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Should sex and violence be shown more carefully on TV?

Abstract

The given research paper aims to discuss a persuasive issue in an analytical manner. It emphasizes on the need of showing sex and violence on television in a careful manner. The issue is investigated on the basis of certain articles as well as other sources. Initially, the paper defines the nature of the issue and its existing as well as potential implications. At the same time, it studies the various aspects related to the topic. Subsequently, it explains the ways in which the issue can be dealt with. The paper is based on a comprehensive study of the issue and derives information from authentic sources.

Introduction

Recent studies show a link between early exposure to TV violence and physical aggressiveness later in life ("TV and Film Violence"). Television is acting as a mirage, as it shows unrealistic things happening to people who are serving as a representative of the person viewing it. These illusions can be dangerous for people who don't have the maturity to cope with it.

Since shows on sex and violence command high ratings, so there is a greater demand for them. Due to this, the writers are not coming with anything creative and broadcasters are telecasting such shows. Even family shows where there is no requirement of such kind of things, instances of sex and violence are included for better ratings. All this has led to continued

ignorance of those people who would have loved to watch television shows having no what so ever connection with sex and violence.

Nature of the issue

A quick glance at the television will show how low the standards have gone. Nearly every show has references of homosexuality, extra martial and pre-martial sex, slurs, violence and teens engaging in sexual activity (Anderson). The whole concept behind advertisement on television and companies spending millions on TV broadcast is solely to make an impact on the viewers. It cannot be suggested that such broadcasts affect only children. It is applicable to adults also. There are a number of evidences, which clearly show that visual imagery affects the behavior, which later comes out in the form of actions.

A recent finding suggests that many people don't understand the meaning of various rating guidelines for TV programs ("Facts and TV Statistics"). There is a need of people on television who can stand as a role model. Television is full of artificial people who do not look or behave in a manner like the people watching it. This leads to the imitation of the so called stars who are indulged in everything possible. According to a recent research, rising rate of pre adolescent sex is at an all time high due to people getting an early exposure to it through television ("Psychologists call for replacing sexualized images of girls in media and advertising with positive ones")

Some studies claim television's effects to be quite potent and pervasive, though it seems to be subtle and earlier it was not considered so. Low quality programming due to high sexual and violent content has profound impact on the mental activity. This gets imbibed in a person's learning process. Non regulation of television content has resulted in an unprecedented usage of slurs and abuses. This has resulted in further deterioration of language. Some of the

music videos displayed on television have a lot of references of racial abuses and violence. A recent survey found that a large number of people wanted shows without profanity or obscenities.

Diverse Viewer segment

Television has been the largest form of public media since a long time. However, in the past few years, it has not been criticized enough for the real problems. It has been observed that Television has a negative influence when it comes to violence & sex. The violence on television simply refers to all kind of violent shows that are broadcasted on the television screens of the viewers all round the world. This includes the use of profanity, insertion of sexual content and true crimes (Chidley).

The issue has captured the attention of people as well as the social activists in the recent years. A large portion of the population believes that television has led to a significant degradation in social as well as the moral values. At the same time, television is also broadcasting a number of programs centered on premarital sex, adultery and homosexuality. In fact, sexual promiscuity is dominating the electronic media in a significant manner.

Recent studies indicate that the availability of sexual and violent material has been more than tripled in the last ten years. Also, the utilization of foul and abusive language has constantly increased in the various programs aired on the television. In addition, the extent of violent incidents has increased at a phenomenal pace. At the same time, television is forcing the individuals especially the children to indulge in certain acts which are not permissible in the society (Kaufman).

It has been reported that extensive viewing of sex and violence related programs on television leads to enhanced levels of aggressiveness in the viewers. In fact, the basic reason for

incorporating violence in various television programs is to draw the viewers (“TV and Film Violence”). It is a general tendency that the inclusion of any kind of violent incident in the promos encourages the viewers to watch both the message as well as the program it advertises. Often, the commercials and promos intervene in the violent scenes or occur at the brink of such incidents. This ensures that the viewers continue to view the remaining section of the program. The same logic applies to the incorporation of sexual element in the television programs as they are believed to be a strong factor for the attraction of certain viewers.

It is evident that the viewers have their own preferences regarding the kind of programs they want to enjoy on the television screens. At times, the material that is not preferred by a certain section is highly liked by another. Also, the kind of programs and material viewed by an individual is entirely up to his discretion and liking. The same concept applies to the makers and producers of programs of different nature and tastes. However, there are certain elements involved in television viewing, which are not acceptable to the moral standards of a society.

Basically, the material & content related to sex and violence, which is aired on the television, has crossed the acceptable standards from the perspective of the society. Such a material makes a considerable impact on the thinking patterns and attitudes of certain viewers, particularly the young individuals. As a result of this, the development of a healthy society is hampered to a great extent. At the same time, viewing of such content can divert the attention of individuals from constructive activities and controlled behavior (Point). This can be disastrous from the viewpoint of the future prospects as well as the career opportunities for the young generation.

However, it is also a fact that such programs and material cannot be eliminated from being aired on televisions in a complete manner. But, it is a high time that certain measures need

to be taken, which aim to control the extent of this situation. In real terms, the onus and responsibility for such an action lies not only on the regulatory bodies but in fact, upon all the members of the society. Ultimately, the combined efforts of the various sections of the society will play a pivotal role in the broadcast of such material in a careful manner.

Implications of the Issue

It had been a common perception that violence is a natural part of life, but presently it is having undesirable effects on the children, teens and even on the adult generation. In fact, a plethora of research studies suggest that the relationship between violence on television and higher levels of aggression in viewers is direct and profound (“Violence on Television”)

Such effects can be observed in the form of increased hostility in individuals and their deviations from the moral values of family as well as the society. It is widely believed that viewing excessive violence may lead an individual to be highly apprehensive about his personal safety and future prospects (“TV and Film Violence”). Simultaneously, such individuals become fearful about the world around them, over a period of time. The content of such materials desensitizes a person towards the victims of human suffering.

Resolving the Issue

Undoubtedly, the material related to sex and violence needs to be shown more carefully on television. Such a control can be ensured through a variety of methods.

1. **Public Awareness and Education Initiatives:** These initiatives aim to assist the viewers in making informed and responsible choices regarding the types of television programs they watch. In various countries, broadcasters and cable companies have pioneered projects as an attempt to increase public awareness of violence & sex.

2. **Classification/Rating Systems:** These rating systems are designed in order to classify all programs, excluding those that are not required to be rated such as news, sports, documentaries, talk shows, music videos and variety shows. The various levels of program ratings are framed along with the descriptive guidelines which assist the programming services in assigning ratings to the programs on an age-appropriate basis. Such a system ensures that the programs with poor content (including sex or violence) are aired in a controlled manner.
3. **Codes on Violent Programming:** Framing of ethical codes or codes of conduct help in the monitoring of violent & vulgar programming. These codes establish the rules for the industry in the selection and broadcasting of programs with violent & pornographic content. (“Violence On Television”)
4. **Technological Devices:** The controls enabled through these devices assist the caretakers to become better programming gatekeepers. Basically, these controls include devices that let individual programs to be filtered out, certain channels to be blocked and TV sets and remote controls to be locked. (“Violence On Television”)

Role of the regulatory bodies: In order to control the broadcast of inappropriate material on television, the regulatory bodies need to play a crucial role. These bodies can frame certain acts and codes in view of this issue.

1. **Broadcasting Acts:** These acts frame the guidelines & policies for the overall broadcasting system. The acts ensure that the broadcasting system should safeguard, enrich and reinforce the social & moral values, the programming should meet high standards and all broadcasting licensees should be responsible for the content they

broadcast. These provide the subsidiary authorities with the power and influence to monitor violent & indecent television programming.

2. Criminal Code: These codes have provisions, which include outlaws for making, distributing and publicly exposing materials that are "obscene." Similarly, such codes require the production houses to act in a more responsible and matured manner.
3. In addition to these legislations, other kinds of responses from the regulatory bodies involve committee reports, constant upgradation in the rules, policy statements, etc. ("Violence On Television")

Conclusion

Hence, it is seen that there is a constant incorporation of sex and violence elements in television programming. This issue has serious connotations for the future of a good society. Consequently, it is the collective responsibility of the various sections to control the extent of such programs in an appropriate manner.

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