

**"Breaking the Screen: Unmasking the Impact of Media Violence on Our Children**

\*Chitra.R. Research Scholar, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice,  
Manonmaniam Sundranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu

\*\*Dr.Beulah Shekhar, Former Professor, Department of Criminology and Criminal  
Justice, Manonmaniam Sundranar University, Tirunelveli,Tamilnadu

Mail id: [chitramac2020@gmail.com](mailto:chitramac2020@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

To improve children's health and wellbeing, there is a need to address the widespread violence against children. Children's health is seriously endangered by their exposure to violence in media, such as on television, in movies, and in video games. There are known risk factors for the development of aggression, stress, anxiety, and depression in children, and all children could be at risk of any kind of violence. Significant media violence can make children less sensitive to the misery and sorrow of others. The long-term effects of children's exposure to media violence on their psychological and behavioral development are significant. Exposure to violent environments has a substantial impact on children's behavior and mental health. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the psychological and behavioral effects of media violence among students. For this study, a quantitative research strategy and a descriptive research design were chosen. The 60 school-age participants in the current study were chosen using the snowball sampling technique. The data was gathered via a web-based structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: part A, which covered demographic information, part B, which measured aggression, and part C, which measured anxiety and depressive symptoms. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The majority of school-aged children showed moderate levels of anxiety and depression, according to the study's findings, and 62.5% of them also had moderate levels of violence. It is recommended that safer media environments be offered to kids in order to enhance their psychological welfare.

**Keywords: Anxiety, media violence, Depression, impact and wellbeing**

## INTRODUCTION

Children are the future's guardians, and a society's ability to raise healthy children rests on that ability (WHO, 2005). In our society, childhood is seen as a time of unique protection and rights. It is believed that children would develop in a secure and nurturing environment. Violence is still pervasive and has a detrimental effect on children's development. Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, a group or a community, which results or is likely to result in injury, death, psychological harm, or developmental loss or damage" (Krug, 2002).

Child abuse can take many different forms, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Violence can occur anywhere, including in homes and families, schools, communities, and the media, among other locations. The abusers are frequently individuals who are closest to the children, such as their parents, guardians, teachers, law enforcement officials, and security personnel. It may have an effect on a child's physical, psychological, cognitive, and social growth. Childhood exposure to violence is one of the known risk factors for children developing stress, anxiety, and aggression. Children's physical, emotional, and psychological health are all at risk when they are the victims of violence. Children's health is seriously endangered by their exposure to violence in media, such as on television, in movies, and in video games. It has a detrimental effect on children's psychological and behavioral growth. It makes sense that children's psychological well-being is essential for their development.

## **THE STUDY'S HISTORY**

Childhood is a crucial time in life that calls for a lot of emotional investment and social support. Children's care from their families, other social networks, and institutions considerably enhances their chances of survival and quality of life. Additionally, caring serves as a reference value that aids youngsters in forming their initial thoughts about themselves, other people, and the world (Deslandes, Assis, & Santos, 2005).

Violence exposure and victimization are widespread among school-age children. It can happen anywhere kids spend time, whether at home, school, or in the neighborhood. Violence exposure might enhance a person's risk for behavioral issues and poor mental health. There are several causes for the beginning of violence against children. In today's technologically advanced and epidemic world, children are most frequently exposed to media violence. Children are influenced by the media, and they pick up skills through observation, imitation, and behavior adoption. According to Bandura (2000), media violence has an impact on aggressive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

They are physical, social, environmental, and psychological aspects, according to studies. As the prevalence of violence against children rises quickly in our society, it interferes with kids' ability to develop psychologically normally. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the psychological and behavioral effects of media violence on kids.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM**

A study examining the psychological and behavioral effects of media violence on school-age children in a few Chennai schools.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the frequency of violence exposure in schools and to determine the psychological effects of media violence (depression and anxiety).
- To evaluate the negative behavioral (aggression) effects of media violence
- To assess the relationship between anxiety and media violence aggressiveness
- To correlate specific child demographics with depressive and phobic symptoms

## METHODS

This study, which was descriptive in nature, involved students from particular Chennai schools. The study, which was evaluative in character, was chosen to use a quantitative research methodology. On the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria, the samples were chosen. The current study involved 60 school-age children who were chosen using the snowball sampling technique. The goal of the investigation was stated to the samples. The data was gathered via a web-based structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: part A, which covered demographic information, part B, which measured aggression, and part C, which measured anxiety and depressive symptoms. In order to gather data regarding the effects of media violence on youngsters, a Google form was created. To gather the data, a Google link was made and sent to the samples through email. Participants answered the questions on the Google platform directly. Each questionnaire was submitted using the Google platform once it was finished, and the finished database could be retrieved as a Microsoft Excel document. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the data collection and analysis.

## MATERIALS

Based on the data acquired from the review of the literature, the study tools were created. Schoolchildren's demographic information was gathered via a semi-structured questionnaire. The instrument included four components, including:

**Section I:** Demographic data It emphasized demographic data such as age, gender, educational level, religion, family type, number of siblings, family structure, household income, and parent-child relationships.

Exposure to media violence in **Part II** this section, which included 10 items, was meant to collect data on children's exposure to media violence.

**Part III:** Depression Level: A 4-point Likert scale with 10 items was used to determine the level of depression. Each item is given a rating of never (0), occasionally (1), frequently (2), or always (3). 30 is the maximum score. The percentage was computed after adding up the overall score.

**Part IV:** Level of Anxiety: A four-point Likert scale with 15 items was used to measure the level of anxiety. Each item was given a rating of never (0), occasionally (1), frequently (2), and always (3). 45 is the maximum score. The percentage was computed after adding up the overall score.

**Section V:** Level of Aggression: A 30-item aggression inventory was used to gauge level of aggression. The overall score was added up, and the percentage was computed.

## **Analyzing data**

To enable computation, data were fed into the computer precisely and accurately. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. This study included both descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **RESULTS Background Details**

The majority of the kids (70%) were under the age of 13, while the remaining 25% and 5% were 14 and 15 years old, respectively. In terms of gender, 58.3% of them were men and 41.75 were women. Hindus made up the majority of children (75%), who made up 66.7% of nuclear or single families. In terms of the number of siblings, 50% of kids had one sibling and 13.3% had more than two. The majority of the kids (86.7%) were residing with both parents. 25% of children had poor relationships with their parents, while 48.3% had average relationships. Only 25% of youngsters had positive relationships with their siblings, while 46.7% had average relationships.

## **Detailed information about exposure to violence**

100% of the samples had access to media violence through television, movies, and social media.

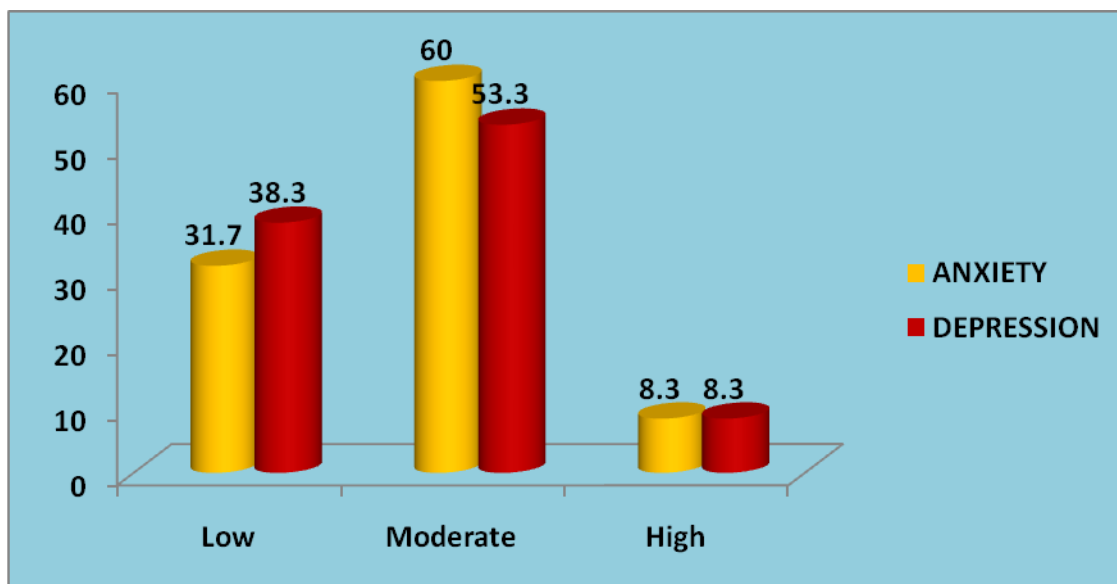
## **Impact of media violence on the mind**

53.3% of them scored as having a moderate level of anxiety, whereas 38.3% of the kids scored as having a low level. The majority of the kids (60%) who experienced depression had a moderate level of it.

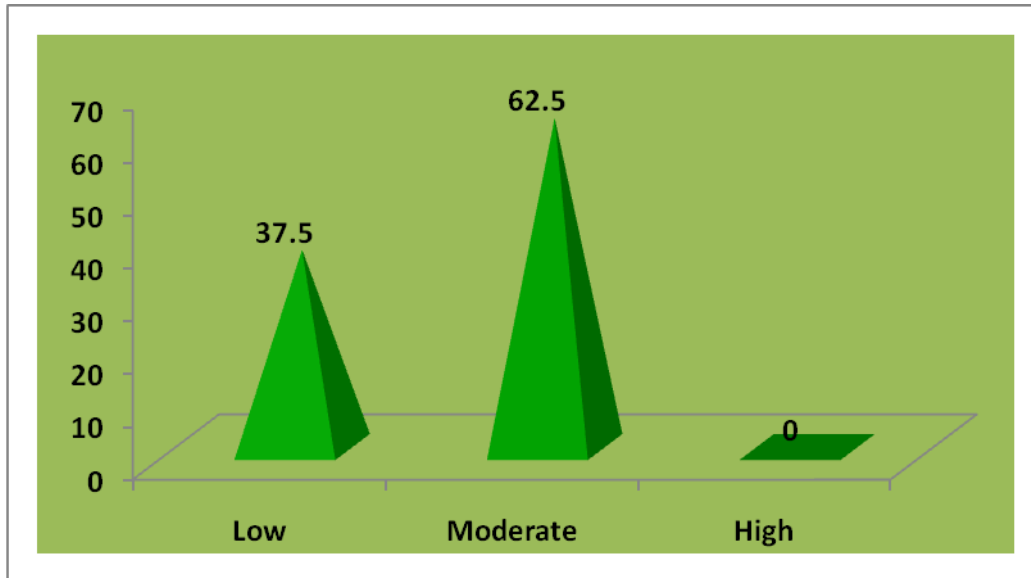
At the P0.01 level of significance, there was a statistically significant correlation between anxiety level and exposure to violence. The level of anxiousness did not significantly correlate with the demographic characteristics of children.

### Media violence's effects on behavior

The results of the aggression assessment indicate that 62.5% of the kids had moderate levels of aggression, 37.5% of them had low levels, and none of them had high levels. At the P0.01 threshold of significance, there was a positive association between anxiety level and aggressive behavior.



**Fig.1: Percentage distribution of psychological impact of media violence**



**Fig.2: Percentage distribution of behavioral impact of media violence**

## RECOMMENDATION

Children need to be protected from violence by criminologists and child health nurses. To lessen the effects of media violence, awareness campaigns for teachers, parents, and kids must be run. The suggestions are,

- Ahead-of-time advice for parents and teachers about how media violence affects children's development
- Tell parents to disconnect the internet, mobile devices, and televisions from the bedroom.
- Encourage parents to minimize screen time and emphasize the value of kid-friendly media
- Limit the time you spend playing violent video games.
- Positive parenting techniques to enhance the standard of child raising activities. Assisting parents in selecting healthy media for their kids.



- Parents can receive counseling about developmentally appropriate methods of discipline as well as information about the effects of media violence on children.
- Tell parents to keep an eye on and limit their kids' media use.
- Screening tool to detect children's early exposure to media violence and lessen its long-term effects.
- Steps to improve the School Mental Health Service to improve children's mental health.
- Behavior modification and counseling for kids who have psychological issues

## CONCLUSION

Children's behavioral and psychological issues are largely caused by media violence. The study's findings made a clear connection between exposure to media violence and its psychological and behavioral effects. The majority of the children in the study showed moderate levels of anxiety and depression, and 62.5% of school-age children had moderate levels of aggression, according to the study's findings. The right to an unviolent life is guaranteed to every child. It is claimed that in order to promote children's psychological welfare, a safer media environment must be offered to them. It may work well to lessen the effects of media violence.

## REFERENCES:

1. Barnish M (2004). Domestic violence: A literature review.HM Inspectorate of Probation.Downloadedfrom"http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/probation/inspprob/index.
2. Biersteker L, Robinson S (2000). Socio-economic policies: Their impacton children in South Africa. In D. Donald, A. Dawes & J. Louw (Eds.),Addressing childhood adversity (pp. 26–59). Cape Town, SA: DavidPhilip.

3. Boyce WT, Ellis BJ (2005). Biological sensitivity to context: I. Anevolutionary-Developmental theory of the origins and functions of stress reactivity. *Dev. Psychopathol.*, 17:271–301.
4. Bronfenbrenner U (1994). Ecological models of human development. *Int. Encyclopedia Educ.* 3: 2nd. Ed. Elsevier: Oxford.
5. Margolin, G, and Gordis, E B, 2000, ‘The effect of family and community violence on children’, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51, 445-479.
6. Olusegun, E, (2014), Domestic violence, risky family environment and children: A bio-psychology perspective. *International Journal of Psychology and Counseling*, 6(8):107-118
7. Rivett M, Kelly S (2006). From awareness to practice: children, domestic violence and child welfare. *Child Abuse Rev.* 15:224–242
8. United Nations Children’s Fund, (2016), Regional office for South Asia, Violence against children in education settings in South Asia, downloaded from “<https://www.unicef.org>
9. World health organization, (2018), INSPIRE Handbook: action for implementing seven strategies for ending violence against children, downloaded from <https://www.who.int>”
10. Zerk D, Mertin P & Proeve M 2009. Domestic violence and maternal reports of young children’s functioning. *Journal of Family Violence* 24(7):423–432

11. WHO. Global Estimates of Health Consequences Due to Violence against Children. Background Paper to the UN Secretary General Study on Violence against Children. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2006
12. Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B., & Lozano, R. (Eds.). (2002). *World report on violence and health*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.
13. World Report on Violence and Health, published by the World Health Organization. Geneva: WHO, 2002
14. McCauley E, Pavlidis K, Kendall K: Developmental precursors of depression: the child and the social environment. In *The depressed child and adolescent*. Edited by Goodyer I. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press; 2001:46–78.
15. Bartol C (2002) *Criminal behaviour: A psychological approach*. Prentice-Hall, Upper saddle river NJ.
16. Englander E (2007) *Understanding violence*. Lawrence Erlbaum associates, Mahwah, New Jersey.
17. Bandura A (1977) *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliff NJ.