REVIEW OF LITERATURE
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 GENERAL INFLUENCES OF MASS MEDIA

It was with the electronic revolution in the mid twentieth century that case histories and studies on mass media effects began creating a stir in the academic and social arena, especially with its claims on media's ill effects, Lerner, D., (1958) Herkowitz (1964), Feshback & Singer (1972) to name a few.

There has been no formal classificatory system to study media effects. As Hovland (1951) wrote, "there is no completely satisfactory theoretical schema or set dimensions for this task". The main reason for this is because the effects are as heterogeneous as the receivers of the communication messages.

Dimensions of Media Effects

Nevertheless, there are three broad dimensions along which media effects have been analysed. One is the size and nature of the social unit involved, i.e. the target audience. A message might go out in general to the public or it might be meant solely for a particular group of
individuals. For example, when an agricultural machinery is advertised, this message is specifically meant for the farmers.

The social context of exposure is the next dimension. One of the earliest studies on the impact of mass media was conducted by Friedson (1953) who has examined this particular dimension. He reported that school boys from kindergarten to the sixth grade said they usually watched television with family members, saw movies with the family or peers and read comics alone. There is a lot of difference when an individual views a movie with the family as opposed to viewing with the peer group. Adolescents, for example, find viewing romance along with their peers less embarassing than with their parents. Another example is that a child viewing a frightening movie alone in a dark room experiences greater arousal of fear when compared to viewing the same movie in a lighted room with other people.

The temporal dimension of effects is also vital because certain type of effects can be brought about in a short while, whereas others take a relatively longer period. An impact on deeply held views or those that may affect the society at large take longer to be implemented, if at all, whereas weakly held attitudes undergo a much
quicker change, especially if the message is persuasive (Weiss, Walter 1969).

**Media Effects**

Studies that have been conducted thus far on media effects have chiefly dealt with attention to a particular medium, comprehension and interpretation of the message, emotional arousal, identification with screen characters or situations and imitation.

There is a juxtaposition of ideas when it comes to **attention** to any particular medium. While a great deal depends on whether the person is interested in the message or not, the appeal and presentation of the content matter is equally important. Here, the very characteristics of the medium play a vital role. For example, television or film with its audiovisual nature is generally far more appealing than the radio. Media are available all the time and at the same time - it all depends which medium one tunes in to. A person will first want to read, listen or watch something only if it is akin to his basic nature and liking (Himmelweit, Oppenheim & Vince 1958).

Despite the commonality of a particular message, the manner in which it registers in individual minds in unique.
Comprehension of the content matter plays a very major role in measuring the effect.

Emotional arousal has been an effect that has caused widespread concern. The context in which the message is placed and the environmental situation in which the receiver of the message is placed are both vital in determining this effect. In one of the earliest studies conducted in this area, by Schramm, Lyle & Parker (1961), it was found that children from broken homes who viewed a televised drama featuring a warm, loving family got very disturbed and frustrated after the programme. According to psychologists it is always better to guide the child's viewing or for that matter any kind of media usage, to help differentiate between 'fantasy' and 'reality'.

Identification is necessary for any sort of imitation to take place. According to Lerner (1958), it is particularly central to any interpretation which is based on the media's role as a contributor of vicarious experiences. Identification is what causes the reader, listener or viewer to emotionally participate in the communication process. According to experimental studies conducted, it was found that children liked imitating stereotypes, especially if they felt that their family would approve, Bandura (1965), Williams, F. et al (1981).
Young people have been exposed to violent fiction for many centuries and according to psychological reports that were published in 1962, they apparently imitated aggression from movies and thrillers. The moving visual image of an aggressive act obviously has more impact than a verbal description. Studies in the past decade have specifically concentrated on this factor, Cantor & Sparks (1986) : Huston, Wothins & Kunkel (1989) : Huston & Wright (1989) : Leishbough De Juliet (1987) : Phillips & Hensley (1984), Singer & Singer (1984); Huston, Wright & Potts (1986) and a study conducted by the Consumers' Association of Penang (1984) to name a few.

2.2 GENERAL IMPACT OF TELEVISION AND VIDEO

Television and its extension of the video cassette player are no doubt the invaders of the modern home. In simple terms, this is an audio visual extension of the film medium from mass audience centres like cinema halls to individual homes. Television addresses its audiences much more directly than any other medium by providing representations of the viewers themselves on screen. The simultaneity of television broadcasts with millions of sets receiving the same image at the same time makes television viewing a social phenomena, even if one is alone in the
room while viewing it. (Allen R.C. (ed) 1987). Video on the other hand releases one from this public viewing that is both space and time bound, (Scherer, C.W., 1989).

With the abundance of programmes available right inside the homes, it is no wonder that people in authority have encouraged studies to be conducted to find out how exactly this abundance of home entertainment will affect children. The television set with its capacity to provide dramatic visual presentations from different sources, is one of the chief reasons for tilting the balance against one of its major competitors, the radio, (Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1961; Ravindran, 1978).

Usage of the Medium

In nearly all the studies conducted so far, one of the first attempts of the researcher has been to find out how children and adolescents use this medium. Home observations show that by age four children look at the television set more than half the time it is on, and attention peaks around 80% from childhood onwards (ages ten to twelve). Comstock, et al (1978) and Zillmann, D (1983) in their detailed study of media usage found that between the ages of three and sixteen, the average child devotes over one sixth of his waking hours to television, more
time than he spends in school. This is particularly central to the lives of children who have very few opportunities to obtain alternative forms of entertainment.

According to Saloman (1979), one of the chief reasons why this medium is a favourite among children is because it requires less of complex 'decoding' compared to the print medium. For instance, anybody can sit passively and watch television when they are tense, tired or bored and it will occupy their minds with the minimum of mental effort.

On the basis of qualitative data it was found that a child's preferences in mass media not only reflected his sex, age and intelligence, but also his general outlook in life, spare time interests, anxieties and needs. An added revelation of this study was that selective viewing caused greater emotional arousal because of the involvement when compared to indiscriminate, non-selective viewing, (Himmelweit, Oppenheim & Vince, 1958). In other words active viewing causes more emotional arousal than passive viewing.
Television Effects

It has been found that the very presence of the television set creates an effect, regardless of the message. The production features of television can be differentiated from the content matter and this by itself can create an effect. In an experimental study conducted by Huston, Stein & Wright (1977), it was revealed that children were much more attracted to the different forms of the medium (camera techniques, visual effects, music, rapid cuts, special effects, etc.) than to the message emanating from this medium. In fact it was found that these production techniques alone were enough to draw children flocking around the TV set.

One of television's chief effects is its representation of the present day culture by conveying a fabric of impressions, information and knowledge about what people are like and how they relate to one another. Media representations are also very influential. According to Huston & Wright, 1989), the American Bar Association expressed concern that many jurors expected the defence to produce a courtroom confession in the style of Perry Mason, in order to acquit a person of trial. Such portrayals are particularly appealing to the young impressionable youth whose system of beliefs about the world are mainly acquired from the television and films.
As early as 1927, the Cinematographic Committee of India found that the 30% of filmgoers were adolescents. Premchand Srivastava (1981) studied the influence of films on adolescents. His studies showed that film as a form of mass media positively shared its impact on the personality formation of adolescents. Now with the sudden splurge of television antennae and video cassettes there is much easier access to a variety of films or any desired programme right in the home. Of course, it is open to conjecture as to how much of the contents of these can influence susceptible young minds.

Television viewing and behaviour has been an important topic for debate ever since media effects began to be analysed. Experimental studies on imitation have demonstrated fairly clearly that children often imitate a model who is rewarded and are unlikely to imitate one that has been punished (Bandura 1965). A study conducted on the Indian TV serial 'Hum Log' has also demonstrated that prosocial television encourages involvement or identification with characters through para-social interaction, (Brown, W.J. 1988). This parasocial interaction is a predictor of almost all television viewing motivations. The 'on air' personality may have more importance to the viewer than the media content by itself (Conway, J.C. (1989)).
Charges Against Television

The television becomes a central factor around which parents and children schedule their time and activities, (National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), 1991). The most serious charge against television is that it keeps people, especially children away from books, and therefore in an indirect manner encourages illiteracy.

The second charge that television leads to social isolation can be contradicted, as television's input in this area is ambiguous. While on the one hand people are prevented from socialising by sitting in front of the screen, on the other it has become part of the social culture as it encourages discussions, etc based on the programmes. As Allen, R.C. (1987) says, "any individual television viewing plug us onto a network of other viewings and discourses and links us as viewers into the larger culture".

The third charge is that television holds precedence and dwarfs other entertaining alternatives. It is said to monopolise people's entertainment to a very large extent and therefore there is more of passive entertainment rather than active participation.
2.3 NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION AND VIDEO

Parents, educationists and people in authority have always been concerned about the negative impact of this medium, especially on the youth who in their impressionable age get carried away with mass media's popular appeal. Fast action coupled with glamorous characters, loud trendy music, colour and vibrancy causes the viewers to flock around the television set. Producers of programmes and movie makers are well aware of this and exploit the situation to the maximum. It is interesting to note that the existence of a heterogeneous audience encourages messages that are low in their intellectual demands and high in their entertainment content.

Passive Viewing

When the viewer does not really absorb the content, but views television for the sake of watching the moving flow of images, mainly for entertainment and relaxation, this is known as "passive" viewing. The only advantage with this kind of viewing is that it is a mental diversion, especially after a day's hard work. But when this relaxation is taken a step too far, it becomes "addictive". More and more time being spent in front of the small screen leads to a variety of disadvantages. Priority is often given to the television programmes over other important
household and related activities. A serious charge against this medium is that it draws people away from books and indirectly discourages literacy as people do not have to be literate to comprehend a television message. Children especially, begin to neglect outdoor games, gardening, trekking, etc. even active involvement in hobbies is reduced to the minimum. In a study conducted by Rick, Susanna L. (1985), four different communication environments and their respective alimentary modes were compared. She says that in what is called the "un-mediated" environment, food is food. In the oral environment, when humans mediate activities with words, food is magic. In Scripture, food is food and activities are focussed on the written Word. Finally she says, "On TV, food is light, encouraging watching rather than thinking". This kind of "passive" viewing is what is harmful.

Indirectly physical health is affected. Many hours of television viewing is a strain on the eye and is a major reason for headaches, bad eyesight and overeating, resulting in general lethargy, (HEALTH magazine, Nov. 1991) & News from the World of Medicine, READER'S DIGEST, Nov. 1991). In a study conducted by Comstock, et al (1978), it was found that children were glued to the television screen more than half the time it was on, especially during pre
and early adolescence, resulting in lack of sleep and the
deterioration of school work. These same effects were found
in another study conducted in Hungary by Vetro, et al
(1988) with the researchers concluding that as the
frequency of television viewing had a damaging effect on
sleep, mental and emotional development were also
consequently affected.

Active Viewing

When there is deep involvement by the viewer in the
content matter then it is active viewing and this is when
there are chances of identification. A lot depends on the
state of mind or inherent characteristics of the individual
viewer. Identification and imitation of screen characters
has been considered one of the most negative effects of
television. That is why Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince in
their 1958 study say that more disturbing than sheer
violence on screen, is when the viewer associates himself
with a character in a dangerous situation.

Arousal of Fear

Television News which is generally considered to be
one of the most educative and informative features of this
medium has been often blamed for the arousal of fear
among people. This was especially evident during the Gulf
War. According to a report in 'THE HINDU' - a prominent Indian daily, dated January 27th 1991, an eminent psychologist, Dr. Margolin of the George Washington University said that television was dramatising the war. "They are doing a lot of things that make the world look scary. I think parents should monitor their children and see that they do not get terrible nightmares". In an experimental study conducted in Ireland by Cairns, Ed (1984), it was found that television News was one of the main sources of knowledge about violence for children. Another factor that has caused a lot of concern is the reporting of terrorists and terrorism on television and highlighting their bravado on films and the like. Steve Rosenfeld of "The Washington Post' wrote, "if the purpose of terrorists is to send a message, we in the media should consider not sending it". The much greater attention being given to terrorism by non-state agencies is due to the media which often takes terrorism for granted. The terrorists love the media, as it is one of the most potent weapons for achieving their objectives. Publicity on television acts as a warning and this serves the objective of destroying morale. If one policeman is killed many are demoralised. The general population enjoy terrorist activities on the news broadcasts. That is why one American

Even the sober BBC did not escape criticism when they permitted an Irish Republican Army (IRA) chief to announce the stepping up of a bombing campaign in Britain. Just a week after, the IRA attacked the bars in Birmingham in which twenty two people lost their lives. In India, Arafat gets publicity shaking hands with the Prime Minister and President, because he is regarded as Head of the State. But, many countries regard him as Head of a terrorist body. This instance is enough to show the radically opposing viewpoints of nations, (Bassouni, M.C., 1982).

Parental Concern with Special Reference to India

Parents face a different kind of fear, because they feel their children's value system changes drastically due to the influence of this medium. Traditional values are looked down on and this is especially true in India. Children who feel more free with their peer groups than with their families have a greater tendency to lean in this direction. Very often advertisements face the brunt of such criticism, especially with the fake modernism they portray. Their depiction of an ultra modern, vibrant and gay culture
creates wants and needs in people they did not know they possessed, (Huston & Wright, 1989).

Another general complaint is that unless there is strict parental monitoring, children get to watch programmes beyond their level of maturity. What television does to children in India is only just beginning to be measured and the results are not very encouraging. Clearly, given what children watch and what they choose not to watch, television has not even begun to fulfill its potential as a powerful educational and curriculum enriching medium.

Peak viewing time for children is the same as it is for adults: 9 to 9.30 pm on week days and several hours on Sundays including the feature film slot. 'Chitrahaar', too is an all family favourite, this pattern being established time and again. In the mid-eighties, Doordarshan's Audience Research wing did a study in Madras and Delhi, on around three hundred children which showed that they watched serials and films avidly, (Chatterji, P.C., 1987).

In 1990, Doordarshan conducted a viewership survey in all the cities in which it has Kendras (transmitting centres), with a large sample of eighteen thousand, in which children were interviewed in the same number as women and men. It showed that children viewed everything except
the programmes meant for them. The latter had a viewership of only between 11 and 15%. But for 'Mahabharat', the Hindi feature film and the more popular 6 pm serials, the average child viewership was 90% and above.

According to the NIPCCD study, (1991), the mothers who were interviewed complained that children were attracted like magnets to the adult themes in the television portrayals. One of their major fears was that children were being introduced to themes and ideas contrary to the traditions followed in a country like India.

Shailaja Bajpai, a columnist of the Indian Express, a popular daily writes, "most of the films shown on Doordarshan could easily be accused of depicting a lot of vulgarity and violence, yet because they enjoy a censor's certificate, they are shown at a time, 5.30 pm, when every child can watch and learn how to behave once he/she grows up" (Indian Express, Sunday Magazine, November 1991).

2.4 INFLUENCE OF VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION AND THE AGGRESSION LEVEL OF ADOLESCENTS

Television a Causal Factor or a Stimulant?

The effects of television violence have been investigated more thoroughly than any other impact of this medium. Experts have repeatedly concluded that there is a
small but reliable causal effect of television violence on aggressive behaviour. The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour (1972); Pearl, Bouthilet & Lazar (1982); Consumers' Association of Penang (1984); The American Psychological Association (1985); Freidrich-Cofer & Huston (1986); Heusmann & Eron (1986); and Lukesch Helmut (1989) are a few of the many studies that have endorsed this conclusion.

However, industry representatives like the American Broadcasting Companies (1983) and a few academicians like Milavsky, Stipp, Kessler & Rubens (1982) and Freedman (1984, 1986) continue to dispute the above conclusion. Freedman after rejecting the above hypothesis that television violence causes aggression accepted by default the reverse hypothesis that aggressive personality attributes caused a preference for viewing violence. O'Neal et al (1989) came to a similar conclusion when provoked subjects in their experimental studies were found to have more interest in video violence than the control subjects. In yet another interesting study by Lynn, Richard et al (1989), the relationships between aggression, the viewing and enjoyment of television violence and the personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism were discussed. Data obtained from three hundred and eighty six
Children and Violence Viewing

A bulk of the studies done so far have focussed on children and it was revealed that very young children are able to recall verbal and physical aggression seen on television as these are simple and observable behaviours; (Huston & Wright, 1989). However they begin to understand the context of aggression only in late childhood or early adolescence. A study conducted by the Consumers' Association of Penang (1984) revealed shocking facts about how television has influenced Malaysian children's imagination, their toys, clothes and even their language. Fantasy-action packed drama while outwardly harmless has a lot of very harmful effects as has been proved by this study. In the 13 programmes studied by the researchers, there were a total of 736 instances of violence of all sorts - made up of 66 killings, 91 injuries, 106 shows of weapons, 94 shootings, 147 instances of verbal violence, 92 uses of physical strength and 140 other violent scenes. All these were shown in the total space of eight and a half hours - the total length of the programmes. In another study conducted by Sparks, Glenn, G. (1986), younger subjects (aged 5 to 8 years) tended to report fright from programmes depicting fantasy content, featuring ugly and grotesque characters, and content portraying transformations of characters. In contrast, subjects (aged
9 to 11 years) generally reported fright from programmes depicting possible violence and programmes with violent content. Findings suggest that children at different age groups differ cognitively in fundamental ways that affect their perceptions of programme content and consequently what they find to be frightening.

Several researchers have felt that the time spent in front of the small screen plays a role in the impact of the screen portrayals. Zillman, D. (1983) found that children spent one sixth of their waking hours in front of the television set. Lawrence, F.C. et al (1986) examined the amount of television viewing time spent by forty eight adolescents (12 to 17 years) from two parent, two child families as part of a larger family time use study. Results indicated that subjects viewed an average of 147 minutes per day and 17 1/2 hours per week. Subjects watched with another family member 65% of the total viewing time but were unlikely to engage in other activities at the same time.

Programmes Containing Arousing Material

It is interesting to find out what kind of programmes contain arousing material that negatively influence the viewer. Research shows that both suspenseful drama (Zillman 1983) and comedy (Tannenbaum, 1971) arouse
both children and adults. According to a study conducted by Huston & Wright, (1986), people do not watch violence for the sake of watching something violent. It so happens that violence is one of the major components of 'Action' pictures and programmes which are so popular, especially among the youth. The audience do not consume any kind of programme homogeneously. Teenagers have a higher rate of consumption of action adventure. According to Wober, Mallory (1988), this is mainly because of the arousal inducing and retribution dealing attitudes.

Cartoons which are generally considered to be an ideal children's programme, has been proved by researchers as one of the most harmful features on television. According to Dr. Tini Harbarino, a child psychologist at the Pennsylvannia State University, U.S.A., cartoons and police shows are the worst culprits among violent programmes; (Consumers' Association of Penang, 1984). This is mainly because the intensity of a dangerous situation, pain and suffering is always played down when a programme is animated and everything seems so easy to accomplish. Adults may be able to differentiate reality from fantasy, but there are children whose curious minds and imaginations get fulfilled only by imitating what they have seen on screen. There is evidence from the study done in Penang to show that children do imitate cartoon characters. Four
children died in the city and twelve of them were seriously injured when they tried to literally "fly off" rooftops wearing Superman suits which happen to be popular birthday gifts in Penang. A Principal of a local kindergarten, Mrs. Priscilla Ong says that children tend to imitate superheroes when they play. She says, "They do get into fights and they do get hurt. They prefer guns to other toys. They dash around hurting themselves and are surprised because on screen none of the characters seemed to be in so much pain".

Gadow & Sprafkin, (1987), of the State University of New York conducted two studies where a class of nine younger (aged 5.7 to 8.3 years) and a class of eleven older (aged 8.6 to 12.1 years) emotionally disturbed children were observed during lunch and recess. Findings indicated that the older class exhibited a significant increase in physical aggression, non-physical aggression and appropriate social interaction following viewing of high aggression cartoons compared with the baseline viewer. The younger group's physical and non-physical aggression decreased following viewing of low aggression cartoons. They became more non-compliant following exposure to high aggression cartoons and more non-physically aggressive, when their behaviour immediately preceding media exposure was used as a co-variante.
Films depicting violence in a humorous way (cartoons or with live characters) were found to increase aggression to a greater extent than films depicting violence in a realistic manner in a study conducted by Bjorkqvist, Kaj (1945) of the Swedish University of Abo, Finland.

Television news surprisingly is one of the features that has been blamed not only for arousing fear but also for arousing possibilities for imitation. Bad elements in society can always learn new techniques for anti-social behaviour by viewing detailed visuals of demonstrations, arson, etc., in the news (Gunter & Wober, 1988). In an experimental study conducted by Cairns, Ed (1984) in Ireland, it was found that television news was one of the main sources of knowledge about violence for children.

Television commercials have also been found guilty of increasing aggression in the viewers. It is just not violence that affects the aggression level of an individual. Most of the advertisements portray a world of glamour and affluence. The viewers often tend to compare themselves and their lifestyles with the ones depicted on screen and when they fall short of them, they get frustrated and aggression builds up as a result. Maccoby & Gibbs (1954) found that children who were frustrated mainly because they were denied what they wanted, were prone to more aggression than the others.
Whitaker, L.C. (1989) argues that increases in recent decades of youth suicide, homicide, drug use, eating disorders and passive (as opposed to active) kinds of learning are related to commercial media inducements to violence and drug use, especially as conveyed by the audio visual medium. Counsellors and therapists cannot remedy these problems by simply helping students to adjust to popular culture. Suggestions are made for helping them to see through and to refute the 'schizophrenic like' commercial equations of good looks, strength and popularity with the false heroes who sell violence and drugs, including alcohol and cigarettes.

Action-thriller movies/programmes are often viewed actively by youngsters. Their main components are violence, high action and sex which often go hand in hand. In the Indian Panorama, these are called "masala" movies which often end up being box office hits. According to an analysis conducted by FEMINA (Oct 1991)—a prominent women's magazine in India, Aruna Jethwani writes about ten women activists' organisations who met and prepared a three point complaint against the movies being produced in India. They said,

movies are to be blamed for suggesting violence as a method of teaching somebody a lesson;
movies exalt the baser instincts of revenge, hatred and the killer instinct.

recent movies project love as instant and as a right to be demanded and possessed. Thus young girls succumb to the advances of angry young men out of fear and fallacy.

With music entering the television scenario in a big way, a whole lot of fresh anxieties have gripped parents and people in authority all over, especially where Music Television (MTV) is available. In an experimental study by Patricia et al (1989) conducted on the impact of rock music experiment I found that comprehension of rock music lyrics developed with age and youngsters often misunderstood the lyrics. Experiment II found that music videos provided less stimulation to the imagination and were enjoyed less than the songs alone. Experiment III confirmed the negative effect of music videos on the imagination. It was also revealed in the content analysis of another subject sample that 56.6% of MTV had violent visuals and 81% of this violence had sex incorporated.

Effects of Being Exposed to Violent and Aggressive Content

The effects of being exposed to violent or aggressive content (in whatever form) can be varied.
Desensitisation is one of the effects, which is a general psychological process. When people are repeatedly exposed to something that is frightening, distasteful or arousing, they become less emotionally responsive. This could happen from continuous exposure to violent television. Heavy television viewers show less arousal while watching violence when compared to light viewers (Cline, C & Courier 1973). However, in a large sample of adolescent boys in London, Belson (1978) found no support for this desensitising effect as an outcome of viewing violence. According to the questions put forth by the Television Opinion Panel (TOP) and the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARRB) in the United Kingdom, it was found that six out of ten respondents felt that children could become desensitised to violence through seeing it portrayed on television. Griffiths & Shuckford (1989) have come up with a new model to explain this desensitising effect of television violence in the terms of a conditioning theory involving ideational processes. It is proposed that desensitisation occurs when the stimulus no longer remains important. In terms of viewing violence on television, it is asserted that this desensitisation occurs when an expectation (born of a past experience), determines the subsequent behavioural response, by failing to imitate a psychophysiological reaction to the television violence.
Catharsis is another effect that has been studied in detail. Way back in 1964, Feshbach stated that catharsis was the draining off of aggressive energies as a result of observing aggressive behaviour. This is particularly so when the viewer identifies himself with the character on screen and their situations are similar. The emotion usually involved is anger. Catharsis is due to the vicarious experiences taking place within the viewer's mind. Feshbach tested this theory and found that men who were angered, showed less aggression on a questionnaire, after observing a violent film, than they did after observing a non-violent film. However, Comstock G, A (1980) discounts the catharsis theory and gives examples of two case studies in which two boys committed murder. These studies are based on everyday behaviour such as daily viewing of violent television shows and on everyday aggression. He says that according to review of research, exposure to violence has repeatedly (though not invariably) resulted in increased antisocial behaviour. Fehr.L, A (1979) also refutes the catharsis theory.

Identification and Imitation of aggressive/violent screen characters has been one of the most frightening effects of television. And similar to the debate as to whether television is a causal or contributive factor,
another point that has been pondered upon is, whether inherent aggression in the viewer results in more of violent viewing. It has been revealed in many studies that such is the case and this directly leads to further identification and imitation. Heusmann & Eron in their 1984 study concluded that identification with violent television characters is related to aggressiveness in the viewer. Overt aggression does occur, but certain individual viewer attributes like age, gender, cognitions about aggression and aggressive predispositions are very important factors influencing this imitation. Environmental attributes are also equally important. There ought to be proper motivation, the right opportunity and appropriate tools to imitate the observed material and actually commit the aggressive act. According to Weiss, W (1975), a lot depends on the similarity between aspects of the person's actual environment and the media setting in which the behaviour was exhibited. Strength of restraints from within the person (for example, values opposing any form of violence) and from the environment (for example, fear of punishment) are influential factors in determining the reproduction of the observed act (Potts, Huston & Wright 1986).
In another study it was concluded that those disruptive students who viewed the most violent acts on television tended to cause the most classroom disruptions (Huff, J.L. 1984).

**Longitudinal Impact**

In a ten year investigation of children from ages 8 to 18, boys who liked violent television at age 8 were more aggressive at age 18 than those with little interest in violent programmes. Added to this impressive revelation was the fact that the boys who liked television violence at age 8 were more aggressive to their peers than those who did not like violence (Leftkowitz et al, 1972).

Another study was carried out with 1500 males from ages 12 to 17 in London. Extensive interviews and questionnaires were used to measure the boys' home, school and neighbourhood environments. Then groups of high and low violence viewers were matched statistically with over two hundred variables that might affect aggression. After this process of controlling, it was found that high viewers of violence still engaged in serious acts of aggression like physical attacks on others, malicious damage and the like, when compared to the low violence viewers.
Television violence was therefore implicated as a cause of their violent behaviour (Helson 1978).

Observational Learning and Attitudes

According to advocates of observational learning, a child learns to behave aggressively from watching violent actions on the television, just as he learns cognitive and social skills from watching parents, siblings and peers. Kubes, D (1981) in his report of a long term study stated that television plays a discernible part in influencing their attitudes towards specific aggressive actions. He studied 12 to 15 year old students and used a theoretical frame of reference which served the two stage concept of the observational learning theory (cognitive acquisition and storage of symbolical informations about behavioural orientation versus direct performance of observed behavioural acts).

Aggressive viewing can generate general hostile behaviour in nearly any normal person, especially so with children, by exerting its influence on their attitudes. The more television a person watches, the more they accept aggressive behaviour, especially if the protagonist is being rewarded at the end of it all. 'Reel' life is often mistaken for real life as viewing the small screen is being imbibed as part and parcel of every day life.
In the Indian context, though hardly any research has been done concerning the effects of violence shown on the small screen on the youth, there have been a scattering of studies on films and how they affect the views of the common man. A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi in 1974 shows that violent films do emotionally arouse people. Ravindran (1978) and Premchand Srivastava (1981) in their studies have stated that violent films do affect adolescents adversely. Various newspapers and magazines have in recent times begun to show a lot of interest in this particular area.

A very interesting article in the 'FEMINA' (June, 1991), one of the leading women's magazines in India, reveals the sorry state of our Indian films. Ex-police officer, B.P. Singhal was installed as the Film Certification Board Chairman in 1990 and his viewpoints have been published in this particular issue. He says, "If you go along any street you would find film posters depicting gun trotting heroes and even heroines. All conceivable types of firearms are shown. If they run short of ideas about automatic guns they show the good old Rampuri knife with blood dripping from it. This is the daily lesson school going children get. He goes on to show how police records show instances of brutality and sexual abuse of young girls by fathers and these examples of
depravity are to be deprecated rather than glamourised on the silver screen. Mr. Singhal feels that most people who frequent cinema houses feel tempted and even pick up such ideas. This is the reality.

Now with the increased availability of video tape rentals and cable movies, along with uncensored foreign programmes available in the Indian homes, much more explicit violence is being broadcast everyday and one does not need to frequent cinema houses any longer.

According to an article in the Sunday Magazine of the Indian Express Group, (September, 1992), addiction to STAR television has become such a phenomenon that parents are becoming increasingly anxious. This increased viewing results in decreased academic interests, and even outings and games are being neglected. Most of the students interviewed say, "Yes, it has made an impact on our lifestyles". One Madras City School Principal, Mirmal Bhasin says, "There are some very good programmes for all age groups, especially on sports. And the news coverage given by BBC is excellent". But she frowned on the number of movies shown; "Children leave educative programmes like the UGC, for movies on Star Plus which is a negative sign". A city psychiatrist, D. Dayalan feels that such programmes
have a greater hold on adolescents. He says, "This age group is essentially rebellious and such programmes encourage their imagination to run wild". However, the novelty might wear off. Some college going students have revealed this when they say, "For the first few days it was a craze and now MTV has become a big bore. 'Oliyum Oliyum' is a greater bore and we now spend less time watching these shows'.

Ways to Mitigate Effects of Media Violence

There are various researchers who have concluded after studies that interventions to mitigate the psychological effects of media violence on aggressive behaviour will yield promising and positive results; (Liebert, R.M., 1986; Eron, L.D., 1988; Heusmann, L & Powell et al, 1984). Heusmann et al did a two year experiment on mitigating the imitation of television aggression by exposing the children to two treatments designed to reduce the likelihood of this kind of imitation. The treatments were successful. Parental guidance, explanation of screen portrayals and differentiating them or relating them to real life appropriately are all part of the substance of most of these treatments.
FOOTNOTES ON CHAPTER 2

1. A sequence of song and dance extracts from Hindi movies which is telecast once a week in the Prime Time slot.

2. Gerbner and his associates have been concerned about the beliefs television 'cultivates' about the world of crime and violence by the medium's continuing preoccupation with violence. The researchers have called this as 'cultivation analysis'. Its major proposition is that people who involve themselves deeply in television's fictional world (heavy viewers) should develop beliefs that correspond to what is depicted in that world - a sort of identification.

3. The main themes in some of the cartoons

POPEYE: "The problem can be solved by brute force which is obtained by eating spinach". So Popeye settles his problems with his enemies with his fists.

SPACE STARS AND SUPERMAN: Here we see superheroes shooting rays and beams from their eyes and hands, gadgets which can perform any feat, explosion after explosion.
SCOOBY AND SCRAPPY DOO: In this case, the characters are always hiding from draculas and mummies in drawers, cupboards and boxes while the beings are out to kill them.

What needs to be noted is the constant and quick flow of violent actions. Everything happens in split seconds, leaving no time to think. The eye sees everything and registers it all.

Evidence: During a hearing on TV violence, a case was presented where a three year old boy had poked his fist through a glass door in imitation of a TV cartoon and had almost bled to death. (Consumers Association of Penang, 1st report, 1984, entitled "Effects of TV violence on Malaysian Children").

4. A sequence of song and dance extracts from Tamil movies which is telecast once a week on the Regional (Madras) network.