

**VIOLENCE IN PASHTO MOVIES AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH BEHAVIOR: A
CASE STUDY OF MARDAN CITY**

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Abstract

The current study aims to explore the violence in Pashto movies and its impact on youth in Mardan city. Movie plays a paramount role in shaping people behavior. Similarly violence in Pashto movies also molds the behavior of Pakhtun youth. Writers through movies construct its own standard of reality which viewers follow in their actual social life. It is evident that Pashto movies propagate messages of violence which has direct impact on those youth who watch it. For this purpose data is collected from eight viewers and five non-viewers where the saturation point took place. This study is qualitative in nature. Study found that viewers are more exposed towards Pashto violent movies which influenced them for excessive use of Kalashnikov; make them vulgar and immoral in their social life. Data also indicated that viewers are more inclined towards committing crimes than non-viewers because of their exposure to Pashto movies.

Keywords: Pashto, Movies, Violence, Aggression, Kalashnikovs, Immorality

INTRODUCTION

Movies have received much attention in recent years due to its impact on society at large. Among the movies those which are based in violence or excessively fashioned in violent contents are subjected to discussion in academic, political and religious forums especially for its impact on youth folk of the society (see e.g., McQuail, 1992; Ammodie and Scott, 2002). Such movies are influencing the values and norms of the society and becoming a source of socio-cultural change among other factors. Violence in movies is the verbal,

nonverbal and physical aggression that has a significant risk of injuring for the parties concerned (Ali, Jan and Bukhari, 2013). It has many possible issues and aspects in the field of literature and impact on society. However, the studies on movies and particularly on violent ones are found to be insufficient to raise a theoretical base for its explanation and understanding. One way to develop the logical, rational and empirical theoretical framework for the topic under discussion is to approach it from the sociological world view. Initially, a qualitative study with a blend of ethnographic approach would explore the real picture of the issue under consideration. The present paper is an attempt to explore the violence in Pashto movies and its impact on youth at Mardan city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan through qualitative approach. This paper restricts itself to the aspect of movies and its impact like purpose and extent of watching such movies, its perceived association with crimes like use of kalashnikovs, vulgarity, and immorality. This in turn shows the changing effects of such movies on societal norms and values and portrays the image of Pakhtun ethnic group to the world.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is predominantly Pashtun province of Pakistan where Pashto is the native language of almost more than 90% of people for centuries. The Pashto is not only the language but also considers being the code of honor of the people which engulf a complete code of life and culture of the Pashtoon ethnic group. History proves that trends, patterns and standards in societies are changing with the passage of time. However, this changing pattern could not be considered to be the effect of only factor. In other words, change in societal structure and functions are the cause of multi-factors and in itself are a multi-dimensional in nature. Among these factors, one of the critical factors of change in society is electronic media. This electronic media could be considered as opinion leaders in the modern time particularly for the youth. Hence, it has the potential of shaping the attitude and values of the society. Pashtoon society is no exception to this universal social norm of change.

One of the aspects of electronic media is movies which attract a large number of populations of every age but youth in dominant number especially to violent driven movies. In such violent movies there are immoral dialogues which threatened the ethical values and social norms of the society. Along with immoral dialogues, the physical violence is crafted in such movies which endanger the attitude of the youth by imitating such dangerous and

aggressive behavior in their routine life (Amodei and Scott, 2002). Hence, Carter and Weaver (2003) argue that movies are the only single factor responsible for media violence in a society. Children and teenager spend most of their time watching violent media. A survey estimated that a typical child views 10,000 murders, rapes, and aggravated assaults in a single year on television (Huston et al., 1992; Gerbner and Gross, 1970). Similarly, Bandura Ross and Ross (1963) state that “aggression in films causes aggressive behavior. Sometimes both children and adolescents imitate their favorite movie character and imagine themselves in the ‘fairy’ world of film and television.

Almost all Pashto movies contain violent contents in one or in other way. Some humorous movies, however, teach the audience not only moral lessons but also provide cheerful pattern of life. The movies under consideration in this study are action and violent movies which are filled with multidimensional variables of behavior and show a wide range of actions i.e., parental disobedience, immoral values along with multiple murders, excessive use of fire weapons, domestic violence in their daily routine, punching, vandalism, sexual abuse, retaliatory murders, amputation of body organs, stabbing and physical torture.

At one time if Pashto movies spread awareness for Pakhtunwali (code of life of Pakhtun) and ethnocentric behavior among Pakhtuns, however, it present disastrous scenes of physical torture, and indecent dialogues, e.g., “*Charsikbhinamarsi, or agar marsi to doo teen aagaikarsi*” (Interestingly, the language used in this dialogue is not Pashto rather Punjabi). Translation: Marijuana smoker never die, he dies only when he send two three persons to hell.

Vulgar and violent songs “*Khudkasha dhamaka yam*” (*I am a suicide bomb*), *Sharabi Jeny Taakr ham Sharabi* (*hey Girl! You made me a drinker*), *Za gnadageer yam* (*I am deviant*), and some of the movies which display violence even in the name itself. Like, “*Munafiq*” (*A Hypocrite*), “*Khandani Badmash*” (*The Rogue by inheritance*), “*Wahshi Badmash*” (*A Wild rogue*), “*Prang 90 an acherhe*” (*Don’t mess with tiger*), “*Loofer*” (*Wanderer*) “*Nasha*” (*addiction*) “*Jawargar*” (*A Gambler*), “*Sartez badmash* (*A Fast and Furious rogue*) etc. are the movies which depict violence in nature. Such vulgar and violent movies affect the attitude and behavior of the viewers especially the youth.

Viewers learn aggressive behavior and acts from the movies. Habitual viewers live in their imaginary world characterized with their favorite hero’s actions and styles (McQuail,

1992). According to Anderson's General Aggression Model (GAM) aggressive behavior is created through social learning process interacting with people (peer group, family, office work etc.). It is created due to exposure to real life "real" situation or "imagined" situation (e.g. exposure to violent media) (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003). Some of the researchers argue that violent behavior is learned habitually in childhood that becomes part of adulthood life. Aggressive behavior is not learned only through one factor but there are political, economic, parental, and social and some other factors that cause aggressive behavior with different degrees of importance and time (Ammodie and Scott, 2002).

Habitual viewers live in their imaginary world characterized with their favorite hero's actions and styles (McQuail, 1992). This desensitization leads to higher degree of violence in real life. Therefore, movie is the only single factor responsible for media violence as concluded by Carter and Weaver (2003). From last decade electronic media has got freedom in Pakistan. At the present time media has a powerful effect on individual's lives. Especially electronic media has the potential to transform the life style of masses and promote a global culture. It is still a fact that although cognitive abilities of the viewers, the media has been successfully ingraining several values and elements into a large section of our society. The media has played a major role in positive developments like fight against terrorism, racism, gender bias, world poverty and spreading awareness about the world peace. This being said, no one can deny to the fact that certain media messages are harmful to our society. The media creates famous persons, fans and followers. It means that a large number of people are following an ideology or a concept, which lies at the heart of that song or the movie. It, however, has its own agenda of exploitation and money making, and it has also power of projection of its cause directly to the public (Ali, Jan and Bukhari, 2013).

A smaller set of longitudinal studies has shown that children who grow up constantly exposed to violent media have a greater risk of behaving aggressively in real life as adolescents and adults (Anderson et al., 2003). It brings life time changes in the human attitude and behavior (Trend, 2007). Research on violent television programs and films, video games, and music reveals clear evidence that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behavior in both immediate and long-term context. It is proved that exposure to media violence causes the cognitive map, aggressive image, beliefs and social behavior and it desensitize children to violent acts (Anderson et al., 2003). The present study

is conducted while keeping Social learning theory as a base for interpretation of the primary data.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning theory also known as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is another theory of communication, teaches the conceptual framework to study the link of movies and change in human behavior. There are three major elements in social learning theory i.e., environment, cognitive and personal traits that change the individual's behavior. This theory posits that learning is not something biological but it is the dynamic behavior of individuals in environment in which individuals learn. The organisms change their biological behavior temporarily or permanently due to the genetic adaptability (Stein and Belluzzi, 1988).

It is stated in learning theories that with the passage of time simple behavior become more complex. Imitating things through observation and strengthening it by repeating that behavior carries importance in behavioral change for the theorist (Skinner, 1953).

Main assumptions of social learning theory are as follows:

- i. Learning is cognitive process that takes place in social context.
- ii. Learning takes place when individual observes behavior.
- iii. Learning
- iv. Reinforcement plays an important role but is not totally responsible for learning.
- v. Cognition, environment and behavior all mutually influence each other (reciprocal determinism).

Social learning theory is mainly base on modeling, or learning by observing a behavior. Bandura defined three types of modeling stimuli that influence individual behavior.

- Living model: In which an individual show the desired behavior.
- Verbal instruction: This is a model in which a person describes the desired behavior in detail and instructs the participant, that how to engage in the behavior.
- Symbol: This is a source in which modeling takes place by means of symbol like viewing movies, television, internet and other media electronic tools through which messages are conveyed to the viewers.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative design is used through which researchers get reliable data through in-depth open ended interviews in the context, observing words, expression, sounds and feelings of the respondents. A total of 12 respondents were purposively selected in Mardan city where 8 male viewers of watching Pashto movies in cinema and 5 non-viewers of the age group ranging from 15 to 24 years which is consider the age group of youth by UN (1985). After collecting the data, it is qualitatively analyzed including narration of the information, interpretation of observational and non-numerical examination.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data is analyzed under various themes and sub-themes derived from the primary data which is interpreted as follows:

EXTENT OF WATCHING MOVIES

It is already confirmed in secondary data that exposure to media violence causes aggressive image, change in beliefs, cognitive map, and social behavior and it desensitizes people to violent acts (Anderson et al, 2003). Our research also support that long time exposure to Pashto violent movies causes change in thinking, aptitude, attitude, behavior and ultimately in life style .Literature reveals that children watches almost 10,000 of violent acts in one year on screen. Viewers are highly exposed on the base of their high frequency for watching Pashto movies. All respondents argued that they watch each 02 new movies releasing in every month. Some of the viewers stated that they watch their favorite movie three and four times. Three of the respondents had worked in Pashto film industry as they were enthusiastic to work as actor in Polly wood. One of the respondents said that he did not give time even to his friends because he was insane of watching Pashto movies and to become an actor. *Qasamdei ka malgaro la me wakh m warkre e (By swear, I cannot give time to my friends).*

Arman Khan added, as soon as I return home from school, I sit to watch movies. If not allowed by my parents, I go and watch in neighbor home.

PURPOSE OF WATCHING PASHTO MOVIES

While asking the respondents about the purpose of watching such an action and violent Pashto movies, the primary data could be interpreted under the following headings:

Implementing it in Real Life

In many of the researches it is given that viewers put into operation what they learned from the movies. Committing crimes and violent acts become part of the viewers due to high exposure towards violent movies. According to the literature that scenes, viewer like in the movies display practically, many social scientists experienced that viewers are acting in the same way, their favorite hero has taken rifle in the hand against the rival.

My field data also realized that viewers watch Pashto movies for implementing it in their real world when the same situation occurs to show aggression they have watched in movies in the same happening. Viewers become smoker, vulgar using abusive language, watch vulgar pictures and practice sexual abuse. Some of the deviant style and moods are popular in Pukhtun culture copied from Pashto movies. "*Mashumyawapainsa bara kre e, toopaikagaekhe e*" (*The kid shows his ankle joint and the foot above and kept the hat on the side to give a dashing look*) (Style of Pashto movie actor Hussain Swati which he almost do in deviant and violent scenes and is copied by many of the viewers (youth and children). These movies make the situation worse. It is stated by one person that he is living in his film imaginary world.

"My friend was fan of Pashto movies and was making style of his favorite actor using Kalashnikov, hence killed his cousin, died on the spot" (Waqar added).

We have peer group and company as viewers. We are not only highly addicted of marijuana, but satisfy sexual emotions with eunuch while watching Pashto movie in the cinema hall. In this "Nayab Pashto Cinema Mardan", the situation is too worse. What we can't do in our practical/public life, can do here very easily.

Learning Techniques of Crime

Viewers do come for learning ways and techniques of crimes and to do it as the same situation happened in their real world but it varies according to the data given by the respondents. It has been observed, many children and youth have killed people in the way they have watched in Pashto movies. This is because those criminals were regular Pashto

movie viewer and was influenced by the movies. How actor takes rifle, what dialogue is going on among rivals learn the viewers. Criminals are released and awarded in the movies even for wrong doers that adulterate social norms, motivating youth for anti-social activities.

Watching Vulgarity in Pashto Movies

Movies carry diverse form of contents in which vulgarity is on priority and the main component of Pashto movies, show vulgar scenes (sexually explicit and bodily naked girls) direct emergence of sexual emotions and influence interest level of viewers. Collecting data on vulgarity respondents realized that all youths prefer to watch movies for vulgarity. *Nasha (Addiction)* is the vulgar movie of the time, is watched many times by each viewer as they are inclined to this very thing, which exist in that movie. Interestingly, on Google lists, Pakistan is on top of searching porn (The Nation, 2015).

ASSOCIATION OF PASHTO MOVIES AND CRIMES

Literature suggests that there is unbroken link between watching movies, crime, aggression and act of crime. Numerous studies conducted showed that there is close link between movies violence, anti-social behavior and aggressive acts in home and neighborhood. In other study Meta-analysis method study proved link between media violence and aggressive behavior, thoughts, feelings, physiological arousal and increase anti-social behavior in viewers. This affect was found in all types of media sources like TV, movies, video games, music, cartoons (Anderson et al., 2003; Kirsh, 2010).

According to the cultivation and social learning theory one cannot learn anything directly but from his peer group, social environment or having high exposure towards media. Media is sixth essential pillar of the society. Its influencing role both positive and negative cannot be denied in the modern world by any prudent person (Stresburger, 1999). Despite religion, social norms and education, media plays a crucial role of socializing people in its own socially constructed realm of society and reality. It is envisaged in the literature, theories, observation and field data that high exposure to violent movies increases spectator capacity to commit crime and subject them towards violence in their later life.

Researchers found that there is huge association between Pashto movies and crimes. They show it repeatedly and it influences the viewer's mind to commit violence and crimes

consequently, as these viewers are almost immature. They discuss film characteristics with their chums, and take rifle facing any quarrel because of influence of violent movies. When father treats the children aggressively they react too much violently that “*Plaara ta pa sabandepoyege?*” (*Father! You know nothing*) “*Bango pa nashaki yam Kalashnikov ta laaskomgware*” (*I am high and taking rifle*). Almost all the responses were in harmony with the assumption of association of Pashto violent movies and crimes.

Excessive use of Kalashnikov

Every conflicting situation in a Pakhtun society is considered to be approached through the use of gun especially Kalashnikov. Although, education in society has somehow reduced its excessive public image but still youth are shaped by movies and movies indicate it a sign of prestige, power and honor. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kalashnikov is considered to be a solution of every major conflict, dispute or feuds. Excessive use of weapon in movies and hero surrounded by his many companions motivate youth for the same practice. Viewers remind role of hero or villain while killing many people at once with single handedly showing his strength.

Kalashnikov as Pashtoon Honor

In almost all the Pashto movies Kalashnikov is displayed as a symbol of Pakhtun honor. *Hathyar d Pukhtun Kaly de* (Tr: Arms are the ornaments of men). Hence almost every Pakhtun possesses some kind of arms. Taking revenge is considered like an obligation in Pakhtun society depicting in Pashto movies. A dialogue of Pashto movie portrays this obligation as “*Vche da marhe Badal wanakhlama khalaqba ma pasekhandei*”

Translation: If I do not take revenge of a murder, people will be mocked upon me.

Translation: It's not your pen, it's your sacred trust (indicating to Kalashnikov), you will take it when you get mature, and will fire at the person in the same way, people say to their child in cradle.

In one of the Pashto movies encouraging Kalashnikov violence like “*Ma cherha gharebsara*” (*Don't deal with poor*) the mother of hero (Jahangir Khan) sell her own jewelry to buy Kalashnikov for her son because he has killed his enemy through spade and suggested hero that it's your jewelry go and kill your enemy through weapon not through spade.

Kalashnikov Influence and Feelings of Viewers

Youth feelings are miscalculated by presenting violent scenes and constructing reality of honor and respect through movies in media. Viewers imitate what they observe in the movies. Using weapon becomes a symbol of status and feel great honor and respect as Pukhtun. They feel proud, confident and view their selves as extra ordinary not only by using it but on taking revenge as well. This is just movie produced provisionally (having play weapons, bullets, and red color for replacing blood) that carries long term effects on viewers, especially on those who are immature. Hence these traits are internalized not only in their individual attributes but it takes high meaning in their peer group relationship.

“Khalaq dang dung kae, deizartamacha rawakhledazeiuki”

Translation: People enjoy music in programs, and viewer take rifle to open fire.

All respondents stated that youth do not favor use of weapon when they used to non-viewers of Pashto movies but it is Pashto movie that enable them for using it. According to a respondent I myself was not in favor of thinking about such harmful things, even I was not used to touch weapon at all but this is due to influence of these Pashto movies watching again and again that enable me emotionally and mentally to think about, like and use it in practical life.

VULGARITY IN PSHTO MOVIES

Vulgarity involves indecency, coarseness, profanity and obscenity materially and verbally in the sense. It is almost morally unacceptable, which indicates indecency and sexuality in actions or verbal talk while playing role in movies, which apparently seems threatening to the social order. Things which are measured as vulgar in one society may carry high value in relationship. Similarly, revealing dresses, abusive words or phrases, unfair relationship among male and female are not in line with Pukhtun culture especially involve cultural restrain mainly women, taking prestigious meanings.

In one of the reports it is noted that high dose of vulgar materials lead to night mares and anxiety which provoke viewers to vulgarity (Surgeon General Report, 1971). Similarly, the current research also reveals that Pashto movies are vulgar in nature. The recent Pashto film industry has crossed the limits of Pukhtunwali. The contents they

present in the movies are full of vulgarity like bodily naked women which affect the emotional level of youth. I find it in every Pashto film as they are *Damaan and Damaan* is the people having no sense of vulgarity (one of the respondents said). Indecency in dialogues, hooting on girls, revealing dresses, hot dance, in a place (furnished by bear bottles) among high male because they have drunk a lot, are major themes of Pashto movies.

Hooting on Girls

Hooting on girls is a concept, dominantly presented in Pashto movies, in which male touches female and or passing romantic and indecent remarks and sometimes kidnaps her. This theme is mainly highlighted in Pashto movies and sometimes showed as a method of retribution in Pukhtun culture, which otherwise is starkly opposite to the Pakhtunwali as Pukhtun holds high dignity and respect for female. It may exist in one corner of the society but not the popular or socially approved practice of forcing a girl in a way to make her as beloved or source of embarrassment in other cases.

All viewers condemned vulgarity as displayed excessively in Pashto movies as attribute of courageous man because Pukhtun is not the one who disregard women. The immature youth while watching such movies may easily become the target of honor killing and or enmity by internalizing and practicing such nonsense watched in Pashto movies (respondents said).

Revealing Dresses and Hot Dances

Revealing dresses are those which show body organ of female which propagates message of sexuality. Pukhtun dress pattern does not involve revealing dresses generally that show cleavage and abdominal area uncovered by clothes. Pukhtun female are presenting like Indian and Western girls, have not covered the whole body in hot dancing.

Similarly, hot dances in revealing dresses among several male and female while hugging and hooting them, do not paint real picture of the society. The way they show Pukhtun male female dance publically in grassland, mountainous areas and Durbar of Sufis (Place of Sufis) is against moral values of Pukhtun men and women. Such dresses become part of imaginary world of the youth film viewers and detract them from the Pakhtun code of dresses.

IMMORALITY

Investigating about impact of violent contents and immoral behavior in the movies on viewers, researchers sum up questions for inquiring it from respondents because like other violence Pashto movies show aggression and deviant behavior which is transmitted to the viewers. One person share an experience regarding immorality in Pashto films, said...

“My friend lives in Punjab, I suggested him to visit Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province, he refuses on the ground that Pukhtun are violent, aggressive and rude hence dangerous to stay in (He said)” Social learning theory submitted that biological determinants not lead to learning but it is environment in social setup that transmits ideas to individuals. Social scientist Trend argues that this learning bring changes in human attitude and behavior for long time.

Exposure to intense media injects hostile feelings and also it maps up the hostile mental framework of viewers that take place in their day to day interaction with people. Similarly in this study, describing about aggressive and immoral behavior with parents in Pashto movies, researchers found that it desensitizes youth for elder respects and deal their home members, friends and elders violently as happens in Pashto movies. They misbehave with their parents and irritating them. In daily life people call their parents respectably but after watching Pashto movies they call their parents disobediently as their conduct is being changed due to filmy dialogues. Immature viewers are more inclined towards aggressive attitude while ignoring their socialization by guardians though educated viewers are not easily influenced by these movies.

Likewise, controlling quarrel, dispute, or anything happening wrong in the society is part of human moral values but there is no space of sympathy for other in the Pashto movies. Words or actions youth have watched desensitized them. In the result of desensitization youth commit anti-social activities in later life as viewers learning remain for many years (Huesmann and Eron, 1986). Interviews suggested that almost all viewers do not care about anything happening wrong in the society, even there is some people as well who want to participate in it by itself. There are too less people who think about. It would have observed in today's situation quarrelling with one another, people pass remarks:

“*Pregdache kha yaw balmarg la uwakhei, Che starhe she pakhpalaba yaw balpregde.*”

Translation: let them deadly beat one another, when one become tired will stop the quarrel already (viewer said). Viewers become anti-human, keeping no sympathy for others and are cruel minded due to brutal, harsh and wicked behavior in Pashto movies.

CONCLUSION

Media plays an instrumental role in learning and socialization of youth of the society. Its influence and contribution in shaping the society is recognized by scholars as significant one. Pashto action and violent movies are one of the aspects of media penetrating in the society without any check and monitoring. The results of the current study give an impression that the owner of the Pashto movies are only wealth collectors and ignoring the social evils they are promoting in Pakhtun society. They confirm the sayings that man is selfish and pleasure seeking by taking their short term benefits and endangering the society stability and social order by waving to immoral, indecent, unethical, aggressive and intolerant contents through Pashto movies. This one sided approach of Pollywood results into reinforcement of the picture of Pashtoon shown in world map as the wild, barbaric and uncivilized ethnic group on the earth. It could be concluded that Pashto violent movie causes criminality in youth. Through such movies, youth are exposed to excessive use of Kalashnikov, becomes more vulgar and immoral in their psychological interior, imaginary world and real social life. Indecent dialogues, hooting on girls, revealing dresses and hot dance negatively affect viewers' attitude and behavior. It is evident that Pashto movies misrepresent Pashtoon society and its culture.

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