

## **EFFECT OF MEDIA FAMILY ON THE PRECOCIOUS PUBERTY OF TEENAGE GIRL: THE EMPHASIS ON IRANIAN SOCIETY**

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### **Abstract:**

*The main purpose of this paper is study of role and impact of media family on precocious puberty: physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. This article also seek, how media can have a negative aspects in critical age for teenagers. Paper, relying on the literature of sociology in relation to family and socialization and put the base on theory of George Herbert Mead. The theoretical frame of this study is borrowed from School of symbolic interaction and regarding to self . Delphi is methodology used in this article, among behaviors and opinions of girls in this age group. These negative aspects disturb the natural balance of growth and changes the behavior patterns. It also cause anxiety , violence, deviation of individual and low normative legitimacy of paint materials and tendency for relaxation .It can be noted that ,all affected product are results of using various media especially the false advertising.*

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**Key words:** *Socialization , Precocious Puberty , Media Family , False Advertising.*

### **Introduction:**

The spread of the electronic communication has distinguished the modern society from traditional society, today the mass media, especially television, play different cultural, social and educational roles and functions, the utilization of this phenomenon in the personality and behavior of the people in the society in a way

that the mass media are considered as one of the effective social institutions on the socialization process.

The TV as a kind of mass media is in continuous cooperation with the culture of community and society, the variety in the mass communication and their content can make some changes in the cultural structure of the society and mutually the culture of a society plays such a role in the determination of the number, kind and the content of mass media. The creation of the mass society which is the term Marcuse used to refer to "the culture of modern society) is done through media. If media can move to the eminent and human goals, the unity and collaboration of human beings will `Based on theories of sociologists of symbolic interaction school, family has a fundamental role in awareness of children. So awareness will be acquired from family environment can have an important role in formation of attitude of children.

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Brown believes family has an important role on the socialization of individuals. Children see their parents constantly while performing their gender roles.(Brown ,1992: 86)

The family as a social institution is one of those groups that the individual spend most of his time in it, the child learns individual and social reactions in this group, but the emergence of mass media, especially TV has made some changes in the sociocultural interactions in the family since the broadcasted programs are somehow in contrast with the sociocultural values and norms of the families whose result is the creation of some expectations which is in contrast and contradicts with those known norms in the socio-cultural environments and this leads to the weakening of the relations in the families and the disturbance in their functions. The puberty is one of those matters whose occurrence is due to the direct relation and contact with social institutions. The onset of puberty is related to different social and cultural, biology and personal differences especially

the hereditary trait in the different societies, cities and families, in recent years the communication revolution has been considered as one of the effective factors in precocious puberty.

The psychologist analysis and growth indicate that the onset of puberty has been lowered in twenties to early 21st century. The correct understanding of the onset of puberty is significant due to the fact that the society, family, school have the necessary conditions for dealing with the critical situation of the child in this stage.

According to theories of gender socialization, on socialization process, children will be not only existing of social but also find male or female characteristics.(Stanly and Wise , 2000:273)

The first intensive study on the psychology of growth done in 1990s in Iran indicate that the average age of puberty onset in the southern states (Khuzestan), eastern states (Ilam and Kurdistan) is different from other states of the country in a way that the average age of puberty begins one year to one and half a year sooner in southern states, the psychologists' studies in Iran have shown the effects of some factors such as media and its spread and their accessibility on the onset of puberty and their behavior in a way that the spread of media works against the differences and tries to remove the differences and direct it toward balance, in other words, the 13 years- old girl who lives in rich urban areas is susceptible and ready to accept puberty due to the accessibility of different media.

One of the problems of the adolescents is precocious puberty which occurs due to the watching of improper and immoral events and listening to the materials which have some restrictions. Besides the matters which will be diffused in the mental network of the adolescent, the studies which done in Italy show that the in terms of metabolic system the light and rays of TV and computer changes the secrete of "Melatonin" hormone in the children and lead to precocious puberty of those children who watch TV for a long period of time.

The media including TV changes the thoughts and feelings not only through auditory and visual senses and providing some patterns for behavior but

also stimulate the human especially in the early years of life when the human brain is under the influence of experiences, through brain massage qualitatively and quantitatively, but seldom we can anticipate the kind of media and the quality of change (as its effect is different in every individual), regarding these information, the present study is going to find and answer to these questions:

- Apart from improving the quality of life of children and despite the positive educational- cultural aspects and providing communication services, what negative effects does the technology have on the process of puberty in adolescents?
- How does the encompassing of TV and computer have changed the social interaction of children with environment? This interaction covers the relation of child with his/her parents, peers, society (culture, values and norms).
- How is the effect of mass media on the physical, social, emotional and intellectual puberty of children? Here two principal aspects will be examined: the role of the visual products of mass media on the identity of children in the process of maturation and the role of light and rays of visual media on the secretion of some hormones which are regarded as key factors in the child puberty.

Some investigations have been done in this regard which will be referred here: the researchers have divided the students in three groups and given them the same information. The first group gained that information through study, the second group through watching movie and the third group through computer's screen. Then the members of three groups were examined in terms of the rate of remembrance of information and data, in the first group about 85% of the students of the first group were able to remember the information, this was 25%-30% among the second group and 3-5% among the third group. Most of the information in the third group was about the imagination rather than the reality. This matter would become unhealthy when the content of delivered information through media is romantic, sexual and aggressive. And the access of children to this kind of information would have severe mental and social consequences and effects on the maturation and puberty. Such programs lead to sexual deviations,

aggression, addiction, antisocial behavior, weakening of the family principles and the spread of crime and offences and in many cases irrecoverable consequences.

Our country is in the rank of 87 among 178 countries in terms of the availability of internet which is considered among those countries in the average level by the International Telecommunication Union, 35% of the users are young students and the mean time spend on internet is about 52 minutes. Through studying the families, we come to this conclusion that internet is going to an uncontrollable direction and families are no longer able to control the process of effective education of children. Considering the fact that the skills of children in the use of compute is more than that of their parents, so its use would be uncontrollable, so the child will go through puberty in the socialization by these media, and by training some anti-cultural aspects the precocious puberty and puberty crisis would be undeniable, on the other side, imagining the omission of media is impossible but some controls can be exerted on the electronic knowledge of children, but it should not be done compulsory.

Considering the decrease of the number of children in the families and the high age gap between parents and children, it can be seen that the child would face solitariness, these controls should be done intangibly.

Today's family should transfer their experiences through communication with each other by the help of councils with cooperative groups of women in areas. This transfer is better to happen in civil communities as the collective psychological traits can be more effective on the behaviors.

Considering the fact that the modern technologies change the mind and thought of children quickly and as the sources of changes are out of individual cultures, it is necessary to encourage children to increase their abilities in thinking and then give them access to these media. The first twelve years of the child's life should be based on the acquiring of knowledge in order the cessation of their growth to be reduced. The recent studies show that every day the internet and computer are taking the place of TV, so the risk of irregular and incorrect use of it threatens all the users, so in order to be sure of the optimum use of

computer in the children's life, it is better for the parents to be more familiar with computer and speak to their children about the use of internet and open the correct way of using these technologies to their children.

### **Methodology**

Considering the significance of this issue which is an interdisciplinary course and needs the experiences and knowledge of experts, Delphi method has been used as the main method, so the views of the experts in communication, educational sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology and consultants were asked in order to provide the ground for studies. In the second stage, by the use of these experiences, the voting was done among 11-14 years old girls (Nedaye Vahdat Secondary School, Arak, 2010), and the obtained results were examined by the views of experts and in the next stage the librarian method was used in completion of interview and observation as the secondary tools of the research. The population was the 11 to 14 years- old girls from Nedaye Vahdat secondary school who were examined through observation and interview.

Discussion (Puberty and the effects of environment according to the expert's view)

The first studies done on the puberty dates back to the researches of "Market Mid" in Samera Island, the results provided the ground for those experts who believed that puberty relates just to biology directly. Mid showed that the symptoms of puberty should not be considered as the effect of internal and physical changes, these symptoms will be varied according to the sociocultural conditions, the researches of Mid on the Samera and Gineno are among the traditional sociological and anthropological works which has preserved its controversial identity and is considered as a pattern for the ethnographical researches. Examining the puberty issue, he showed that despite the common believes "The Puberty Crisis" is not a universal phenomenon and it can be reinforced or removed based on the specific kind of training and cultural transfer. The Meud's emphasis in the culture and personality school is on the process of cultural transfer and socialization of people. He believed that the manner of this transfer shapes the people's personality, so the most important goal of

anthropologists should be the examination of educational and training patterns in order to understand the way culture affects individual, the relation of dominant dimension on each individual with the culture. In the modern world which is under the influence of media culture, according to Meud's findings, it can be understood that the media can be an effective factor on the awareness and the way it is shaped, since in modern world, different kinds of media have surrounded the life of people and individual within different ages, so it can influence the growth path, and this is "the effect of culture on individual", media culture and collective culture.

Other studies confirm this issue including the following: Japanese researchers concluded that peaceful and kind family relation can prevent precocious puberty, also anxiety and stress can predate puberty age for 18 months.

According to psychologists the association between father and daughter can play a great role in calmness of young girls in puberty, lack of attention and support are regarded as the causes of precocious puberty in girls. Besides, eating unhealthy foods, low consumption of fruits and vegetables, emotional pressure, family problems, obtaining good information from the environment, peers and media lead to the precocious puberty in both genders.

Psychologists and educational experts believe that with the spread of scientific and information technologies, families spend less time with their children so due to the decrease of supervision and looking for the children on the side of parents, children and adolescents notice the matters and issues which should learn later on time, very soon. And considering the fact that in Iran, the sexual needs will be satisfied after marriage and within religious believes the adolescent who reach puberty will be longer in this period than his peers in other cultures. Also as he spends much more energy and time to get along with it, providing them the information based on the age considerations and also creating a peaceful environment in the family and community are as solutions for reducing pressures in puberty. Inopportune friend making, immoral behavior in low ages and the tendency to street friends with opposite sex are among the

precocious puberty crisis which is affected by media. Family, school, community and media are most significant in the creation of free time and the proper growth of instincts. In all communities, the puberty age determine the future and personality of the individual, so all people and institutions who are in contact with children and adolescents are responsible for its guidance.

Consultants' experts believe that sexual puberty is combined with cognitive and emotional puberty, precocious puberty is regarded a negative phenomenon for Iranian girls. Uncontrolled use of computer and TV will impose the child in the harmful effects (which is physical, social and mental disturbances) also sight problems, skeleton disturbances, overweight, decrease of social skills, problems in interaction and communication, electronic addiction, virtual crimes and murder can be considered.

### **Technology and its effect on the child's growth**

In world today which is called the age of information explosion, the concerns of most families is the awareness of their children's learning and supervision of their learning. The growth experts believe that the growth of child's mind can be diagnosed from two perspectives, one is social psychology that child acquire from outside and through family, school and educational transfer and the other is the automatic learning of the child which is called intelligence, i.e. what the child learn by its own. The use of mass media such as TV, computer and games is one of the most significant ways of socialization in so far as in childhood one of the several sources of child's socialization is these mass media and they are inevitable in today's world.

What is relevant in Iran is the different status of production and construction and the difference in the content of these programs, as the children might be familiar with different dimensions of society and it is probable that they cannot find healthy and good constructs. So it might be for this reason that most of consultants and teachers are against TV and computer in children and adolescent's room. The presence of electronic devices in the children's room will reduce the time of families' gathering together and it might increase the early



familiarization of children with sexual matters, the social interactions and the time of peer playing would be removed. The negative consequences of this matter can be seen in schools, usually these children pay little attention to the instructions in their class and they are willing to be independent and autonomous whose result would be social retreat.

The use of TV and computer could be effective in the mental growth of the child when other conditions for education are in their best position such as life environment, in order to provide the health and happiness in children. What the TV offers to child might be effective in the psychological growth and abstract intelligence and personal health but it cannot be responsive to the social intelligence and physical needs of the child. Excessive use of such tools would create some disturbances in the child's growth curve, the child would live in a virtual space and far from social activities like playing with peers and this is far from real life situation so the confrontation of child with the society would be problematic in future.

The surrounding of TV and computer might lead to the weakening of social relation of children with their parents. On the other hand high variation of resources and media programs will lead to disappearing of homogeneity between children and surrounding environment, as the community needs some people to make some literatures and behavioral patterns among them, so with the presence of media the least consensus among people within the society and their common norms and social felicity would be disturbed.

Eric Sigmon believes that excessive watching of TV in childhood will lead to severe disturbances; the messages of this program would not be good but the main problem is the unlimited and uncontrolled use of TV. Most families allow their children to watch TV unlimitedly in order to avoid spending money for their creation.

Adolescents constitute the largest TV and computer audiences, in a study done in England it was shown that the England adolescent spend one third of their life, i.e. 7.5 hours within a day, watching TV and playing computer game. Offensive programs and romantic movies for adults will influence them in a way

that some of them become woolgatherer, fierce behavior and the imitation of romantic and sexual behavior without any instinctual base threaten human's future, excessive overweight, Alzheimer, diabetes and decrease of defensive power were among other jeopardies among them. But the major risk was precocious puberty; the researchers concluded that TV has a key role in the decrease of Melatonin hormone secretion. The task of this hormone is to adjust the internal timing of the body and it controls the pace of physical maturity growth, melatonin is produced at nights and the cause of sleepiness at night is the secretion of this hormone. But the bright and shiny screen of TV doesn't allow its secretion at nights, so the amount of this hormone is less among those who watches TV late at nights. This hormone adjusts the puberty age in adolescents and when its amount decreases, it will decrease the puberty age. The rate of puberty age decrease in English adolescents equals with the rate of popularity of TV in 1950s. This means the society with nervous adolescents who have not reached emotional and personal maturity and seek the life in the sexual relations and its result would be the increase in the crimes and ruin of family bases.

Italian researchers also concluded that the children's body will produce and secrete Melatonin 30% more after one week on not watching TV and computer screen. So unlike past, today's children who are exposed to this ray more hours will reach puberty sooner than their ancestors, even some girls experience puberty when they are 7 years- old. This experience would endanger their growth and education when it is without any training.

Since the age of reaching puberty is variable, precocious puberty is related to natural stimulus in which the children and adolescents receive some information through the speaking of their peers of families and mass media which their knowing would be soon for children. Usually physical maturation will be accompanied with cognitive and emotional maturation, the child who reaches precocious puberty will make some problems for family and community, the necessity for entering maturation is to have enough knowledge of this period and if due to lack of attention of parents, school and community (media) the child

reaches precocious puberty, the first problems will be inclined toward family, community and school.

Most experts believe that computer and TV has a destructive effect on the growth and intelligence of child, the TV literature blocks the progress and development of child's intelligence, since the mind of child reacts to the radiated ray and stop thinking process. In this regards, the TV industries would react to this, they introduces some products in programs for children and promote and develop the TV industry every 10 years and make it more attractive. If the child spends most of his/her time on the TV screen, he would be deprived of other activities which are important for his development. Moreover it might happen that they are exposed to sexual and aggressive content which is not suitable for their age, and their parent should examine the site addresses which their kids have visited them by filtering software. Also they should encourage their child to interact more with them and show more intimacy with their children.

The report of Erick Sigmund shows that TV has some relations with 15 dangerous illnesses among which is cancer and fantasy. Children who spend much time watching TV continuously will become very fat and so the society should provide sport facilities and innovation in physical creation. The incident problem is the content of TV and advertisement and the change of aesthetic and behavior of people, also the duration of watching TV has a significant role in most illnesses, after working and resting, TV takes most of the time of citizens than any other activity. Here the main danger is directed toward children which make some severe disturbances in them.

### **Conclusion:**

Today, information technology has been spread widely and it is combined with all aspects of life from school to work place, bank services, trade and .... Also it plays a significant role in the children's life and it is increasing very fast. The fact that whether this technology improves children's life or not, how is the role of identity in this technology, and that we are facing a precocious puberty are the main focus of the study. Precocious puberty means the appearing of puberty

symptoms physically and hormonally in girls before 8 years old, first these girls are taller than their peers and then due to precocious puberty, their bones will be shorter in puberty. The onset of puberty is different in different cities, communities, families due to different sociocultural, biological and personal differences. In recent years, the revolution in communication and the spread of media (TV, internet, satellite ...) has been considered as one of the main factors on "precocious puberty" of girls.

The true understanding of puberty is important because the society, families and schools should have the necessary preparation for dealing with this critical situation of adolescent. Some of the natural characteristics of this period are the revolution that if s/he deals with it properly he would face fewer problems in his youth. Adolescent is a kind of being which is changing always physically and who is immature in term of emotional status, limited in terms of experience, subjected to the environment from cultural point of view, and lives in dreams and fantasy, but he is in fact faced with reality, s/he enjoys neither from childhood not from adulthood. In this condition the media influence him more.

Precocious puberty which results from socio-cultural factors deals with some matters like watching sexual scenes, hearing stimulus sexual stories and products from some channels, the advertisements of different media, clothing, curious, the need to love, unrestrained behaviors of others, morality, lack of normal legitimacy and so on, also some genetic factors and food is also effective, technical scientists believe that some chemical materials in the conserves, nail polish, shampoo and perfumes can lead to precocious puberty and in this case we will see the significant and negative role of media in the advertisement of such products, the media advertisements make some changes in the attitude and motivate and encourage more use of such variations and endanger physical and ethical health of teenagers. The results of this study show that the precocious puberty has two perspective: 1. those factors which were mentioned above, 2. Lack of height growth of adolescents. The adolescent will be subjected to some effective factors such a media, type of food, environmental situations and so on, and they will face stress and since they have not enough experiences especially

by the appearance of period symptoms, she will fear and will face social and emotional problems which can be controlled by on time recognition of precocious puberty and doing on- time treatments.

**Suggestions:**

- The relation between parents and educational teachers, friendly communication with the child in critical and vital ages are among the main areas for confronting with premature puberty.
- Respecting the factors and individual and family controllable factors and situations such as the supervision of parents on their child's use of group media, the use related training to media, such as proper training of children regarding puberty through special programs for experts and psychologists for providing the conditions for confronting with this crisis.
- Referring to the physicians for the examination and treatment of premature puberty for prevention of skeleton problems, height growth and doing the necessary examinations.
- Promoting the awareness of parents through media and special programs about making relation with adolescents.
- Increasing the media's programs and scientific reinforcement of them in terms of providing some solutions for problems about puberty critics.

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