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# Media- A Double Edged Sword

[1]Dr. Meera Deshmukh, [2]Archana Shaha, Monali Kohinkar

[1,2] TMV's Lokmanya Tilak Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pune
tmvpharmacy2019@gmail.com

**Abstract**
Media is the best way of communication between individuals as well as groups. Nowadays the channels for communication are endless. It begins from communication of newspaper to instant satellite communication. Entry of internet into the picture changed the scene drastically. Media influences the entire mankind irrespective of age, social status and gender. All the medias especially internet, television have advantages as well as disadvantages. They can be termed as 'double-edged sword'. All the modes of communication have the potential to develop positive and negative effects on human. The outcomes may be in the form of health problems (physical as well as mental), behavioral violence, loneliness, depression, lack of self worth, loss of confidence, development of negative attitude and beliefs and many more. Certain category of group of people groups such as children, financially backward population, sick people, elderly people are the immediate victims of negative effects of media. By educating and creating awareness amongst these groups regarding handling of the media will help them to be part of a civilized society. In this review we discuss how media especially visual and social Medias act as double edged sword on children of the society.
***Key words:*** *Benefits of media, Social media, children*

## Introduction

Vulnerable groups have to be protected from various kinds of abuse they come across. The UN member states have taken a step to protect vulnerable population across the world, i.e., a Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UNESCO, 2005). This promises the adequate protection to the vulnerable groups by the development and application of medical, technological and scientific knowledge **[30]**.

Nowadays media plays an important role in molding the society. Irrespective of age, gender all are one way or other bound with at least any one type of media. The endless communication media include news paper, television, telephone, mobile phone, internet, social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Skype, Snapchat and many more. The user number has hiked from half a million in the year 2000 to 4 billion in the year 2017 **[12]**. All the medias have advantages as well as disadvantages, they are like 'double-edged sword' **[26]**. Being a good friend of media and wise utilization of it, one can achieve many targets, but being an addict to media may be a dangerous situation that may include suicidal attempt, violence, depression etc **[33]**. Media can influence the vulnerable population like, children, sick people, economically backward people, aged people etc. Visual media is the one that influence everybody than any other media. The viewer can imagine and understand the visuals in the media better way than by reading. Hence a visual media plays a critical role in molding a generation. In the current scenario social networking is accelerating towards its sky. To explore the maximum out of it, our generation runs a step ahead with the media – especially social media networking **[14].** Vulnerable groups means the group of people/ population who are at risk, which may include children, aged people, media addicted youth, sick people, financially backward people, women etc.

The certain Advantages of the media are,

(i) Internet gives the updated news across the world without any delay
(ii) In the field of education, students can easily understand and share the important data of their class works. Teacher can explain very effectively with the use of technology like YouTube, Google classroom, presentations and video clippings of the topics.
(iii) In the field of employment, with the introduction of job websites a person may get updated information about the vacancies

(iv) In the field of health people get advices from doctors
(v) Social networking is the best and fast way to advertise anything to reach to the public instantly
(vi) Media helps to explore children abuses through interviews; hence promotes child rights

Disadvantages of the media can be summarized as;

(i) Wastage of time by spending on internet / social medias for hours with nil productive information
(ii) Children watching the sites which has age limitations affect their mental and emotional health badly
(iii) Increased rate of cyber crimes
(iv) Children become prey of dangerous cyber cheats in the form of suicidal games Bluewhale, PUBG and other that push the child towards depression and finally to commit suicide.

**Media– The double edged sword**

Media has tremendous potential that can contribute to protect the vulnerable population rights. Media and networking shortened the barriers and increased the accessibility to share or to communicate with outside world through mobile phones or social networking sites to explore the situation. Being a part of vulnerable groups, children can use the media / social net working for their education purpose. They can share the updated informations related to their education with friends. With the help of visual media or video clippings they may understand the concept better, than mere reading the books. Internet makes the literature survey more convenient with online libraries, online research articles etc. With the help of video visuals of the topics the teacher can teach the students' better way than traditional way of chalk and black board.

Even today children are facing abuse worldwide in the form of child labor, homelessness, illiteracy, sexual violence, physical abuse and many more that their basic rights are violated and questioned. Here media comes into picture and explore the situation in front of public / government so that this vulnerable population may be protected.

In the field of employment media plays an important role. With the emergence of job sites people can update themselves with the job market and vacancies on finger tips. They can attend online interviews through Skype that can help save time and money. Nowadays certain companies vouch for work from home for their employees. So the candidate can comfortably work from the safety of their homes. This in turn boosts their productivity. The Government has also taken the initiative to make the documentation of many sectors online so that the work can be completed quickly and in transparent manner. The booking of railway or bus or airplanes tickets online is a prime example of wise and smart use of media. Advertising of anything made easy and fast reachable through social networking and internet. In the field of health care, media plays important role like awareness programmes on various diseases like HIV, Leprosy, Tuberculosis vaccination drive like Polio and the precautions that need to be taken to prevent epidemics.

**Television**

Television is popular because of its easy handling and use. It has both positive and negative effect on society **[8, 19]**. The developmental level of a child is critical factor that a media decides. All the television programs are not bad, but the negative information like violence, immature sexuality, and use of offensive language affects the child's mental growth and can be dangerous to the society **[1]**. The power of storytelling to children through means of animated cartoons on the television will help and empower children or vulnerable group to be more focused in life and will aid better understanding of the academic concepts. **[10]**

Following are the some of the literature outcomes that relate television and vulnerable groups;

(i) Violent television programs relate directly with increase in violent behavior **[19].**
(ii) Television addiction causes childhood obesity **[4]**.
(iii) Excess television watching affect concentration in studies and eventually academic performance **[28]**.
(iv) Television can be one of the best ways to advertise products to every age group **[2]**.
(v) Certain programs encourage in irresponsible sexual behavior **[29]**.
(vi) Frequent television watching takes children's vital time for playing, reading, learning to talk, spending time with family, regular exercise, developing physical mental and social skills etc **[5]**.
(vii) Television can be an excellent teacher. There are programs about different subjects that toddlers can learn valuable lessons like kindness, cooperation different historical events, arithmetic and alphabet. Encourage the children to visit libraries, read books, and participate in different activities **[17]**.
(viii) Television increases violence. Children may watch violent videos or acts on television frequently which leads to many murder and rape incidents and increases aggressiveness. Children with

learning disabilities, abused by their parents, whose families in distress etc are more vulnerable to violence nature **[7]**.

**Video games**

Video games are with negative and positive impact depends upon the theme of the games. Some of the videos games develop good qualities in children whereas some others develop violence and aggressiveness **[31]**. The survey shows most of the video games meant for all the audience include significant rate of violence in the form it rewards the player for injuring a character etc. Hence current scenario of video games has to be improved **[32]**.

**Internet**

Internet is the encyclopedia of everything, that we may approach it anything and everything and it is user friendly. Parents appreciate their children for having knowledge in computer as well as internet. They may think internet is an essential medium that their children need to excel and hence they encourage it. But before encouraging their children the parents should be aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of it. The dangers of internet are hidden and uncontrolled and benefits are projected. The internet has enormous potential that it provides knowledge to children, youth and any group of the society. Prolonged usage of internet even though for good thing may affect a child's postural condition and development. Also leads to childhood obesity, retarded social skills and behavioral changes **[27, 6]**.

Social networking is one of the brilliant technological phenomenons of the 21st century. It is a social net work of individuals or organizations etc. Social network is the platform to create social relations so that they can exchange ideas, discuss on a common topic etc on internet that may boost them personally as well as professionally. But social network provides platform to create individual websites using graphics, personal details etc. This provision is used up mainly by young generation **[9]**. Internet advertisements may lead children to watch pornographic sites or sex talks which may make them a prey for such internet dangers. Parents have to keep an eye and make sure to block the access to such dangerous sites or material and not replaced. The best way to avoid internet crimes is by educating them about the significant potential of internet for good things and hidden dangers in it. Also appreciate and encourage the wise usage of internet. As social media may be a key method by which the individuals stay connected with friends, those with stress and anxiety make use of social media in times of crisis. Many modern- day interactions are conducted through mediums like phones, computers, and laptops by using applications like video call, video chats, text messages and multimedia messages. Therefore in times of crisis or pandemics one might consider mobile phones and social media as a means of staying connected with their friends. **[22]**

**Case studies on Media as boon and curse**

Media especially internet has become a boon as well as curse to the society. Following case studies reveal the potential of internet as a good and a bad guide. A survey done at Ghana which focused on youth revealed the need of awareness on the risks of internet mainly social media **[21]**.

Another survey **[20]** shows that students are aware of what they have to do and not to do on internet. Here the findings were; (1) students are highly aware about the benefits of internet, (2) They find home, library, computer lab are the convenient places for browsing (3) Students approach internet mainly for education and entertainment (4) According to them, internet is the route that fulfills their requirements regarding project work, availability of updated information. Business through internet is one of the great opportunities that one can utilize, i.e. online selling of commodities like apparels, jewelry, food, paintings and many more. Following are some of the entrepreneurs who succeed in their journey through internet; Newman and Elsass running an online kitchen that named Bushwick Kitchen.Andy Dunn who succeeded in setting up an online apparel store called Bonobos **[15]**. In India there are many success stories in the field on e-commerce that include Flipcart, Snapdeal, and Myntra.com etc. **[13]**. Education being the ultimate goal of about 50% parents of India provides their children the best facility they can. Nowadays education became business and hence it is hard to give the best so the welcomed the EdTech for the assistance in the current century. In this scenario educational companies explore various methodologies of coaching and tuitions to be delivered to students make the concept clear and understand. BYJU's: The learning App aims to prepare the students for different entrance and competitive exams like CAT, JEE, IAS, GRE and GMAT. This focused mainly on school students from grade 6 to 12.

'Meritnation: School made easy' is another EdTech entrepreneur that made the studies easy for student's upto class 12th. 'CultureAlley-Langue Learning' helps those who struggle to learn different languages. Embibe is an online portal of a team of entrepreneurs that focus on engineering entrance examination. 'Simplilearn: Get Certified, Get Ahead' which is another online portal that aims to simplify the working professional learning. 'EduKart: courses

for everyone' the app focused on online distance learning. It offers courses such as MBA, executive MBA, BA, BCom, MCA, BBA and many more **[11]**.

Not only in the field of education in the field of entertainments also has media supported a lot. Justin Bieber who was a just a singer like others has now became an internationally famous pop singer recognized after posting videos on You Tube. The convenient service provided by Ola, Uber that focus on online transport system makes changed the travel system of the society greatly. Zomato, swiggy succeed in their restaurant search business, where as Trivago does their role excellently in lodging search business. Another step that made with the internet media is the ticket booking system that made the travel easy by the introduction of 'red-Bus'. A great achievement through the internet media was the implementation of the project named 'Internet Sathi'. This project empowered the rural women in Assam, India, about the importance of knowledge and how to update through internet etc. **[16]**.

An activity called Ice Bucket Challenge which involved dumping of a bucket of ice over one's head. This was a part of promotion of awareness of disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and encourages donations for the research in the particular field in US. The awareness program went viral on social media and people across the world accepted the challenge of ice bucket and participated. Even though it was a successful campaign there occurred many health challenges who participated in it, like unconsciousness in people with blood pressure, sustained injuries and even death. An 18-year old was killed during the participation of ice bucket challenge in response to internet mania. He was the first victim of this viral challenge was found dead after jumping into a quarry **[25]**. Another reported cyber bullying in the year 2016 is a suicidal game called Blue whale challenge that targeted the vulnerable youth. It was a social network phenomenon across the world and a game consist of various tasks assigned to the players by the administrator over a 50 day period. The tasks with simple progress through self harming and finally challenging the player to commit suicide. This notorious internet game has taken more than 100s of life across the world that include India, Russia, Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan **[23,3]**.

These above cases highlight the impact the social media and gaming applications have on the young and fragile mindset of the vulnerable group. The media has a disturbing, dangerous and lethal potential to affect negatively the children's healthy development which includes weight status, sexual initiation, aggressive feelings, aggressive beliefs, consumerism, social isolation, mentally instable and weak. If used in moderation then this social media can be of greater advantage to the children. It is the need of the hour to find out way for optimizing the role of social media in our society by taking their positive attributes into consideration and minimizing their negative impacts. Accepting media promises to be an effective tool in shaping the behavior of children and adolescents. **[24]**

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is advisable that proper awareness of usage and handling of the communication media give birth to a wise and civilized generation. The inventors of the different mode of communication devices, medias etc would not be anticipated that their creations will become tools of crimes and social diminishes. Keeping away from the usage of internet/ media is not advisable and may not be practical in the current society. However regulations and restrictions should be put forward to ensure the wise usage of internet, social media for the better future of the society.

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