

MEDIA EFFECTS

Is society's violence the media's fault? This is the question that has been asked since before television was in every house. Of course there are the different types of media today ranging from newspapers to online reports and stories.

There have been arguments upon arguments about this issue and over 3,000 studies conducted. Unfortunately, there isn't one single result, there is only an array of supposed answers to this undying question.

Theatrical films raised more concern and had a lot more violence.

Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive and is not restricted to this country.

Technology today isn't helping everyone to feel better about this dilemma. It is actually going to get worse before it gets better. There isn't only movie or news reports someone can watch to see violence, but also the new video game craze. Video games have become an enormous industry in the past decade. People from 4 year old to 70 year old own their own Sega Genesis or Nintendo Play Station. Of course there are a number of games to choose from...but what is the highest wanted game? None other than Mortal Combat.

The name speaks for itself. Just for the record, this game consists of choosing a character, a weapon and then fighting another character until one is dead. It also is equipped with sound effects for when someone is punched or stabbed, and also shows the blood flowing from the body when hit.

So many studies have been done on the effects of media violence on children. Most are concerned with the results, especially parents. If the government, parents or others are so concerned with the effect of their child seeing violence on the television.

Parents need to draw the line between appropriate and not appropriate. It would be a nice convenience to have a rating system on the television, but parents should be aware enough of what their children are doing and watching—that they are the rating system themselves.

The question now is what is happening to help this situation currently? The answer is quite relieving. All of the networks are on their "tippy toes" so they won't get a bad name. The Entertainment Industries Council, which distributes suggestions to the writers and producers of network shows and TV movies on social issues, is now meeting with writers to develop ways for dramatising conflict without violence and showing the consequences of violence.

What is the effect of violence in media with children compared to with adults? Children model behaviour they see in the media. If they don't see the consequences of violence, it will teach them that violence doesn't cause serious harm. Adults see more violence in the media than actually exists in real life.

There is also discussion of violence on TV not having any effect at all. People have seen so much that they don't really think about the actual act occurring on screen.

People have become used to seeing violence on television, but this has become somewhat surreal to them. They don't think of it as reality until it happens to them. When Violence happens to people or their families, they become eyewitnesses to violence. They have personal experiences—compassion sensitivity, fear. People haven't lost that.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Is There A Problem?

When someone talks about his or her problems in life, if you were to ask them "Is there really a problem? you would most likely get a vehement response, saying "Of course there is a problem, can't you see, don't you understand? Hardly an individual will sit back and reflect on your question before answering. Usually the reply will come instantaneously, without actually thinking or analyzing or introspecting over the question. This is not an isolated phenomenon, but one which all of us are prone to.

Practically every moment, we perceive some problem or the other. Life, for most of us, seems like a never-ending series of challenges and problems, some minor, some major. Most of our waking period is occupied in thinking about some problem or the other and trying hard to find solutions to these. We often feel that once we find a solution, we can be happy and peaceful. But even when we do find viable solutions, we realize that something else has come up, to take its place. There hardly seems to be time and space for feeling happy. Happiness, for most of us, comes in ultra-short bursts—a child being born, a wedding, passing an exam, landing a plum job, winning an award—but somehow, we are not able to hold on to this happy, satisfied feeling for very long. The next problem seems just around the corner. And paradoxically, we are able to hold on to negative states of stress, anxiety, frustration or worry for a long time.

—P V Vaidyanathan

Wearing seat-belt ensures your safety

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

Road traffic injuries are major public health problems and a leading cause of death and injury around the world. Approximately 1.2 million people are killed each year in road crashes worldwide, with up to 50 million more injured. Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari has already announced that the central government would now make it mandatory for all travellers in a car to wear a seat belt and a penalty has already been decided for defaulters, regardless of whether they are in the front or rear seat. In 2021, around 500,000 road accidents happened in the country, killing 150,000 people. If we look at the recent incident, the death of former Tata Group Chief Cyrus Mistry has led to a discussion on the necessity of seat belts while travelling in a car.

According to police, Mistry, who was sitting in the car's rear seat, was not wearing a seat belt. The injury thus became fatal. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, over 1.55 lakh lives were lost in road crashes across India in 2021 - an average of 426 daily or 18 every single hour which is the highest death figures recorded in any calendar year so far. The simple act of wearing a seat belt is the single most effective way to reduce the risk of fatality in a crash. The seat-belt is the single most effective feature in a vehicle to reduce the severity of injury to the vehicle occupants that results from road traffic crashes. Failure to use a seat-belt is a major risk factor for road traffic deaths and injuries among vehicle occupants. A seat belt reduces by half the risk of being killed or seriously injured in an accident. The higher the speed, the greater the impact at 50 km/h, it is like falling from a 4-storey building and at 75 km/h, it is like falling from an 8-storey building. The results showed that failure to wear the seat belt by drivers are likely to increase the risk of fatal and severe injury significantly. Moreover, distraction and road type road can contribute to the accident severity. Not just life, but seat belt use by front and rear passengers will restrain them from being ejected from their seat or in a high impact collision, even being thrown out of the car, thus saving them from severe facial, head, spine and thoracic injuries. As per the World Health Organisation, the use of rear seat-belts can prevent lower the risk of death in the rear seat by upto 25 per cent. Seat-belt reminders will go a long way, but there are those who will still bypass this, and then there are some who

mean to wear them, but forget or wrongly believe it's only above a certain speed. Wearing a seat belt should not cause any discomfort or pressure when adjusted properly. Seat belts have come a long way in the comfort department since becoming a mandatory feature in cars in the 1960s. Improperly worn seatbelts pose a significant risk to patients. The seat-belt is an effective safety tool that not only saves lives, but also significantly reduces the severity of the injury that a vehicle occupant may have sustained if they were not wearing the device. It only takes about three seconds to strap on your seat belt. That's less time than it takes to tie your shoe. Living in such a rapidly changing world, it's easy to take innovations for granted, but remember that seatbelts were designed with one goal in mind, 'to protect you'.

Turmeric- The Golden Spice

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Turmeric also said to be the golden spice is one of the most important spices across the globe. India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of turmeric in the world and 46 per cent of world turmeric trade is run by India. In India total area under turmeric is about 1, 72,000 ha and total production is about 8,51,000 tonnes. This crop is known for its multipurpose value such as for the medicines, colour pigment, spicy flavour etc. It is anti-cancerous, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, anti-proliferative etc. The curcumin found in it is used as a food colourant. Its annual growth rate in terms of area is 3.7 per cent and in terms of production is 9.1 per cent. It was originated from the Indo-Malayan region. Its scientific name is Curcuma longa belonging to Zingiberaceae family and is considered as the triploid. Its somatic chromosome number is 63. Turmeric occupies 6.6 per cent of total area of spices in India. In order to mitigate the increasing demand of this spice there is dire need to cultivate this crop in a scientific way. Turmeric is used as a condiment, dye, food colourant, drug and medicine. Turmeric rhizomes have yellow colour component as curcumin (3-9 per cent), essential oil (5-9 per cent) and oleoresin (3-13 per cent). Curcumin is used in cosmetics, preservatives, food industries and pharmaceuticals. The artificial colouring agents have been banned and so the use of curcumin is prompted. Curcumin protects the liver from toxic compounds as it acts like an anticoagulant by inhibiting collagen and by adrenaline induced platelet aggregation. Curcumin is also used to heal the wounds. It has antifungal and antiseptic effects. It has also antiviral effects and is found effective against the HIV. Various kinds of cancer including skin, colon and prostate can be cured by the use of curcumin. Turmeric can be grown on wide range of climates ranging from sea level to an altitude of 1200 MSL. It requires hot and humid climate with optimum temperature 20-30 degrees C for a good production. It is grown in loamy, alluvial, friable and fertile soil with a PH range of 5-7. This crop is water sensitive and cannot withstand the water-logging conditions. It is grown almost at all the

places including from sea level to an altitude of 1200 m above sea level. It requires 250-400 cm of rainfall for the healthy production. It is grown by the disease free mother rhizomes which are used as the planting material. Sugandham, Suvarna, Prabha, Rajendra Sonia, Narendra Haldi-1 etc are the important varieties of turmeric. The planting material should be treated with suitable fungicides/organic fungicides before planting at least for 30 minutes. The planting material is stored in a cool dry place or in earthen pots plastered with mud 2-6 ploughing is done before sowing the turmeric crop. 1-1.2m wide beds are made with 15 cm height and convenient length. The ridges or furrows are used for sowing the turmeric. In the Northern region the turmeric is grown in April and May. 60 cm distance is kept between rows and 20 cm distance is kept between plants. Around 20 qt of disease-free rhizomes are used for one hectare area. It can be grown organically by following all the organic practices. After mulching the beds should be mulched with green leaves so that the soil moisture can be maintained and weeds can be controlled. In turmeric 3-4 weeding are required to get the desired production. The crop gets ready to harvest in the second fortnight of February. The complete drying of leaves is the sign of maturity. The rhizomes are carefully dugout from the soil and after digging the soil is cleaned from the rhizomes and is kept in cool and dry place for the post-harvest. The yield of turmeric varied from 200-250qt/ha. Turmeric fingers are removed from the mother rhizomes and mother rhizomes are kept aside as seed material. Curing of rhizomes is done by boiling of fresh rhizomes in water for 45-60 and drying in the sun. Boiling is stopped when the froth comes out and white fumes appear giving out a typical odour. The boiling influences the aroma colour of turmeric and overcooking spoils the quality. The cooked fingers are then dried in the sun by spreading them in 5-7cm thick layers on the floor. The thin layer adversely influences the colour of turmeric. It requires at least 10-15 days getting completely dry. Artificial drying with the cross-flow hot air at a temperature of 60 degree C also gives the good quality and colour

to the turmeric. The yield of the dry product varies from 10-30 per cent depending on the variety and location.

The appearance of dry turmeric can be improved by smoothing and polishing the outer surface by mechanical rubbing. An improved method of rubbing is by using the hand operated barrel or drum mounted on a central axis. When the drum filled with turmeric is rotated, polishing is effected by abrasion of the surface against the mesh and mutual rubbing against each other as they roll inside the drum. Turmeric is also polished in power operated drums. The yield of polished turmeric from the raw material varies from 15-20 per cent. The colour of turmeric should be taken care as the market prices mostly depend on the colour of the produce. The crop mostly is infested with the rhizome rot disease which is caused by the fungus namely Pythium aphanidermatum. The collar region of the pseudo stem becomes soft and water soaked resulting in the decay of the rhizomes. Seed treatment with suitable fungicides/organic fungicides prior to storage and at the time of sowing controls the disease. When the crop is infested in the field then the fields should be drenched with the mixture of suitable fungicides. The crop is also infested with the leaf blotch disease which is caused by Taphrina maculans. Small, oval, rectangular or irregular spots appear on either side of leaves which soon become dirty yellow or dark brown. The leaves turn brown. This disease can be controlled by the spray of combination of suitable fungicides. Leaf spot is another important disease which is caused by Collectotrichum casici and brown spots appear on the upper surface of leaves which can be managed effectively with suitable chemicals. Shoot borer is the most serious pest in the turmeric which damages the crop up to maximum extent. The larvae of this pest bore into pseudo stems which feed the internal tissues. Spray of suitable chemicals/organic inputs is effective in controlling this pest.

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Role of press in democracy

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of USA defined democracy as 'the Government of the people, for the people and by the people.' It is the government in which the people have full rights to participate in the exercise of public sovereignty. Such government fully represents the people. Democracy accepts political equality and opposes the view that a particular class should have political rights or a monopoly. Democracy is the rule of law and majority based on public opinion. The word 'press' refers to the newspapers and the newspaper world. Newspaper means a periodical (regularly printed with some difference) printed magazine containing news of public interest and their comments. 'Freedom of newspapers' is essential for the success of democracy. Press is an integral part of democracy. It is called the fourth pillar of democracy. Expression of thought is mentioned in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. In Article 19(1) of the Constitution, there is a special discussion on freedom of speech and freedom of expression. This article has been interpreted as follows, 'All citizens have the right to freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peacefully and without arms, to form associations or unions, to move freely throughout the territory of India, to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to practice any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business'. There is no special provision of freedom for newspapers in the constitution, but Article 19(1) is applicable to all citizens, including journalists. It is the belief of the journalistic world that 'the news should be sacred, but the comments should be free,' that is, the news should be given in the right and clear

words, but there should be complete freedom to comment on it. In a democracy, newspapers have to play the role of an enlightened reviewer. In the case of the opposition being very weak, it has to do the work of strong opposition, too.

Newspapers have to work for the public interest. For the success of democracy, free, alert, fearless and impartial newspapers are of prime importance. The First Press Commission (1952-54) has said that 'opportunities should be given to study the different points of view of the people so that there can be exchange of views in public affairs without any hindrance or pressure'. Mahatma Gandhi has given three objectives of newspapers: (1) to understand and express will or views of public, (2) to create a desirable feeling among public, and (3) to boldly reveal defects and errors. According to Lokmanya Tilak, the aim of the press was to instill the mantra of awakening in the public and to develop the spirit of honesty and unity. He had said, "We write so that the readers can understand our thoughts, know our aspirations and develop in them a feeling like ours, so that people start opposing British like us. People are the Parliament which works continuously and does not prologue." Knowing the power of newspapers, Alkbar Allahabadi, the great journalist wrote, 'Khincho Na Kamanon Ko, Na Talwar Nilao, Jab Top Mukabli Ho, To Alkbar Nikalo.' With regard to the press, the statutory status of the United States is different from that of other nations. In the first amendment of the US Constitution, a provision was made for the freedom of the press so that it could play its role in a democracy uninterruptedly. The official power to censor the press was abolished so that it was free to censor the government. The press was

protected so that it could know the secret of the government and disseminate it to the public.

During the British rule in Bharat, many ordinances were issued to silence the press, but their results were reversed. The roots of governance got uprooted and the movement for 'Swarajya' kept gaining momentum. The Revolt of 1857, the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920, Champaran Movement of 1917, Bardoli Peasant Movement of 1928, the Salt Satyagraha Movement of 1930-31 and Quit India Movement of 1942 are the testimony to the fact that repression has always been costly for the ruthless rulers. Even in independent Bharat, when emergency was declared in 1975, censorship was imposed on newspapers. Its result is well known. The Congress government collapsed in the general elections. In 1984, the Press Bill was passed hurriedly by the Congress government in Bihar; whose sole aim was to silence the press. After the nationwide agitation in protest against this, eventually the Bill not only had to be withdrawn, but the then Chief Minister Dr Jagannath Mishra had to lose his throne. The question arises from the freedom of the press that whose freedom? It does not mean the freedom of the owners of the newspaper. It is the freedom of the editor and the journalist to write impartially. First Press Commission and the Second Press Commission (1982) had made several recommendations to systemize the press world in India. One important recommendation was the separation of Newspaper industry from other industries and commercial interests. No newspaper should be fully owned by other industries. There should be appointment of board of trusty between Editors and proprietors of the newspapers. But

no steps have been taken to implement many of their commendations of the Commission. Journalism is closely related to mass communication, which means mass information. It is the widespread dissemination of information, ideas and entertainment material through the medium of communication. These mediums include Akashvani, Doordarshan, TV channels, motion pictures, social media, newspapers, other publications and advertisements.

Traditional mediums such as folk dance, drama, the dance of puppets etc. also fall in this category. Mass communication refers to the simultaneous transmission of information, ideas, experiences and entertainment material to a large number of readers, listeners and audiences through small and large media.

The land of India has been a vast laboratory of mass communication and journalism. The country has given the best messengers to the world, who have shown the path of righteousness, nationality, equality, humanity, peace and non-violence. As a result of its rich tradition and collective experience, India has been able to solve many complex internal as well as external challenges. The Indian press was the torch bearer in the pre-independence struggles. It successfully acted as a catalyst in solving serious problems even after independence. In its struggling journey, it fell many times, stood up and then fought fiercely to protect the self-respect of the nation. It is marching forward with advanced technology and new spirit to safeguard democracy as well as the rights of the people.

(The author is a Technocrat and Educationist).

Make efforts to bring proper improvement in random routine

■ VIJAY GARG

Why should you fall when you have to get up? A few days ago, while working in the office, an acquaintance fell. It was time for a break in the evening, but people noticed that they were lying unconscious on the floor of their room. His chair had also fallen! Obviously, the people present there were very surprised, because everyone seemed that they were not so ill that suddenly such a condition would have happened. Sitting around giving his co-workers a rough idea of his health. There was information. However, people immediately ran and efforts were made to revive him. He regained consciousness when water was sprinkled on his face. Colleagues wanted to take him to the hospital, but he refused after regaining consciousness. He told that there was nothing to worry about, just that he had not slept properly for many days. Cannot sleep. Even after making a lot of efforts, he remains awake throughout the night. Perhaps he was a victim of insomnia. Actually, these days many people are suffering from insomnia. This disease has engulfed the metros, till now this disease is spreading in the villages also. Doctors believe that the modern lifestyle is the root cause. Eating untimely, going to bed late in the morning, consuming drugs, competing to earn more than the basic requirement for earning a living and worrying in vain have become a part of the urban

lifestyle. All these things are separate and intertwined with each other. That's why there is no way to avoid all this. It is good to reduce the requirements by being determined. Efforts should be made to bring proper improvement in random routine. Environmental pollution is also the second biggest reason. The smell of petrol-diesel and the stink of drains buzzing with mud keep floating in the urban air. In metropolitan cities, wet and dry waste collected from everyday use is stored in 'dumping-areas' away from the population. Not only the metropolis, but also the small towns are developing rapidly. Because of this, residential colonies have come up around the dumping area. The problem of stinky air is more in these colonies. The air is also getting badly polluted due to the increasing use of vehicles. In this addition, noise from loudspeakers and electrical equipment cannot be ignored. Due to these, a strange tingle remains in the atmosphere. This tingle can be easily guessed when the electricity of the area fails for some time. A relaxed silence spreads around us. The voices of birds start being heard. The rustling of the wind starts to be felt. Even if a very tired person is sitting nearby, his heartbeat can be heard. Economy in the use of electrical appliances. There should be wisdom. However, troubled by insomnia, the acquaintance thought of seeing a doctor. After talking to them and set-

ting some investigations, the doctor explained that they should not worry as they do not have any disease. As far as sleeplessness is concerned, they should not think that they are not sleeping. Thinking like this makes you sleep and far away. We frequently switch sides and scoff at ourselves. Feel yourself helpless in front of sleep. Whereas the truth is that for sleep, only sleep has to fall. The acquaintances were shocked to hear the doctor. After all, how is it possible to fall asleep? It is true that when someone suddenly collides with someone and falls, then people jokingly taunt - 'Brother.., what are you in sleep? See, let's go!' Seeing the surprised mixed silence, the doctor explained with a smile, 'Look, as a man does not have to think about making love, he just falls in love. Suppose he falls in love. So don't think, just fall into sleep. Be happy.' I liked the reflective words of the doctor. Familiar Returned assured. Thinking of logic says that only those who fall can muster the courage to rise. It is not possible to get up without falling. 'Falling' is the first and necessary condition to rise. That's why those who want to rise must first practice falling. However, falling has its own fun. If 'Jhumka' falls in Bareilly's market, the matter reaches 'Saiya'. If a beautiful girl falls in a crowded market, even the goons of the locality run to pick her up showing gentleness. Although falling is also the law of nature.