter a world of their own. At such a stage, they find solace in social media, which is the gateway to the learning of violence. Debates like these remain groundless without statistics. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCBR) dated July, 2014 about 93 women are being raped in our country every day. Quoting an article from Times of India dated July 1, 2014, "The most horrifying fact is that majority of the offenders are known to the victims. NCRB statistics shows that in 94% cases the offender was known to victims, which includes neighbours, other known persons, relatives and even parents." PRS Legislative Research shows that the total number of rape cases in the year 2006 was 18,682 whereas in the year 2011 it reached 23,582. (Source NCRB). only a statistical glimpse of rape cases have been shown; cases like domestic violence, child abuse, dowry effects, marital rapes, etc. are yet to be counted. This is the terrible sad state of affairs that our nation is going through. American Psychological Association 2005, states that "there appears to evidence that exposure to violent media increases feelings of hostility, thoughts about aggression, suspicions about the motives of others, and demonstrates violence as a method to deal with potential conflict situations."

There is no doubt about the projection of violence in the social media today- be it cartoons, video games, movies, serials and soaps, advertisements, etc. This social media has become one of the strongest agents of socialization. Socialization plays a major role, and society does its due for the same. Every individual, be it a child, teenager, young adult, parent or neighbour, relative or colleague are all a part of the society and undergo the learning processes that the society has to offer to them. Therefore, unintentionally and unknowingly, a lot of manipulated destructive knowledge has been induced into their minds without their knowledge. This becomes a part of their thinking, a part of their life. Rather, one could say that such knowledge becomes true reality for them as well as a way of life. This created notion is not only then prevalent in their cognition but also their personality and behaviour leading to passing on of the same

created and intended knowledge into the minds of the next generation. Michael Apple, a neo-Marxist talks about how this mental control of violence in the mind turns into models of hegemony created by the adults/media. This ideology seeps into the minds of the people and confirms the position of those who are hegemonies in the most natural of ways, like bare truth itself. The projection of women as vulnerable and oppressed becomes white truth in the eyes of the oppressors and time and again violence is brutally stabbed on the women. This leads us to another important track. We need to see and understand how women are projected in the media.

- News channels buzz with rape cases 24x7
- Violence victims are not women alone but also girls, some even new born
- Soaps and serials where women as daughters or daughter in laws are shown as meek characters, who are exploited and they do not do anything about it
- Movies and ads where the male macho character runs around to save the helpless female characters "who always land in trouble"
- Objectifying women's physical characteristics in the sale of consumerist products,

Social networking sites like Facebook, twitter, etc., YouTube, open source videos, other websites and homepages that gives one access to any information. The ocean of content that is out available is unimaginable. This confirms the roles of individuals and people's actions. The actions also lead to consequences, but yet once again, unfortunately those consequences are not rationally justifiable. The actions or consequences that reflect are possibly seen in the following ways:

- an acceptance to being victims of violence and not standing up for justice
- a legitimation to perpetuate violence because resistance is not made
- a myth of mediocre reasons – i.e. blaming it on western culture, working hours of women and clothes that women wear
- a justification to illogical provocation- i.e. the oppressor saying that it was an accident, in the name of family honour, violation of parampara and sanskriti.

These reasons would go on but the violence does not end. Although people are able to understand the trap of social media in relation violence against women, the fight is yet to go a long way. Some companies like Havell, a few organisations/causes like Mumbai for Women and individuals have projected another face to the women folk. Even nations Thailand have special advertisements that demand the viewers' attention to social causes to bring about a change in the perspective and outlook of the people. Media is a very powerful tool which may be used for the education of the masses. It becomes the responsibility of every stakeholder from the government to people to take ownership of what is being available on media to the young; for if this generation becomes destructive, then we were the agents and perpetuators to this destruction. Edward De Bono had said, "The mind can only see what it is prepared to see." It is now the responsibility of an entire generation in our nation to prepare something worthwhile to see.

The first group of women to act was the suffragists who fought beginning in the mid-19th century to gain rights for women, one of the largest being the right to vote. After 72 years, they succeeded in gaining the right for women to vote in 1920, after which time their efforts largely subsided. In the 1960s, as more women were entering the workforce and embarking on careers outside of the home— another perceived attempt at taking power and positions previously held by men—led to a second wave of women activists. This wave was motivated by the sexual exploitation of women in the workplace, as well as inequality in pay (which continues to this day). This movement also sought to prevent violence against women. The efforts of these women and this movement have gone in ebbs and flows for many reasons, ranging

from women not thinking they need to support each other, to national headlines of abuse of women. In 1994, Sen. Joseph R. Biden along with Rep. Louise M. Slaughter sponsored the Violence against Women Act (VAWA). The act was an initiative motivated by the Anita Hill hearings. This act has been up for renewal many times since its enactment. It has always had bi-partisan support, this year however, with the political climate what it is, it seems to be missing the same kind of support. Our society is clearly in a critical state of dysfunction, as evidenced by the me too and the #why I didn't report movements and those in power blaming the victims. The victim cannot be made to feel as if it is her or his fault. In our current system, prosecutors are forced to evaluate whether a sexual assault case stood a chance of ending with a defendant being held accountable. Sadly, the victim's credibility and stability are keys to whether a case should move forward. The Victims Assistance Unit often has to work with the victim, before, during, and after the trial because, in reality, the victim is victimized a second time by the adversarial process and defense counsel.

Conclusion: We have to decide the victims should be taken care of, not reoffended. Those who prey on women, especially men, wielding some sort of power over them, whether size, money, or prestige, must be held accountable and seen as the wrongdoer. The reality is that about two out of three sexual assaults go unreported. Education acts as a powerful tool in empowering women and enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The government of India has implemented various Programmes, Policies and Schemes for women empowerment from time to time.

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