ment of a child. Children's minds can't accept the brutality that they see on screen and that affects their behaviour.

"We don't allow our children to retain their innocence when we expose them to hostility in any form, be it in real life or on screen. Eventually, children who have seen a significant amount of violence on screen are likely to see the world as a sinister, frightening place, where nothing good ever happens. Children, therefore, become desensitized to real life brutality as they see violence being portrayed in a glamourised, glorified manner on TV," says General Secretary of CTFB Fahmidul Islam Shantonu.

Young children, in particular, can be easily scared by frightening and violent images. They suffer from nightmares or have difficulty sleeping. In some cases, children may even suffer from depression due to over exposure to violence.

"You can't just expect a child to understand that what they see on screen is not real as they can't tell the difference. I have had cases of children aged three to five who find it difficult to sleep at night when they are exposed to too much violence. They wake up in their dreams, screaming or calling out for their parents. One can only imagine the debilitating effects violence shown on TV can have on small children," says Professor Mohammad Shahidullah.

## Imitating Television

Nilufer rolls her eyes as her best friend sings praises of the main lead of a popular Hindi soap opera. Cutting her friend short, she says, "I can't bear these idiotic shows."




**Children are often left unsupervised in front of the TV and allowed to watch whatever they want to as long as they remain occupied.**

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ignoring the hurt expressed in her friend's eyes, 12 year old Nilufer continues, "I love "Gossip Girl." The actors are so talented and good looking. When I grow up, I want to be just like Blair, my favourite character of the show."

Interestingly, "Gossip Girl" is an American drama series revolving around a group of rich, spoilt young teenagers engaging in similar themes that mark the typical Hindi serial that Nilufer hates. The main lead, Blair, is the queen bee of her high school, who uses her friends as pawns on a chess board whenever it suits her.