Abstract—The purpose of the study was to find out the perceived influence of media, the causes and prevention of anti-social behavior among youths. The study discovered that media has both negative and positive influence on young children and youths. It was observed that television has been found to contribute to youth anti-social behavior and violence. Video and computer games promote and trigger impulsive and reflexive response in children that, in effect contribute to the development of a tolerance for violence if not to training in how to be violent. Among the identified causes include internal factors such as birth trauma, low birth weight, low resting heart rate, cognitive deficits and hyper activity. External factors include family, school, environment, community and peer relations. The prevention is centered on the symptoms and causes of any identified usual behavior. The study made recommendations on ways of curbing antisocial behaviours among youths and children.

Keywords— Antisocial, behavior, Influence, Media and Youths.

I. INTRODUCTION

The problems of children are as old in history as the children themselves. In every society, the treatment of children is in accordance with its religious, social and political beliefs. As less developed society begins to modernize, the rate and the nature of its anti-social behavior are influenced by its rate of development. All over the world, a lot of behavior lacking consideration for others and causing damage to the society are found among the young children and youths. This behavior could persist into adulthood and have a long term negative consequence not only to the individual or family but to the community at large.

The behavior ranges from community to community. However, behavior considered anti-social in one community may be considered normal in another community as this cut across context and cultural, social norms and values of different communities. What could be put down to a mere clash of life style to one person could cause great distress to another.

According to Merriam-Webster (2001) Anti-social behavior is defined as “hostile or harmful acts to organized society or behavior that deviates sharply from the social norm. Anti-social behavior is a repeated violation of socially normative behavior, usually involving aggression, vandalism, rule infraction, defiance of adult authority and violation of the social norms and mores of society (Meyer 1995). The crime and disorder Act 1998 defines Anti-social behavior as acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the offender.

The media which is the umbrella term for various means of communication has become an integral part of human life around the world. The role of media in education, entertainment and information cannot be overemphasized. Media is a communication channel through which news, entertainment, education, data or promotional message are disseminated. Media includes every broad casting and narrow casting medium such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, bill boards, direct mail, telephones, fax and internet (business dictionary). Media create awareness to the entire youth thereby enabling them to plan on their development strategies.

The influence of the media on the psycho-social development of children is profound. The media has both negative and positive effect on the mental and physical health. For example, television has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects on society especially children and youths. Some research findings proved that excessive television watching have a deleterious effect on learning and academic performance, encourage irresponsible sexual behavior, violence, murder, rape, kidnapping to mention but a few. In the same vein it is a powerful teacher, where valuable lessons are taught example, racial harmony, co-operation, kindness, arithmetic and alphabets. Educational videos can certainly serve as powerful pro-social teaching devices.

No matter what their respective prevalence are, several countries worldwide have long started making all efforts to halt or at least slow down the rate of anti-social behavior in their territories. Mass media has been central in most of these effects.
Government officials, policy makers, and cooperate citizens can use this potent influence to prevent anti-social behavior and violence in young children and youths through such media campaigns as public service announcements, news reports or documentary television programs featuring effective prevention practices and programs (Christle, Nelson & Jolwette n.d.).

The young children and youths are so attained to mass media for information and cues about how to behave. The media have tremendous potential for reaching then with messages about antisocial behaviors and violence. Moreover, in television and radio, there are series of adverts and jingles which run concurrently are packaged to create more awareness in the minds of people especially young children and youths concerning dangers associated with antisocial behaviors.

Ruth, Charles and Gupta (2004) explained that exposure to behavior change communication messages broadcast through a variety of channels is the most effective way to change knowledge, attitude and behavior. The use of multiple media types is expected to reach a larger audience and help reinforce messages which can have positive or negative influence.

According to Hornby (2008), Influence is the effect that something or somebody has or the way a person thinks or behaves. It is the power which someone or something has to make someone behave in a particular way. Influence is used to refer to a cognitive factor which tends to have effect on what one does or a power to affect persons such as the mass media. Antisocial behavior has continued to ravage individuals, families and communities throughout the world.

### A. Prevalence Rate for Antisocial Behavior

The accurate figure of occurrence of antisocial behavior is difficult to obtain. Most anti-social behaviors are never reported.

The reason is that many people fear about the consequences if they report. They feel that their problem is not significant compare to what others have to deal with and a feeling that they may get no response if they do report. Vassallo et al (2002) explained that current method through which data on anti-social behavior are gathered include self-report studies, victim surveys and data gathered through police, councils and other criminal justice agencies.

These are useful sources of information, they are limited in their capacity to provide an accurate description of antisocial behavior, as it often involves incidents that do not result in contact with the criminal justice system or are difficult to detect, thereby going unrecorded. In some underdeveloping and developing, most people do not report antisocial behavior because they may feel that they may not get response if they do report. However, from observation the incidence of antisocial behavior is more on the male youths than the females. Smart et al (2004) assert that antisocial behavior is more common with adolescent, and that most anti-social behavior is found with adolescents between 13 – 18 years.

### B. Types of Antisocial Behavior

Western Australia Police (nd) defined antisocial behavior as any behavior that disturbs, annoys or interferes with a person’s ability to go about their lawful business. Flatly, Moley and Hoare (2008) perceived that antisocial behaviors vary according to people’s background and areawhere they live. Amanda and Anthony (2009) classified antisocial behavior as shown in Table 1.
### Table 1. Risk And Protective Factors For Antisocial Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Risk factors</th>
<th>Protective factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Prenatal and post natal difficulties</td>
<td>Social competence and good social skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antisocial Personality: Including impulsiveness, belief system and attitude which favor deviancy, restlessness, risk taking aggressive behavior.</td>
<td>Attachment to family, problem solving skills and good coping style.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Early signs of antisocial behavior including displays of aggression.</td>
<td>Internal locus of control.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol and drug abuse.</td>
<td>moral beliefs and values</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental criminality.</td>
<td>supportive, caring parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor family management practices (ie. Lack of supervision, harsh and inconsistent discipline).</td>
<td>Family harmony responsibility for chores or required helpfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>High levels of family conflict</td>
<td>Secure and stable family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of parental involvement, neglect, low parental warmth,</td>
<td>Small family size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic stressors</td>
<td>Strong family norms and morality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Academic failure</td>
<td>Positive school climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truancy and low commitment to schooling frequent school changes</td>
<td>Schooling achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility and required helpfulness,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Antisocial behavior according to Harradine et al, (2004) and Smart et al( 2004) could be classified according to duration of occurrence as follows:
1. **Adolescent Limited**: When antisocial behavior last a short period of time in an adolescent.

2. **Life course persistent**: Antisocial behavior that last from adolescent to adulthood.

3. **Misuse of public space**: Vehicle related nuisance and inappropriate vehicle use (e.g. Illegal parking), teenagers loitering and obstructs others from using space, drug use or dealing, people sleeping in areas such as park, benches under trees, or in alley ways, fighting or acts of physical violence and consuming alcohol in the street and prostitution.

4. **Disregard for community safety**: Horned and dangerous driving, noisy or rowdy behavior and intimidation (includes shouting, swearing, fighting etc.) drunk or disorderly behavior, including house parties, noisy neighbor’s, loud noise and music, urinating in public and uncontrolled animals.

5. **Disregards for personal well-being**: Drug use, binge drinking and drunken behavior, skipping or taunting from school.

6. **Acts directed at people**: Bullying people being insulted, pestered or intimidated, aggressive, threatening or obscene language and behavior, aggression or hostility towards minority groups and disputes between neighbors.

7. **Environment damage**: graffiti in public places, property damage and vandalism, rubbish, litter and failure to maintain property and abandoned cars.

Also, pick pockets, stealing, drugs/alcohol abuse, school drop outs, fighting, kidnapping, cultism are common anti-social behavior.

**C. People more vulnerable to anti-social behavior**

The people more vulnerable to anti-social behavior are Children from minority and immigrant groups, emotionally disturbed children, children with learning disabilities, Children in families in distress, dwellers in poor and disadvantaged socio-economic areas, people with past victimization experience and low level community cohesion dwellers.

**D. Causes of Antisocial Behavior**

The risk factors associated with antisocial behavior are classified as internal factors and external factors such as family, school, community and peer relations (Catalano, Loebur and Mckinney, 1999, Dodge 1999, Hawing et al 2002).

1. **Internal Risk Factors**: Internal risk factors are described as individual, within the self, and intra psychic (Roy, 200). This could be classified as physical and Psychological characteristics.

   - **The physical characteristics factor include**: pregnancy and delivery trauma, low birth weight, dysfunction. Psychological characteristics are cognitive deficits, hyperactivity, concentration problems, restlessness, risk taking and aggressiveness (Hawkins et al 2000).

2. **External Risk Factors**: These include Family, Family Structure, Parent Child Relationships, family structure, Schools, Community and Peer group.

   - **Family**: overall, the family’s influence on a child’s behavior is powerful and stable, as well as generational in scope (Arllen et al 1994). The family is the first and the chief socializing agent for the child. It forms the foundations of behavior patterns of children. It includes.

     - **Family structure (family brokenness or intactness)**: this could be as a result of separation, divorce, desertion or death, and causes strains on the family. Quarrelsome or fighting each other causes traumatic feeling in the life of the children. This leads to child exhibiting hostility.

   - **Parent child relationships**: Parental discipline is a significant factor of anti-social behavior (Sandhu 1977). The consistency and fairness of discipline have been found to be significantly associated with conforming behavior. Affection relations between parents and children are of vital importance to the development of personality and character.

   - **Family structure**: Female headed households, material malnourishment, and poor parental care, in-utero toxicity and delivery complications.

   - **School**: School conditions can generate a high level of educational failure and alienation which can lead to antisocial behavior. The youths from low income status are always marginalized as teachers believed that these students have limited potentials so that there is no use in working with them. School is a place where children are universally cared for, supported and natured; hence marginalization should be discouraged in the school. Mayer (1995) identified school factors as: lack of involvement on school activities by students, the absence of clear rules and school polices governing student behavior and few allowance for individual difference in the school. When the academic curriculum and models of instruction do not match the students ability level he/she may become frustrated or board and less attached to the school altogether (Scott et al 2001, Sprangne and walker 2000).
Community: Community a shared pattern of feelings, behaviors and lifestyle shared together with close and frequent personal relationship with others (Basvanthappa 2011). Some risk factors in the community which contribute to anti-social behavior include: poverty and high levels of neighborhood disorganization (crime, drugs-selling, gangs and poor housing (calboun et al, 2001). Communities with increased population, with many broken homes, and with less responsible adults to control the children and youths, are also factors that put youth at risk for antisocial behavior. Limited opportunities for youth recreation or employment, the availability of firearms, and violence in the neighborhood are other risk factors that have been associated with the community (Dobbin and Gatowski, 1996, Loeb and Farrington, 2000).

Media portrayals of violence have been well established as a risk factor (Flannery 1997). Media have high tendency of exposing children youth to exhibit high level of violence and antisocial behavior.

Dwyer (1999) assert that high levels of exposure to violence on television have been found to contribute to youth antisocial and violet behaviors. Extensive television viewing, regardless of the content, has been found to negatively affect children’s behavior (Kauffman 2001).

Also, video and computer games that promote trigger impulsive, reflexive responses in children that in effect contribute to the development of a tolerance for violence, if not to training in how to be violent.

Peer Group: The roles of friends and peers are crucial in the life of young children and youths. Youth involvement with peers who exhibit high-risk and deviant behavior has been found to be one of the best predictors of delinquency (Farmer and Cadwallader 2000). Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication and occurs within intimate personal groups.

Sandhu (1977) opined that when criminal is learned, the learning includes: Techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated or very simple, and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.

Some youths who exhibit antisocial behavior begin to interact with their peers in ways that maintain and support the continuation of their antisocial behavior those that associate with deviant peer groups go through a process of deviancy training, where they are taught deviant norms and values by their peers. According to Henry (2000), these relationships become stronger and more reinforcing over the years and the antisocial patterns and beliefs become more resistant to change.

E. Prevention of Antisocial Behavior

The causes of antisocial behavior are complex and numerous. It is important to examine the symptoms and causes of any identified unusual behavior. Also look into those affected, why and the real impact of that behavior.

Proper antenatal care and deliveries by a skilled midwife will reduce complication that will endanger the health of the baby. Also immunization and treatment of any ailments. All risk factors are shaped by interactions between the child and her/his environment. For instance, a child that is raised in a family with poor conflict resolution skills is likely to develop much differed problem solving strategies than a child from a family that models fair and democratic approaches to resolving conflicts.

In the family the parents/one family member should be attached to the child. Parents must be caring, supportive be in harmony and should be small in size. Large family causes lack of cares on the children.

There should be harmony between family members and the family must be secure and stable. Parents also contribute to the development of their child’s behavior by setting rules in the home, showing respect for their child individuality, and by being responsive and accepting of their child’s behavior (Hanson & Carts, 1995).

In the school, teachers play an integral part in the development and control of youths who are exposed to multiple risks. This is achieved by providing a positive and safe learning environment, by setting high, achievable, academic and social expectation and to facilitiate academic and social success. In developing school polices children should be involved, this will make them respect and enforce the policies.

Schools should encourage social clubs and also supervise what students are doing there. Teachers are to convey an attitude of comparism, understanding, and respect for the students. Reward students positive behavior, goal oriented work; this will reduce drop outs in the society. Teachers should make the students feel sense of belonging by having bond between them and students. The school should have a career counselor as well as job training.

In the community, encourage recreational opportunities, volunteer activities and well – organized after – school programs that will keep student busy this will reduce antisocial behavior, since the rate is high after school. They should be involved in community networking, participation in church activities, taught about cultural norms against violence. Avoid child abuse (e.g., Street hawking), exposing children violence, drugs and alcohol, firearms and excess poverty.
Peers play a vital role in the life of children friends and peers with positive moral beliefs and attitude should be encouraged. Avoid watching violence television movies. Positive peer relationships are strong protective factors because of its powerful influence. All antisocial behavior should be reported to the police and or other law enforcement agents.

II. CONCLUSION

Over the years, antisocial behavior has become a grave national concern and a tip political issue that has been sensationalized by media coverage. The media have both negative and positive influence on the society. Antisocial behavior affects different people in different ways. It could be intimidation, harassment, bullying, fighting, drug/alcoholic abuse and others.

Anti-social behavior is influence by the following factors: family, school, community/environment, peers relationship, as well as exposure to media violence. Early starter are much more likely to continue antisocial behavior with increasing severity will progress to criminals acts. Antisocial behavior is prevented according to symptoms and causes of any identified unusual behavior. Inform law enforcement agents about any antisocial behavior observed. Parents should monitor the media programmes their children watch.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Mass media should package positive programs that will create awareness on antisocial behavior among young children and youths.

Agencies, both governmental and non-governmental and policy makers can launch public campaigns to increase awareness of these programs, that will provide technical assistance and information about them, and they can devices incentives for communities to invest in effective programmes.

REFERENCES


