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The reign of virtual gaming: Fall of childhood

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Abstract

Gone are those days when the play fields used to be full of children, the sweet chaos caused by the small devils are long gone as these children have found a new way of keeping them busy and occupied. Their life has become so virtual that rest of other things have lost their meaning; the charm of playing together in the evening under the sky has been replaced by playing in front of consoles. With internet they are connecting with their peers are playing the game together, and this is the new kind of socialization. Many kinds of diseases have appeared among the students which used to happen to people in their old age after retirement. Respiratory heart disease, cardiovascular disease and obesity are the common household names in our society. Children have lost the beauty and essence of their childhood and getting prone to uncountable diseases. Things can be brought back in track with the help of physical activities and by regularly playing games and sports. It's the duty of parents not to give them a video game console when their children cry rather gift them a sport for their better future.

Keywords: Virtual gaming, fall of childhood, sport

Introduction

With the onset of technology the whole human race evolved, eventually mankind became the most superior species which ruled mother earth, travelling from one part of country to another just took few hours, calculation and computations were made in fractions of seconds, the most incurable diseases became curable, after conquering sky, water and land we have explored the horizons of space and the mystery it upholds, But at what cost?

The cost was very heavy to bear and definitely a debt which can't be paid. With the onset of technology certainly life became easier, and that's the plus but the same point becomes negative when we look out of our window and see the vast play grounds are empty, swings in the parks have rusted, there is no one playing hide and seek, not a single ball rolling down the football ground with enthusiastic legs kicking it from behind, there is no hurry among the children to do their homework fast and as early as possible so that they can run beside the neighbourhood barn with both arms stretched with a feel to fly, because now they know, all they have to do is open their videogame consoles in front of the television and without panting and getting injured they can play hours of football, without holding a bat they can hit gigantic sixes, without wearing a glove they can knock out their opponent in boxing just by pressing buttons and in front of screen cushioned by an air conditioner.

"It's a knockout, I won mom", the 11 year boy with 52kgs of weight, wearing glasses yelled, but deep down his mom knew, though his son won but the "childhood lost the bout".

The rise of virtual gaming

With technology, the virtual gaming sector also rose, and in very less period of time it became very popular among the kids. The high quality graphics, the colourful ambience and attractive audio lured every kid around. Now kids are no more interested in playing football in the ground rather they preferred playing FIFA over a gaming console, the bicycle kick they never tried on ground out of fear became so easy and luring that they preferred scoring goals with clicks rather kicks. Virtual gaming has consumed us in such a way that we no longer see it as evil trying to engulf our children. As most of the parent believes that it's good for them that their kids stay at home in front of their eyes. And playing a real game of football or volleyball would corrupt their kids, and nowadays it is a common notion among parents that playing conventional games and sports will spoil their child's career. (Shapiro, 2014) ^[14].

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Nowadays the virtual gaming sector has become one of the most popular past time activity not only among children but also among adults. It's a multibillion dollar industry, children and even adults they waste their lots of time playing videogames or even handling the mobile phones, they also face lots of difficulty in managing their daily routine. The good old days are long gone when socializing with others use to be the best thing, but now most of the virtual gaming has access to internet so it gives the players the ease to communicate with their fellow peeps while playing at the same time, so what's the use to going out and meeting people? (AACAP, 2015) ^[1].

Effect of virtual gaming on society

The concept of virtual gaming is old; we all have played videogames at some point of time in our life. We live in a society, and as a society we all know the direct impact of these technological gadgets upon us. Children now a days are referred as gaming freaks or digital freaks as a report made by common sense media disclosed that about 42% of children posses tablets in the year 2017, which was just 7% in the year 2013 and was less than even 1% in the year 2011, not only the number of tablets users among children rose dramatically but from using 5 minutes daily in 2011 and 15 minutes per day in 2013 the time of usage increased to 48 minutes per day in 2017. (Stueber, 2019)

Technology has overpowered us in many ways but it has also become very hard to see children without holding their handheld devices. It has severely affected children, teenagers and even toddlers in many ways, with the increase of craze of virtual gaming among children has given rise to many of the health disease and serious issues as children are doing less physical activities or even no physical activities. They don't like to spend time outside playing and burning calories and with passage of time obesity engulfs them from a very small age, serious healthy related issues like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other cardiovascular diseases rises. (Stueber, 2019)

There are many studies which suggested that lack of physical activities among children has increased the risk of getting exposed to impaired glucose tolerance, type II diabetes and insulin resistance from a very small age.

At the start of teenage, children under the age group of 13 need 11-14 hours of sleep; at this tender age sleep is very important for proper growth and development. Good sleep promotes growth, healthy weight and attention seeking capability, but it has been seen that the children who regularly involve themselves playing virtual games are more likely to be sleep deprived at night, even if the devices are inactively used during the night time resulted in inadequate amount of sleep. (Stueber, 2019)

Studies also found that the children who spend more time over these gaming consoles they generally have concentration problems and problems like distractions, this directly affect their academic success (Cole, 2019) ^[4]. With excessive usage of these gaming consoles the children become inefficient towards differentiating between the real experience of life and imaginary things, this also results in frequent nightmares. The videogames also exposes the children towards violence and they also become less efficient towards anger management. (Cole, 2019) ^[4]

Who is responsible for the downfall?

When a child is born, it's the duty of parents to educate their children from day one, but the reality is somewhat different, if

their kid doesn't eat the parents are handing over their phones to them so that they can eat the food, and with the passage of time it becomes their main source of interest rather playing any kind of outdoor or even indoor games.

There is general conception among parents that if their children will engage themselves in playing games and sports then they will be spoiling their career. The concept of virtual games are not new to us, the evolution of character from one level to another, every bit of attractive detailing in the game are designed in such a way that it becomes addictive to children, for the purpose of designing the gaming companies are also taking the help of psychologists so that they design the game scenario in such a way that the gamer want to keep playing it again and again. (Gibson, 2016) ^[10]

The present day teenagers are so connected and addictive to technology that they are being termed as "digital natives", because of this virtual world they have lost touch of the real human interaction, kids are becoming unsocialized day by day. Some of the concerned parents are also worried about their child's physical and mental growth, as all their kids are doing is confining themselves in a room and playing virtual games. (Gibson, 2016) ^[10]

According to a research conducted by global estimates, a total of one between three internet users is a child, and now the number of children using internet has outsourced adults in many parts of the world. And it is very hearting to see that in such a crucial time of growth and development they are wasting their time in such a way. (Kardefelt-winter, 2018) ^[11]

One cannot deny the fact that the important social skills are learnt through playing and involving oneself in playing games and sports, the main concern about these games causes over children is the excessive amount of time they spend and the impact of these games over them. (eshrat zamani, 2010) ^[7]

How to overcome

These are the ill practises that we are facing in our daily life, technology has a positive side if it is used in limits and anything become harmful if it goes limitless and same is happening in virtual gaming sector, children are becoming addictive, irresponsible and unsocialized. We can eliminate all these negative aspects of virtual gaming by creating awareness regarding side effects of virtual gaming, when to use, how to use.

Providing proper environment for children, so that, they can engage themselves in physical activities like playing outdoor games, doing physical exercises that can help them to stay fit and healthy.

Interacting with people will improve the feelings of well-being and they will be in the state of comfort without any depression. Children can regain their creativity and sense of self-esteem.

Similarly socializing with people gives a very good impact on our mental and bodily wellbeing, it's the duty of teachers, parents and other elder to motivate children about the importance of doing physical activities and playing games.

Children are known to be the future of a nation and if the future gets confined in the four walls of a room playing in front of a screen then am sure that the future is dark. Children are our future torch bearers and it's our duty to show them right path.

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