

## **Role of Parents in Raising Children in Digital World; Special Reference to Covid 19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

“How a child learns today, how they grow today, How the nature of childhood can be explained in the present scenario”. Children decides how the world is going to be after some years. They are the ones who are vital for generating a better world. We are residing in the age in which specialists in digital technologies are making strive to push their boundaries on turning into highest fine in science, beyond our imagination. Digital world has given a new clarification to technological understanding which is now used as a mode of expression, interactions, entertainments, gaining information etc. Digital world helped children to develop themselves by learning, socialize and unwind. As people are more connected than ever before, many children have access to digital or electronic gadgets and social media platforms. As we have seen in this period, children learn to use tablets and smartphones before they learn to walk and talk. Apart from the limitless online opportunities, the digital world brings new risks like cyber-bullying in children. Parents are increasingly playing active role in children’s education. During covid-19 pandemic, the lockdown made children to be more addicted to digital platforms, elec-

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tronic gadgets and social medias that follow children from their playground to gadgets. Modern childhood is at intersection between emotional well-being and new technologies. These situations creates changes in family functioning and therefore it affects the development of children. The present study explores how parenting and friendships have changed today. It also examines how digital media affected children during lockdown.

Key words: Raising children, Digital world, COVID 19

## **Introduction**

Today's children and adolescents are immersed in both traditional and new forms of digital media. Research on traditional media, such as television, has identified health concerns and negative outcomes that correlate with the duration and content of viewing. Over the past decade, the use of digital media, including interactive and social media, has grown, and research evidence suggests that these newer media offer both benefits and risks to the health of children and teenagers. Evidence-based benefits identified from the use of digital and social media include early learning, exposure to new ideas and knowledge, increased opportunities for social contact and support, and new opportunities to access health promotion messages and information. Risks of such media include negative health effects on sleep, attention, and learning; a higher incidence of obesity and depression; exposure to inaccurate, inappropriate, or unsafe content and contacts; and compromised privacy and confidentiality. This technical report reviews the literature regarding these opportunities and risks, framed around clinical questions, for children from birth to adulthood. To promote health and wellness in children and adolescents, it is important to maintain adequate physical activity, healthy nutrition, good sleep hygiene, and a nurturing social environment.

## **Differences Between Traditional Media and New Digital or Social Media?**

Today's generation of children and adolescents are surrounded by and immersed in a digital environment. Traditional media, such as television (TV), radio, and periodicals, have been supplemented by new digital tech-

nologies that promote interactive and social engagement and allow children and teenagers instant access to entertainment, information, and knowledge; social contact; and marketing. Traditional media, also referred to as broadcast media, typically were created externally by an established production source, such as a film studio, TV network, or editorial staff and were provided either to individuals or to a broader audience for passive viewing or reading. In contrast, newer digital media, which include social and interactive media, are a form of media in which users can both consume and actively create content. Examples include applications (apps), multiplayer video games, YouTube videos, or video blogs (vlogs). For children and young adults today, this evolving integration of passively viewed and interactive media is seamless and natural; the distinctions and boundaries between traditional/broadcast and interactive/social media have become blurred or imperceptible.

Digital media allow information sharing across a variety of media formats, including text, photographs, video, and audio. Today's video games, for example, often represent a merging of both traditional and social media, as users can virtually "inhabit" impressively produced worlds and interact with other users in remote locations. Video game participants can even work collaboratively to cocreate virtual worlds.

Evidence continues to show limited educational benefits of media for children younger than 2 years. Earlier American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations to discourage media exposure for children younger than 2 years were based on research on TV and videos, which showed that in-person interactions with parents are much more effective than video for learning of new verbal or nonverbal problem-solving skills Winpenny EM, Marteau TM, Nolte E., (2013) Exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol marketing on social media websites. *Alcohol*. 2014. This research showed that infants and toddlers experience what was referred to as the "video deficit:" difficulty learning from 2-dimensional video representations at younger than 30 months of age. The video deficit is thought to be attributable to infants' and young toddlers' lack of symbolic thinking, immature attentional controls, and the memory flexibility required to effectively transfer knowledge from a 2-di-

mensional platform to a 3-dimensional world (Barr R, 2013). Memory constraints on infant learning from picture books, television, and touchscreens. Before 2 years of age, children are still developing cognitive, language, sensorimotor, and social-emotional skills, which require hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers for successful maturation.

Recent researches has shown that, under particular conditions, children between 15 and 24 months of age can learn from repeated viewing of video demonstrations without adult help. Dayanim and Namy showed that 15-month-olds could learn the meaning of sign language symbols after 3 weeks of watching a commercially available video 4 times per week. However, children in a comparison study group whose parents used a book of sign language symbols to teach the content retained more knowledge about the symbols' meanings for a longer period of time. Building par asocial relationships with TV or video characters (ie, the perceived relationship that audience members develop with characters who speak to them, such as Elmo or Dora) also has been shown to improve toddlers' learning. Calvert et al(2015) showed that, after 3 months of playing with a personalized interactive toy, 21-month-olds could learn how to stack cups from a video demonstration by the same character, suggesting that building an emotional bond with an on-screen character improves learning potential.

### **Developmental and Behavioral Risks in Early Childhood**

Population-based studies continue to show associations between excessive TV viewing in early childhood and cognitive, language, and social/emotional delays. Possible mechanisms for these outcomes include the effects of viewing inappropriate, adult-oriented content (as well as some inappropriate child-directed content), a decrease in parent-child interaction when the TV is on, and poorer family functioning in households with high media use.

An earlier age of media use onset, greater cumulative hours of media use, and content that is not of high quality all are significant independent predictors of poor executive functioning (impulse control, self-regulation, mental flexibility) as well as "theory of mind" deficits (ie, the ability to un-

derstand others' thoughts and feelings) in preschoolers. Media multitasking, once thought to be a pastime only of only adolescents, now is observed even in children younger than 4 years. The orienting response to novel stimuli is very strong in young children, so their attention is drawn to the engaging and quickly changing features of digital media, such as animation, sounds, and highlighted features they can tap and swipe. These features, however, may decrease young children's comprehension. It is unknown whether rapid shifts in attention to and from digital stimuli may have long-term effects on children's attention span or information processing.

Because strong associations between violent media content and child aggressive behavior have been clearly documented, parents should continue to monitor the content of their children's media. Today, more children own and use mobile devices independently making monitoring and regulation much more difficult. More research is needed on how parents can best supervise and guide their children's media use.

### **Significance of the study**

Digital media usage has increased exponentially in current scenario. All types of communication can be done through social media. Individual spend most of the time in social media by sharing their daily lives and acquiring new knowledge. While talking about children, they also spend time with digital media because parents are the role model. Media in all forms, including TV, computers, and smartphones can affect how children feel, learn, think, and behave. Digital media play a very important role in children's daily life. It result positive and negative impact and also affect their psychosocial development. It increases the social isolation, anxiety disorder and antisocial disorder. It also affects the relationship between parent and child. During Covid-19 all spend their lives in their home and the usage of digital media is increased. In case of children, the classes can be taken through online. It will result the usage of phone increased later other social media can be used. Children on social media may be more likely to be exposed to violence, bullying, and hate, that can have detrimental effects on their psychology. It also affects their future and lacking affective interpersonal relationship, socialisation. The role of

parents is very important in the excessive usage of media. Parenting style is one of the important factors that show the behaviour of the child. The study helps to find the role of parents and how to minimise the use of digital media especially during lockdown days. And explored parental perceptions of the influence of digital media and technology on children.

### **Review of Literature**

In young children, use of mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablet computers, has risen dramatically since the Kaiser Family Foundation first began surveying parents of 0- to 8-year-olds about their technology use (Rideout V, 2011). For example, in 2011, 52% of children 0 to 8 years of age had access to a mobile device (although only 38% had ever used one). By 2013, this access had increased to 75% of 0- to 8-year-olds (Rideout V, 2013). Although these national surveys continued to demonstrate a digital divide on the basis of economic status, with less access to mobile technology and the Internet in lower-income families, a smaller study in 2015 called this disparity into question by showing that almost all (96.6%) 0- to 4-year-olds recruited from a low-income pediatric clinic had used mobile devices, and 75% owned their own device. (Kabali, Irigoyen, Nunez-Davis R, et al., 2015). This study also showed that most 2-year-olds used mobile devices on a daily basis and that most of the 1-year-olds assessed (92.2%) had already used a mobile device. Although a digital divide likely still exists in terms of access to quality content and reliable Wi-Fi, it is now clear that most young children seen by a pediatric health care provider will have used or have been exposed to mobile technology.

Exactly what young children are doing on mobile technology has not been studied in great detail, because mobile device usage is relatively recent and methodologically difficult to assess. By parent report, most children in the (Kabali et. Al, 2015) study watched YouTube or Netflix primarily, and smaller proportions watched educational programs and played early-learning apps (eg, alphabet and counting apps). A large minority also played games or watched cartoons. Survey has found disparities in the use of educational media on mobile devices, with 54% of children from higher-income families

often or sometimes using educational content on mobile devices but only 28% of children from lower-income families doing so.(Rideout V, 2013). Thus, younger children and those from lower-income families are more likely to use mobile devices for entertainment purposes.

Studies show that social media use patterns and rates among older children and adolescents have continued to grow over the past decade, aided in part by the recent rise in mobile phone use among children and teenagers. At present, approximately three-quarters of teenagers own a smartphone, 24% of adolescents describe themselves as “constantly connected” to the Internet(Lenhart A.2015).50% report feeling “addicted” to their phones (Felt LJ, Robb MB.,2016). Mobile apps provide a breadth of specific functions, such as gaming, photo and video sharing, and global positioning system monitoring. Social media sites and their associated mobile apps provide a platform for users to create an online identity, communicate with others, and build a social network. Among the myriad accessible social networking sites, Facebook remains the most popular, with 71% of 13- to 17-year-olds surveyed by the Pew Research Center in 2014 and 2015 reporting using this site/app (Felt LJ, Robb MB.,2016). However, adolescents today do not typically dedicate themselves to just one site; most teenagers maintain a “social media portfolio” of several selected sites including, as indicated by rates of use in the Pew survey, Instagram (52%), Snapchat (41%), Twitter (33%), Google+ (33%), Vine (24%), Tumblr (14%), and other social media (11%) (Felt LJ, Robb MB.,2016).

As communication moves from face-to-face and voice-only phone conversations to more screen-to-screen interactions via apps, such as FaceTime or Skype, daily communication is becoming intertwined with screen time. Texting, using a smartphone keyboard to send a written message or a visual symbol (emoji) to another smartphone, also has become a prominent means of communication for teenagers.

It is common for adolescents today to engage in more than one form of media at the same time, a practice referred to as media multitasking. This multitasking may include watching TV and using a computer (Brasel SA, Gips J.,2011) or being online and engaging in more than one activity. In one study of older adolescents, approximately 50% of the time students were online,

they were engaged in more than one activity (Moreno MA, Jelenchick L, Koff R, Eickhoff JE, Diermyer C, Christakis DA.,2011).

Adult interaction remains crucial for toddlers to learn effectively from digital media. For example, from 12 to 24 months of age, toddlers can begin to learn novel words from commercially available “word learning” videos, but only if their parents watch with them and reteach the words, essentially using the videos as a learning scaffold to build the language skills. DeLoache JS, Chiong C, Sherman K, et al.,(2010) in one longitudinal study of low-income families, 14-month-olds whose mothers had talked with them during educational TV programming since infancy showed more advanced language development than infants whose mothers did not talk with them during media use (although this finding also may have reflected how much mothers spoke to children in general) (Richert RA, Robb MB, Fender JG, Wartella E.,2010). The few experimental studies showing independent learning of words from videos at this age have been limited by their low ecological validity. Vandewater et.al (2010) have shown that toddlers lose the knowledge learned over time without repetition.

Research studies as well as anecdotal reports have suggested benefits of media use for today’s children and adolescents, such as communication and engagement(Moreno MA, Gannon KE. 2011). Additional benefits include exposure to new ideas and immersive learning experiences. Many social media platforms provide tools that students can use to touch base with and collaborate with others on projects. Communicating across distance is made easier by social media; these communications may include connecting via video-chatting with family or friends who are separated geographically. Traditional and social media can also raise awareness of current events and issues, and social media can provide tools to promote community participation and civic engagement.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To conduct a situational analysis of parents
- To understand how the digital world influence the children



- To assess the affect of covid 19 pandemic in children

### Method

The researcher utilized a mixed method for the study. Case study with five parents and quantitative survey with fifty students up to the age of 18 were carried out. Universe of the study is participants from Ernakulam district. Other secondary information have been taken from internet, books, magazines and journals of national and international authors.

**Findings:** The study provides following information based on parents.

- Parents have less time to spend with their children regarding their studies.
- Children are addicted to social media like YouTube and watching television.
- Children lost their interest in studies and become lazy.
- Parents face difficulty to manage fight between the siblings to use mobile.
- Children are using WhatsApp and games at the backscreen during online classes.

Fig. 1. Usage of time by children in Social media

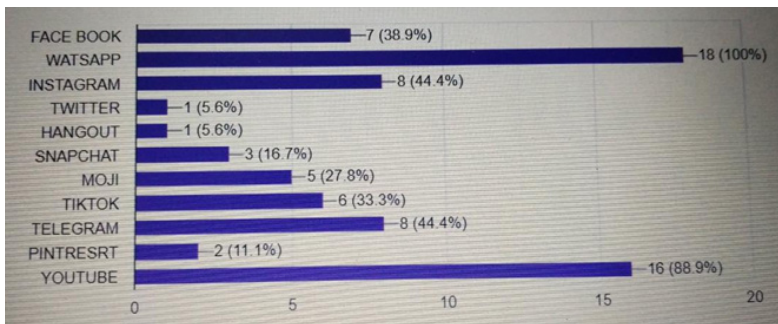


Figure 1. shows the most preferably used digital media by children are WhatsApp and YouTube. Figure shows all the social media platforms used by children these days. In this pandemic condition the usage of these apps have been increased tremendously.

The survey results show that 61% of parents are working for the children who are excessively using digital media. 27.8% of children is having single parent working. As the parents are busy with their schedule it would be hard for them to spend time with children.

The study shows that 77.8% children fight with parents most of the times. The parents and child relationship will be shaken when they fight for silly things like usage of digital media it will ruin their further relationship.

- Single child and the children, whose parents are working are more involved in the digital platforms.

- Most of the children are having their own smartphone, main reason for it is the online classes during

- Lockdown.

- Applications mostly used by the children are WhatsApp, YouTube and gaming apps. Facebook and Instagram are also used by the majorities.

- Most of the children are spending minimum 2 hours for using smartphone.

- Application used for educational purpose are WhatsApp, google meet and zoom.

- Digital world have been very much influenced on the children specially during lockdown.

- Most of the children are being driven to stay in digital world because of lockdown.

- Most of the children fight with their parents in using smartphone and they have their own digital gadgets.

- 50% of the students have said that digital media is affecting their education.

- Gaming applications are mostly used by children during covid time, influenced from their friends.

### **Case Study**

Participant A says that, both of them are employed, and have no time to spend with her children regarding their studies. So based on their interest they studied and it reflects on the exam result. They have two children the elder one is a daughter studied in Plus two and smallest one is a boy studied in 6th standard. They may not have any worry about elder one because they take initiative for studying and done their work properly. But in case of smaller one always playing with friends and watching T.V. During Lockdown days also most of the time watching T V. The mobile phone is needed for elder one and have no problem in between children. Because they may not interest in online games and social media. They are mainly playing football, cycling. In lockdown days also all children are at home on afternoon, evening they spend time together for playing. It's good for their health.

Participant B explains that their children mainly addicted to social media like YouTube and spend most of their time for watching T V. There are three children, one is not studying and another two are class 8 and 9 respectively. They have only one smart phone so during lockdown it's difficult to manage the conflict between children. The interest of children for studying is reduced and have laziness after starting online classes. As a parent to reduce the use of digital media by giving a proper time for their usage. This is the only option at this trending time of online classes.

Participant C has two children, one is in the 5th standard and other one is in 8th standard. They managed the time for using phone and digital media without affecting their studies. The only one negative aspect is that during online classes they use WhatsApp for chatting. The parent is much aware about the usage of digital media is important. As a present set a time schedule for the use of digital media, studying and playing. It's good to manage their studies well, give pleasure and productive time and also promote positive health. All these can happen only with the attention of parents is needed for their children. Otherwise, it affects their studies, health and over usage of digital media are raised.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The relation between media and health behaviors among adolescents have been backed by decades of evidence in traditional media. Studies have shown that exposure to alcohol or tobacco use or risky sexual behaviors in TV or movies is associated with initiation of these behaviors, leading some to describe TV as a “superpeer.” A growing body of evidence suggests that these influences also are strong in digital and social media. Several studies have illustrated that adolescents’ displays on social media frequently include portrayal of risky health behaviors, such as illegal alcohol use or overuse, illicit substance use, high-risk sexual behaviors, and harmful behaviors, such as self-injury and disordered eating. Evidence suggests that peer viewers of this content are influenced to see these behaviors as normative and desirable. Social media combine the power of interpersonal persuasion with the reach of mass media

Although restrictions exist to protect youth and children from exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana advertisements on traditional media platforms, such as TV, there is concern about the extent to which youth are exposed to promotion of these substances on social media Web sites from marketers or peers. The interactive and selective components of social media may offset some of these traditional media drawbacks, because social media use in moderation can enhance social support and connection. However, the specific way in which social media are used may be the key. Previous research has suggested a U-shaped relationship between Internet use and depression, with increased risks for depression at both the high and low ends of Internet use.

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