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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CARTOON VIEWING AND ITS IMPACT ON SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN: EVIDENCE FROM DHAKA CITY, BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Background: The objective of this study is to examine the impact of cartoon programs on children's behavior. Cartoon programs not only attract children through their entertaining content but also instill both positive and negative habits. The factors that shape children's impressionable minds are largely found in the environment in which they grow up, including the media content to which they are exposed daily. Although cartoons are believed to influence children's behavior, the nature of this influence and the extent to which parents and children are aware of it have not been adequately explored in the context of Bangladesh.

Methods: Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of cartoons on the social behavior of Bangladeshi children from the perspectives of both parents and children. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 70 students and their parents through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. A descriptive method was used for data analysis.

Results: The findings show that both children and parents share a similar perception of the influence of cartoons, viewing it largely as positive. Cartoons were found to help children improve their spoken English, learn about inventions, develop moral values, and remain constructively engaged during their leisure time. However, some parents expressed concerns that certain cartoons may have negative effects on children's behavior.

Conclusion: Therefore, appropriate regulations and parental guidance are necessary to minimize these adverse influences. The study recommends that parents make a conscious effort to monitor the cartoons their children watch and ensure that the content is appropriate for their age and daily activities.

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Introduction:-

Children's understanding of what they watch on television may influence how they respond to cartoon content, particularly violent scenes. Research suggests that children are more likely to focus on observable actions rather than the underlying motives or internal causes of behavior. This raises important concerns regarding the potential impact of cartoon violence on children's social behavior. Parents and guardians also play a crucial role in monitoring children's media consumption. However, questions remain regarding whether parents are fully aware of the content

of the cartoons their children watch and whether cartoons serve purposes beyond entertainment. It is in light of these concerns that this study seeks to examine the perceptions of both children and parents regarding the influence of television cartoons on children's social behavior. The concept of the cartoon originated in the Middle Ages and initially referred to a preparatory drawing for a work of art, such as a painting, fresco, tapestry, or stained-glass window. In the nineteenth century, the term came to describe humorous illustrations published in magazines and newspapers. By the early twentieth century, it was also used to refer to comic strips and animated films (Barker, 1959). For more than eighty years, animated films and television cartoons have entertained children around the world. Felix the Cat, the first widely recognized cartoon icon, began its journey in the 1920s. During the following decade, famous cartoon characters such as Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, and Pluto were introduced by the Disney Brothers' Cartoon Studios (Box Office Mojo, 2004).

Cartoon channels operate 24 hours a day and exclusively broadcast cartoon programs. Approximately 68 percent of Cartoon Network's audience consists of children aged 2 to 17 years, while the remaining 32 percent comprises adults aged 18 years and above. Children between the ages of 6 and 11 constitute the channel's primary audience (Stabile & Harrison, 2003). Violence is often an integral component of many cartoon programs. Studies have noted that cartoon content frequently contains higher levels of violence than television serials and comedy programs. As a result, children are exposed to more violent scenes through cartoons than through many other forms of television programming. This exposure may influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, making it an important area of research. Cartoons have been a part of cinema history since the advent of motion pictures in the late nineteenth century. A cartoon is an animated film that uses drawings, illustrations, or computer-generated images instead of live actors. These films are often humorous and are primarily intended for children.

Cartoons are created by displaying a sequence of slightly varying drawings or models in rapid succession, giving the illusion of movement and change. These characteristics make cartoons highly attractive and engaging for viewers, especially children. Initially, cartoons were short because they were shown in movie theaters before the main feature film. However, with the rise of television, cartoons became longer and evolved into the half-hour programs commonly broadcast on channels such as Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, and Disney Channel. To appeal to a wider audience, cartoon producers also made their content more family-friendly. According to research conducted by psychologist Steve Hossler of Bowling Green State University, a child watches approximately 18,000 hours of television between kindergarten and high school graduation (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999). This statistic demonstrates the significant role television, including cartoons, plays in children's lives. The forces that shape children's impressionable minds are largely found in their environment and in the media content to which they are exposed on a daily basis.

Objectives of the Study:-

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of different cartoon channels on school-going children in Dhaka City. To accomplish this objective, the study aims to

1. Analyze the current pattern of cartoon viewing among school-going students in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
2. Examine the effects of cartoon channels on children's behavior.
3. Explore the perceptions and opinions of parents/guardians regarding the influence of cartoon channels on children.

This study provides empirical evidence of the effect of cartoon viewing among school-going children of Dhaka City, Bangladesh, which contributes to the existing body of research on children's media consumption. This study, as opposed to many studies which focus on the negative effects of cartoons, has identified that viewing cartoons leads to more positive outcomes. The results revealed the positive aspects of the role of cartoons in the improvement of children's language skills, creativity, imagination, learning motivation, and social awareness, as well as the negative aspects such as increasing children's screen time and reducing their outdoor play time. This study provides parents, educators, and policymakers with valuable insights on responsible viewing of cartoons and choosing educational and appropriate content for children's healthy cognitive and social development.

Literature Review:-

Television has a variety of applications in society, business, and science. However, its most common use is as a source of information and entertainment for viewers in their homes. According to Atonoff (2007), in his book *Misery of Cartoon Channels in USA*, the United States had the highest number of television sets per person, with 835 television sets per 1,000 people in 2000. Canada followed with 710 sets per 1,000 people during the same period.

Japan, Germany, Denmark, and Finland also ranked highly in terms of television ownership. Television viewing among children has remained significantly high over the years. On average, children aged 2–5 years spend approximately 32 hours per week watching television, while children aged 6–11 years spend about 28 hours per week in front of the television (McDonough, 2009). The vast majority of this viewing (97%) consists of live television, and 71% of children aged 8–18 years have a television set in their bedrooms. Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010, p. 2) observed that young people have increased the amount of time they spend consuming media by one hour and seventeen minutes daily, from 6 hours and 21 minutes to 7 hours and 38 minutes. Furniss (2007) notes that cartoon characters gained prominence as animation developed and became a standard feature of the filmmaking industry. Iconic characters such as Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny achieved worldwide popularity alongside other well-known characters including Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Daffy Duck, Goofy, Porky Pig, and Pluto. In animated feature films, Snow White became one of the earliest and most celebrated cartoon characters, together with the Seven Dwarfs.

Furthermore, renowned animators such as Walt Disney, William Hanna, and Joseph Barbera created many memorable characters, including Mickey Mouse, Tom and Jerry, Tweety and Sylvester, and Bugs Bunny. Since the early 1960s, when cartoons became an established feature of television programming, they have been the subject of two major controversies: commercialization and merchandising, and the portrayal of violence. These issues have attracted considerable attention because a large proportion of cartoon viewers are impressionable children. The complex issue of television violence and its potential impact on children's behavior remains unresolved. In response to criticism regarding cartoon violence, broadcasters have censored violent scenes from many animated films shown on television. Interestingly, scenes that were considered suitable for general audiences in the 1940s are now often viewed as excessively violent for contemporary children (Butler, 2014).

The manner in which cartoons are produced has changed significantly over time. To reduce the cost of drawing and coloring every frame of animation by hand, Disney began using computer technology in the production process. Furthermore, beginning with *Toy Story*, Disney collaborated with Pixar to create three-dimensional (3D) films using entirely computer-generated animation. Since the release of *Toy Story* in 1995, the first fully computer-animated 3D feature film, numerous 3D animated movies have been produced, including *Finding Nemo*, *WALL-E*, and *The Incredibles*. These films have become extremely popular among children and have received critical acclaim, with several winning Academy Awards. Due to the success and popularity of these productions, fewer hand-drawn or two-dimensional (2D) animated films are being released. According to Atonoff (2007), if 3D animated films continue to generate greater profits for Disney, they may eventually become the dominant form of animation production.

Cartoons and animated films were once among the most popular forms of entertainment for viewers of all age groups. They were enjoyed by people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds through television and cinema. In their early stages, animated films and cartoons contained humor and entertainment that appealed to audiences of all ages and levels of sophistication. However, over time, cartoons gradually lost their cross-generational appeal and became primarily associated with children's entertainment (Kellogg, 1992). Today, the term "cartoon" is no longer a precise concept, as it encompasses a wide range of graphic and animated forms. Nevertheless, cartoons remain one of the most attractive sources of entertainment for children, who often develop strong emotional attachments to cartoon characters and programs (Kemnitz, 1973). Animated programs and cartoons also play a significant role in increasing the profits of toy manufacturers and other commercial enterprises, as they often serve as effective promotional tools for corporate products. In many cases, cartoons can be viewed as extended advertisements designed to support profit-oriented companies.

The last few decades have witnessed a remarkable transformation in the genre of animated television programming, resulting in what has been described as a "toon boom" (Kellogg, 1992). Cable television networks have expanded considerably, reaching a large proportion of households. Channels such as Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon broadcast animated content throughout the day and command substantial shares of children's television viewership and advertising exposure. According to Westcott (2002), Cartoon Network generated approximately \$500 million in revenue in the year 2000. Although many classic animated programs are no longer broadcast regularly, popular shows such as *Tom and Jerry* and *Looney Tunes* continue to attract audiences because of their enduring popularity among children (Susan, 2000). The content of cartoon programs should be carefully monitored to protect children from potential harmful effects. Certain cartoon programs, such as *Space Ghost* and *Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law*, have raised concerns regarding their possible negative influence on children. Cartoon-related injuries have become a serious issue that requires attention, particularly in the United States. Due to children's strong attachment

to and identification with fictional and supernatural characters, some children may imitate risky behaviors portrayed in cartoons, which can result in injuries (Saturnine, 2004). Clara and Marian (1980) examined the impact of television cartoons on children's free-play behavior. The study involved 65 children and their kindergarten teachers. The children were observed by both the researchers and their teachers. The findings revealed that cartoons were the most popular television programs among the children.

Most children preferred cartoons broadcast during weekday afternoons. Teachers reported that cartoon viewing had a significant impact on children's classroom behavior. Children frequently demonstrated behaviors, language, and actions inspired by television cartoons during classroom activities. Research on violence portrayed in television programs and video games has consistently shown that exposure to violent content can increase aggressive and violent behavior among children and adolescents in both the short and long term (Anderson, 2003). In recent years, the study of cartoons and animation has gained increasing importance in the field of communication research. Animation is now widely used as an effective tool for conveying messages to target audiences in areas such as marketing, education, and public awareness campaigns (Ginmann, 2003). Klein and Shiffman (2006) found that children's preferences for cartoon characters are influenced by various factors, including gender, costumes and accessories, physical attractiveness, age, intelligence, pro-social and antisocial behaviors, and the overall portrayal of goodness or badness. Their research highlighted how these characteristics shape children's likes and dislikes regarding cartoon characters.

Research Gap:-

Empirical studies on the impact of cartoons on children's behaviour, cognition, and academic performance in the context of Bangladesh are scant, while many studies have been conducted in other countries. Previous research tends to be more concerned with the negative side effects of cartoon viewing, such as aggression, addiction, and diminished academic involvement, and comparatively less with the educational and developmental value of cartoon viewing. Moreover, there are few studies focusing specifically on school-going children with primary survey data collected from structured questionnaires in Dhaka City. The socio-cultural setting of Bangladesh is different from many of the developed countries, and so the findings of the foreign research cannot be generalized without supporting evidence from other countries. Furthermore, the positive and negative impacts have rarely been investigated together, with the perspectives of both children and guardians. This study aims to fill these gaps by offering context-specific, descriptive evidence on media preference for viewing cartoons and their impacts on the overall media consumption pattern of the school-going children with the view of providing more comprehensive understandings on media consumption pattern of children in urban Bangladesh.

Research Methodology:-

This study adopted the survey method, as it is appropriate for assessing opinions, attitudes, and trends. The study aimed to investigate the influence of television cartoons on the social behavior of school-going children and to explore the perceptions of both children and their parents regarding this influence. The study population consisted of children aged 6 to 11 years enrolled in selected schools in Dhaka City. The selected schools were Udayan Higher Secondary School, University Laboratory School and College, Engineering University School and College, and Azimpur Government Girls' School and College. Students from Classes II to VI were purposively selected because they were capable of understanding and completing the questionnaire independently. These schools were chosen because they represent students from diverse socio-economic and geographic backgrounds across Bangladesh. Moreover, a large proportion of the students come from middle-class families with access to cable television, enabling them to watch a variety of cartoon channels regularly. The study employed a sample of 70 respondents. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in each selected school. Each FGD consisted of 10 child participants, who shared their views and experiences regarding cartoon viewing. Their responses were recorded and analyzed as qualitative data. Data were collected directly by the researchers through a structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The collected data were carefully edited, coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The findings were then interpreted and presented systematically to address the objectives of the study. Figure 1 shows a map of the study area of this manuscript.



Figure 1: Study Area

The study was conducted in an ethical manner. Parents/legal guardians of the participating children were contacted to obtain informed consent before data collection, and verbal assent was requested from children. There was 100% voluntary participation, and participants were advised that they had the option of stopping at any time without repercussion. All participants were anonymous, and their information was kept confidential and only collected for academic research purposes.

Results and Findings:-

The distribution of age of the 70 children for the school-going sample is presented in Table 1. The largest proportion of respondents (27.14%) belongs to the 9–10 years age group, followed by 11–12 years (20.00%) and 10–11 years (17.14%). 15.71% of children are aged 8–9 years, 11.43% are aged 6–7 years, and 8.57% are aged 7–8 years. The results show that the average age of the respondents was between 9 and 12 years, which means that in the study, the media habits and perception of the children are mainly from the middle childhood (9-12 years old) period, while cognitive development and media exposure are becoming increasingly important during this period.

Table 1: Age and number of participants

Class Interval (Age)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
6-7	8	11.43
7-8	6	8.57
8-9	11	15.71
9-10	19	27.14
10-11	12	17.14
11-12	14	20.00
Total=	70	100.00

Table 2 shows the occupational distribution of the fathers of the respondents. Fathers have the most, with businesses at 35.71% of the group, followed by teachers and other occupations at 30.00% each. Only a small percentage (4.28%) are employed as bankers. Most of them (65.71%) are housewives, and 17.14% are employed in other professions. The number of teachers working mothers in the sample includes 12.86% of all working mothers, while only 4.28% are engaged in business. Housewives are more prevalent than other statuses, indicating that a majority of children have much time devoted to their mothers' supervision, an aspect that might affect their television and cartoon consumption. Results showed that the respondents are from a variety of work backgrounds, with business and teaching being the most frequent occupations. This diversity increases the representativeness of the sample and

points to the fact that children's consumption of cartoons is not restricted to families of a specific occupational status.

Table 2: Occupations of Fathers & Mothers of the participants

Father's occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teacher	21	30.00
Banker	3	4.28
Business	25	35.71
Others	21	30.00
Total=	70	100.00
Mother's occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teacher	9	12.86
Housewife	46	65.71
Business	3	4.28
Others	12	17.14
Total=	70	100.00

Table 3 indicates who is most likely to be with the children when they are viewing cartoons. The majority (68.57%) of children do watch cartoons with their mothers, a minority (11.43%) watch with their fathers. The 10.00% who are siblings are followed by grandparents (5.71%) and other family members (4.29%). The results show that mothers' role is the most important one in supervising children's cartoon watching activity. This indicates that mothers who are more likely to be able to choose the content, monitor the amount of screen time, and encourage learning viewing practices will have the strongest influence on how cartoons will affect the development of their children.

Table 3: Comfortable zone (family members) of the children

Family Members	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mother	48	68.57
Father	8	11.43
Siblings	7	10.00
Grandparents	4	5.71
Others	3	4.29
Total=	70	100.00

The leisure activities preferred by the respondents are shown in Table 4. Cartoons were the children's favourite leisure activity, with a large majority of children (65.71%) saying that their favourite thing to watch is a cartoon. Video games are the second preference, with 24.29% of respondents, and only 5.71% like outdoor games, and 2.86% like indoor games. There is a very low percentage (1.43%) involved in other leisure pursuits. The results suggest that screen entertainment is more popular than other activities among children's leisure activities. The strong preference to watch cartoons indicates the importance of cartoons in children's daily life, and also makes it clear that children need to ensure that the content they watch is educational, suitable, and good for their overall development.

Table 4: Participants' desirable leisure time

Leisure Segments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Outdoor games	4	5.71
Indoor games	2	2.86
Video games	17	24.29
Watching cartoons	46	65.71
Others	1	1.43
Total=	70	100.00

Table 5 shows the number of children watching cartoons every day. A majority of respondents (44.29%) indicated that they watched cartoons three or more times a day, while 38.57% said that they watch cartoons twice a day. 17.14% of the children watch cartoons once a day. The results suggest that most children in this study regularly and frequently watch cartoons. Exposure was frequent, indicating that cartoons are a significant component of children's daily lives and could have a significant impact on their learning, behaviour, language development, and play interests; therefore, parental supervision and selection of suitable cartoon content is vital.

Table5: Frequency of watching cartoons in aday

Frequency	Number	Percentage (%)
One	12	17.14
Two	27	38.57
Three &above	31	44.29
Total=	70	100.00

The preferred languages of cartoon channels by the respondents are given in Table 6. The largest number of children (44.29%) watch cartoons in Hindi, followed by English (24.29%) and Bengali (17.14%). Also, 14.28% of the respondents watch cartoons in all three languages. The results show that children in Dhaka City prefer reading Hindi-language cartoons. This is a common exposure to multiple languages that could benefit children's language acquisition and communication skills. It also points to the need for parents to be aware of the quality of the content and to foster a balanced preference for educational programs in both home and foreign languages.

Table 6: Languages of cartoon channels they watch

Languages	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bengali	12	17.14
English	17	24.29
Hindi	31	44.29
All of the above	10	14.28
Total=	70	100.00

The average time that children spend watching cartoons one day is shown in Table 7. A majority of the respondents (51.43%) watch cartoons for approximately two hours a day, while 30.00% watch cartoons for three hours a day. A small percentage watch cartoons for four hours or more (4.29%), and only 14.28% watch them for one hour. The results indicate that exposure to moderate amounts of cartoons is prevalent for most children. While it is uncommon for kids to watch cartoons for extended periods of time, children who view cartoons for three or more hours per day may be more vulnerable to the benefits of an educational show and/or the harms of long-term screen time exposure.

Table 7: Spending hours watching cartoons

Hour	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 hour	10	14.28
2 hours	36	51.43
3 hours	21	30.00
4hours &above	3	4.29
Total=	70	100.00

Table 8 shows how children emotionally respond to the prohibition of watching cartoons. Over half of the respondents (54.29%) have become very angry, with 21.43% feeling angry and 14.28% becoming slightly angry. 10.00% said they felt nothing. The results indicate that cartoons have become part of children's everyday entertainment and some children have emotional ties with watching these cartoons. The above-mentioned high percentage of negative reactions when access is limited could suggest a certain dependence on cartoons, which is an

issue that should be taken into account by parents in order to monitor and facilitate a balanced recreational use of screens.

Table 8: Feeling towards someone who creates a barrier in watching cartoons

Reactions of children	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Veryangry	38	54.29
Angry	15	21.43
Littleangry	10	14.28
Nothing	7	10.00
Total=	70	100.00

Table 9 indicates whether children's behaviour changed as a result of watching cartoons. 80.00% said that they changed their behaviour, while 20.00% did not notice any change. Of the 20.00% that reported behavioural changes, 20.00% said that these changes were beneficial (e.g., better learning, creativity, communication skills) and 60.00% said they were not (e.g., increased stubbornness, taking on the qualities of cartoon characters, emotional reactions). While behavioral changes were prevalent, the results indicate that there are both positive and negative influences. Thus, parental supervision and the choice of suitable and educational cartoon content are very important to maximize the developmental benefits and lessen undesirable behaviors.

Table 9: Changes in behavior for watching cartoons

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	56=14 Positive	80.00=20.00 Positive
	=42 Negative	=60.00Negative
No	14	20.00
Total=	70	100.00

Discussion:-

The data indicate that the majority of respondents watch television cartoons and have been exposed to them for a considerable period of time. The findings reveal that children aged 8–12 years are the most affected group, accounting for approximately 79.99% of the respondents. The results show that 82.8% of the respondents watch cartoons through satellite channels, while only a small proportion rely on local television stations. Among the respondents, 17.14% primarily watch Bengali-language cartoon channels, 24.29% watch English-language channels, and 44.29% watch Hindi-language channels. The source of television programs can significantly influence children's reactions and perceptions. Since most of the cartoons watched by the respondents originate from foreign channels, it is reasonable to assume that their content reflects foreign cultures, particularly Western culture. Consequently, children are frequently exposed to Western values, lifestyles, language patterns, and accents. One parent interviewed stated: "Cartoons have influenced my children, especially in their speech. Sometimes you hear them speaking like the cartoon characters. I think they should learn from cartoons because we prefer them to watch cartoons rather than Bangladeshi movies and home videos. The cartoon characters speak better English, and this helps children improve their English language skills."

This statement demonstrates that parents recognize the foreign nature of cartoon content and often view exposure to English language and accents as beneficial. Children naturally imitate what they observe on television, particularly the behavior of cartoon characters. Continuous imitation may influence their perception of reality and, in some cases, contribute to the adoption of foreign cultural practices and values. However, many parents do not perceive this as problematic. Social behavior consists of several dimensions, including aggression and violence, language and communication styles, consumer preferences, clothing choices, and social interactions. The findings suggest that cartoons can influence these aspects of children's behavior. The focus group discussions further supported these findings. When participants were asked what they had learned from cartoons, several mentioned learning about technology from Ben 10, developing friendships, helping others, and gaining scientific knowledge. One participant stated: "Cartoons influence my behavior because they educate me about science." A female participant, Sadia, remarked: "I learn how to dress and style my hair from cartoons like Barbie. Before, I used to wear random colors,

but now I know what to wear.” Another parent commented: “I think cartoons are good for children because they provide entertainment and keep them occupied. When they are watching cartoons, they become completely engaged. However, if I notice that the content is affecting them negatively, I will stop them from watching such programs.” Similarly, another respondent noted: “Cartoons broaden children’s imagination. They make children believe that anything is possible and encourage futuristic thinking.” These responses indicate that cartoons can contribute positively to children’s creativity, imagination, language development, and social learning. Many parents also use cartoons as a means of keeping children occupied and entertained. The findings are consistent with Social Learning Theory, which argues that much of human behavior is acquired through observation and imitation. Children learn by observing models around them, including cartoon characters, and may imitate behaviors that they perceive as attractive or rewarding. Nevertheless, some parents expressed concerns regarding the negative effects of cartoons. One parent stated: “Cartoons have influenced children negatively, especially boys. They often imitate fighting behaviors they see on television. My son frequently behaves like cartoon characters and pretends to fight.” A child supported this observation by saying: “I learned how to fight from Ben 10. Sometimes I do what Ben 10 does. When he punches someone, I feel like punching my brother. I know it is not good, but I still do it.” Another parent expressed a similar concern: “I feel that cartoons are generally bad for children.

Although they keep children occupied, they often distract them from their studies. They become less interested in schoolwork and homework unless they are forced to complete it. Cartoons can be educational, but children may also learn behaviors and language that parents do not want them to adopt.” These statements suggest that exposure to violent or inappropriate cartoon content may encourage aggressive behavior, reduce academic concentration, and promote undesirable language use among children. However, it is important to recognize that cartoons are not the sole influence on children’s social behavior. According to the respondents, several other factors contribute significantly to children’s development, including peer groups, family influences, schools, religious institutions, cultural environments, books, and community interactions. This supports the argument that television is only one of many agents of socialization, and its influence depends on the interaction of multiple social and environmental factors. Overall, the findings indicate that cartoons can have both positive and negative effects on children’s social behavior. While they can enhance imagination, language skills, and learning opportunities, they may also encourage aggression, distraction from academic activities, and excessive imitation of foreign cultural practices. Therefore, parental supervision and appropriate content regulation are essential to maximize the benefits of cartoons while minimizing their potential negative impacts.

Conclusion:-

The results of this study show that children are frequently exposed to television cartoons, and this level of exposure plays a significant role in shaping their behavior. However, it was also found that the influence of cartoons can be either positive or negative, depending on the child and the particular cartoon he or she is exposed to. For instance, when respondents were asked what they learned from cartoons, some mentioned values such as love, friendship, heroism, and morality, while others reported learning aggressive behaviors such as fighting. The study also revealed that most cartoons watched by children in Bangladesh are foreign productions. This is largely due to the heavy influx of foreign programs through satellite television providers, which most respondents reported watching. It is important to note that these foreign cartoons often contain cultural elements that differ from those of Bangladesh. Their moral values, language, manner of speaking, and even styles of dress are generally different from those prevalent in Bangladeshi society. According to the study, the lack of locally produced cartoons is one of the major reasons for the dominance of foreign cartoons and the limited availability of Bangladeshi animated content. However, it is also noteworthy that many parents prefer their children to watch foreign cartoons because they believe such programs help improve their English language skills, as opposed to the Bangla language used in locally produced programs.

Policy Recommendations:-

Television plays an important role in shaping children’s social behavior. Therefore, it is essential to regulate the content of television programs to minimize the negative influences they may have on viewers, especially children, who are generally more vulnerable to media effects. Traditionally, cartoons were primarily designed to entertain and educate children. However, cartoons have evolved, and many now contain mature themes and content that may not be suitable for young audiences. Such programs should not be broadcast during children’s peak viewing hours, typically between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Children are young individuals between the ages of 1 and 12 years. Younger children, particularly those aged 1 to 7 years, are often unable to distinguish between right and wrong or reality and fantasy. Consequently, parents and guardians have the responsibility to guide them in choosing

appropriate television content. During the course of this study, the researchers discovered that many parents were unaware of the specific cartoon programs their children watched. While they knew that their children watched cartoons, they were often unfamiliar with the content and messages conveyed in these programs. This lack of awareness is concerning because children, who have highly impressionable minds, may adopt various attitudes and behaviors from what they watch if their viewing habits are not properly monitored. Therefore, parents and guardians should devote time to educating their children about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, helping them understand what is suitable for their age, and supervising the television programs they watch. Furthermore, governments, organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should play a significant role in supporting and promoting young and emerging animators. Such support would encourage the development of indigenous cartoons that reflect local cultures, values, and educational objectives. These stakeholders should provide animators with the necessary platforms and resources to showcase their work. Additionally, awareness and educational programs should be organized to inform parents and guardians about the importance of monitoring children's cartoon-viewing habits and ensuring that the content they consume is age-appropriate and beneficial to their development.

Limitations and Future Research Guidelines:-

There are some limitations of this study. The first is the small number of children in the school (n=70) from selected areas of Dhaka City, and this may be a limitation to the findings being generalizable to other parts of Bangladesh. Secondly, a descriptive research design that was used in this study, relying on the self-reported information from the respondents. Third, long-term effects of cartoon viewing and differences among socioeconomic groups were not studied. Larger and more diverse samples and a longitudinal or mixed methods study design are needed, as are comparisons between rural and urban children in the future. The impact of particular genres of cartoons, digital streaming services, and parental involvement on childhood cognition, social and emotional development may also be studied.

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