

Power of print media

[Life, Adolescence](#)



The Power of Media to influence youth Abstract: This study is based on one of the most common methods of qualitative research — Thematic Analysis. It highlights the extent to which print media is using sexuality to generate interest amongst the youth for a particular product or service. The study also focuses on the effect that mass media have on our youngsters. To prove this further, the theory of Social Reflection has been used as a tool which shows the kind of impact a particular message or an advertisement (in this case) will have on society. For this test random sampling method was used, fourteen random newspapers from 30th May 2002 to 10th November 2011 were taken as samples to conduct the test. The study has verified and there are enough grounds on basis of which it can be said that print media or media in general is communicating the messages in a way which has got huge impact on our young generation. Introduction: United Kingdom is facing a lot challenge because of increasing rate of teenage sex and the credit for this goes to media which openly portrays sexual activities. Apart from this United Kingdom is also worried about the rising health issues amongst teens who are highly vulnerable to media . Schools in United Kingdom have incorporated sex education as a subject to equip students with the needed information. Still teenage pregnancy cases are highest in United Kingdom. Only teaching sex education as a subject in Schools is not sufficient the role of a mentor or a teacher should be to impress upon the students the consequences of teenage sex (Kitzinger & Farquhar, 1999). The need of hour is to provide more realistic and detailed information on sex to our teens. Media plays a very vital role in promoting the urge amongst youth to have more intimate relationships . The kind of sexually appealing messages,

gestures, language, images that are being used in mass media encourages the teens to experience sex by getting involved with someone. (Kitzinger, 1999; Batelor, 2003) A person's approach towards understanding sex depends to a large extent on the way sex is being portrayed in media. Also media increases the probability of having sex related discussion with peers or an intimate chat with an individual (Harris & Davis, 1982). Understanding the criticality of role that media plays in life of an adolescent is very crucial. At this stage in human development cycle a child goes through various hormonal changes leading to a desire to become independent. The sexual content and the information shown in media have a long lasting impact on child's psychology. The problem gets worst as these days children have an easy access to television, magazines and most importantly internet which is full of adult related content. As a small child one may not be able to experience sex and sexual products but that desire remains which they fulfill as an adolescent without being aware of the risks related to it. The television shows and programs are full of adult related content and scenes portraying youngsters having a girlfriend or boyfriend. Youngsters are the main audience of such kind of shows and as per a study after effects of these programs are so much that young boys and girls feel more inclined towards sexual activities (Sapololsky & Tabalret 1991). Also these television shows create an image in mind of youth that involvement in these kind of sexual activities will make them independent individuals. Our youth who is not very well versed with the consequences of having such relations blindly follow the trend leading to emotional and psychological problems. Only right guidance can safeguard our youth against all this and ensure that they take well

informed decisions. The damage being done by media to our society is not limited to this only, but goes far beyond. Media presents teens as problematic, irresponsible and immature individuals, who cannot understand sexual issues. The objective behind this is to negatively motivate teenagers to prove themselves mature enough by using sexual material being promoted by media. Also sex is shown as something that belongs to young, attractive and healthy individuals only. Media never uses the pictures of appealing boys and girls with some disability, by doing so media is portraying that disabled people are not very strong and attractive, also these people do not like to get involved in sex (Rivers 2000; Warwick and Douglas, 2002). The reason this research focuses mainly on presentation of sexuality in Media is to: -Understand the kind of negative impact media has on physical and mental health of our youth. -Highlight the misconceptions youngsters have about sexual relations. This study was conducted to understand, “ What kind of an approach is being used by mass media to reach its audience and the impact this approach has on youngsters”. Design The study is based on thematic analysis which is one of the most dependable methods of qualitative research. Reason for this dependability is that, along with being adaptable thematic analysis also organizes and summarizes the findings from the diverse data base used for research. Material The material used for study was five random articles. Though the articles were randomly picked up but presence of terms like sex, teenage, teen, sexuality or media in the title of the article was the basic criteria for selection (material in appendix 1). Researchers The researchers involved in this study were the newspaper reporters who use to communicate frequently with youngsters to

collect some or other kind of data. These reporters were made to collect information from youth on- what kind of topics, issues, if discussed in newspapers will increase its demand? The reason for choosing newspaper was that, it is one of oldest forms of print media with a mass appeal. Also it is affordable and our computer savvy young generation can read these news articles on internet as well. Analysis The objective of entire study was to understand “ What kind of an approach is being used by mass media to reach its audience and the impact this approach has on youngsters”. The research has found that media has got a huge impact on our young generation; this is one of the main reason why more and more teens are getting involved in sex . There are enough grounds in the form of articles used in the research, to justify the statement — “ that our young ones are getting inclined towards sex on an alarming rate” (articles in appendix 2). a) Mostly, all the references given at the top had one common word ‘ pregnancy’. Some of the references also mention that television shows have great impact on youngsters. As mentioned earlier that our young ones who have just entered into puberty stage and undergoing various hormonal changes are the main audience of these television soaps. The impact of these kinds of programs on youth is, they feel the urge to get involved in sex and become adults like their parents but these poor kids have no idea on the matter related to pregnancy. b) Through these references one can make out the amount of anger the writers have towards the incomplete message being conveyed by media. These messages only drive teens towards sex but do not inform them about the consequences of having sex at this age. This is one of the very basic reasons for increasing pregnancy cases amongst teens.

How can media be so irresponsible towards its societal obligations? c) These references also indicate that sex is being used as a direct or indirect tool to promote various products and services. The usage of sex and sexuality is so much that apart from harming the health of youth it has also started spoiling their equation with their parent and guardians. The following words were used to conduct thematic analysis of the information collected through research: early sex, teen age sex, health issues, government involvement and advertisement of sex. Here it becomes very important to understand approach of youngsters towards sex and how do they conduct themselves while reading a subject related to sex or watching sexual image. The research also draws attention that — Is media as well as our youngsters collectively to be blamed for the extent sexual element is being misused by media? Media is focusing more on the filthy content being advertised. Responsibility of generating awareness about the negative consequences such kind of advertisements can have in the form of health related issues specifically various communicable diseases is being ignored by media completely. As mentioned in the introduction, television shows have a lot of influence on teenagers, further study has revealed that repetition of any sexual message or image tends to have a greater impact on a child. Suppose if same kind of scene is being shown again and again it will naturally draw attention of a child who is not even aware of sex but due to repetition of the scene he gets attracted to experience the same . In case of soap advertisements which run frequently on television with women wearing revealing outfits and looking attractive in them will definitely motivate a child to try such revealing clothes. As discussed earlier, as a child one is

more dependent on his or her parents and may only observe and get attracted towards experiencing these situations. But the moment children start maturing sexually, responsibility on parents reduces (Rimmel R & Real K, 2003) and at this stage children will definitely like to experience all sex related content they have seen on television. Print media like magazines and newspapers are highly responsible for generating sexual drive or need amongst youth. In United Kingdom more or less every article in the paper has a picture of a sexually attractive woman. As newspapers are very affordable and there is no age bar for buying a paper, so it is one of the main source due to which adolescents get involved in sexual activities and end up harming themselves. An adolescent boy after looking at such an image may feel the need to satisfy himself sexually but if this need is not satisfied he may feel frustrated and at a later stage he may get involved in sexual crime. Same is the with females, if their sexual needs are not fulfilled they may get affected physically and emotionally (Kehily, M. 1996). These kind of dirty images are being used throughout the country and because of this parents are facing a lot of problem in the way they want to raise their kids. Parents in many western countries would not have allowed their daughters to have boy friends but today they have no other option apart from changing their own mindset. The credit for this changing scenario goes to media. With such a trend when the entire media is using sex appeal, no doubts why kids these days are reaching puberty at a very early age (Frank Biro, M. D.,).

Conclusion: I really feel good about this research as it has brought back my childhood memories. I wonder as a child me and my peers rarely knew anything about sex. There was a time when I was completely against the

concept of imparting sex education to children, but this research has changed my thought process completely. The time is changing and sex education is need of hour. Media is using sex to such an extent that the adolescents feel the urge to get involved in sexual activities at a very early stage. These young children are not even aware of the consequences sex can have. I am all the more touched to see how people are moving away from their value system to get accepted in so called society created by our media. To conclude I would like to say that media is the most influential tool today. Media has the power to reach classes and masses at the same time. It affects the way youngsters think and behave. Future of our nation lies in hands of media.