Unfortunately, we live in a material world, where you are mocked for being unique. Adolescents, in particular, struggle to find a balance between how they see themselves and how they want the world to see them. In this image-conscious world, children are constantly searching for role models who they can relate to. They won't hesitate to look up to and imitate the behaviour that they see on screen. In hopes of being the popular, pretty one in school, they ape the shallowness represented by characters of a show like "Gossip Girl." These kids may not even understand what the show is about but they like what they see on screen. That is enough to keep them glued to their chairs when the show is being aired.





Children are attracted to Hindi soaps when they see their family members watching them.

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The Japanese cartoon series "Doraemon", telecast on Disney, was a favourite amongst most children under ten. The show, which focused on a 22nd century cat like robot living amongst human beings, was a daily staple in the lives of a number of children in the country. Parents have found this show, dubbed in Hindi, to be intolerable as they complained that their children were getting more adept in the language of our neighbouring country than in their own native tongue. Parents also noticed behavioural changes in their children as they started to act in a manner similar to the show's main lead, an annoying and whiny child called Nobita.

"My son used to be crazy about that show. He thought that it was fine to throw tantrums because Nobita would do the same. The character was shown to be an essentially "good" boy, who would fall into misfortune because of his carelessness. My son would make faces the way Nobita and Doraemon did and even started to walk the way the characters walked in the show," says Nilufer Azam, a homemaker.

Doraemon was recently banned in Bangladesh over fears that children hooked to the show would be encouraged to communicate in Hindi, preferring the language over their own mother tongue. The government also ordered an end to the airing of unapproved foreign satellite television channels such as Disney, Disney XD and Pogo.

Even as some parents are heaving a sigh of relief, many think that a ban can never be the solution.

"It doesn't take children long to get attached to a new show or character. As for learning Hindi, there are a number of Indian channels broadcast in Bangladesh. Hindi soundtracks are extremely popular amongst kids. If we want to discourage our children from adopting a foreign culture, our local television industry needs to introduce better, more attractive shows for children" says Abul Hamid, a father and school teacher.

Little to offer

People growing up in the 90s always bring up an animated series about a young girl from a village whenever they talk about good television programming for children. And with good reason! "Meena", developed by UNICEF, is a prime example of the sort of TV kids could benefit from watching. Set in a Bangladeshi village, it used humour and relatable characters to touch upon issues ranging from sanitation to female education.

"Sisimpur", the Bangla version of the children's television series Sesame Street, is another show that offers immense entertainment and educational value for children. With characters like