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British-type film rating system urged

A FILM rating system indicating the type of audience a particular movie is suitable for should be introduced in Hongkong.

The system, similar to one used in Britain, was proposed yesterday by the director of Hongkong ~~Council of Social Services~~, Y.F. Hui.

He said more stringent programme control was needed to protect young television and film viewers.

Mr Hui told members of the Hongkong Association of University Women at a luncheon meeting that concerned parents and social services groups should campaign for reasonable censorship safeguards through legislative enactments.

He said they should express their concern and demand that the authorities exercise the necessary regulations on visual media and printed matter unsuitable for children.

"They should also lobby for more government subsidies to produce more

culturally worthwhile and entertaining children programmes and movies, which social and commercial organisation should also be more forthcoming in sponsoring their production," Mr Hui said.

He suggested that more scholarships should be granted to promising writers of children's plays and stories.

He agreed with the Commissioner of Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority that protecting young TV viewers against the inimical effects of unsuitable programmes is a three-way responsibility, involving the Government, programme producers and parents.

But Mr Hui disagreed that at the moment only the parents are negligent in not providing sufficient guidance.

To guard against parental neglect, he suggested that all adult TV programmes be shown as late as possible.

"I hope the Television Authority would also act

more strictly than it has been so far in categorising films for young movie goers and control their admittance with the rating system I proposed," he said.

Under the system, films suitable only for adults are marked "X". Those marked "A" are suitable for viewers aged 14 and above while "AA" films require children aged 14 and below to be accompanied by parents.

"U" rated films can be seen by children of all ages.

Mr Hui, who is concerned with the fact that children continue to flock to see movies marked as "not suitable for children", claimed no serious efforts were made to verify the age of young theatre goers, thus making a mockery of the warning.

"If nothing else, let us not put up regulations which we cannot or will not enforce, less we engender in our young people a contempt for rules and authority," Mr Hui said.

As for printed matter, Mr Hui said the gory scenes and

perverted sexual antics illustrated in many locally-produced comic books were "stomach-turning."

He said he was surprised to find such books, which fascinated many younger readers, being sold on nearly every news stand without the slightest interference from the authorities.

According to Mr Hui, police raids to seize pornographic material were no more than publicity stunts. He alleged that the type of magazines seized in raids were being blatantly displayed in stands and shops.

Mr Hui said childhood was the time when a child sought information and formed attitudes. The images he absorbed was bound to have more than a transient effect on his personality and character.

If children were not properly supervised, when exposed to such images, be it pictorial or printed words, they would soon acquire bad taste," he said.