IMPACT OF TELEVISION ON INDIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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Abstract

Television has profound impact on our society. It has changed the life styles of the people and has become a major influence in our culture. Unlike printing, which took hundreds of years to influence the culture, TV’s impact was almost instantaneous. It has occupied an important position in Indian households and therefore it is bound to make an impact on the individual and the society as well. Television in India is developing fast as the major source of enlightenment, leisure and infotainment. Television is a good medium for mass education. The illiterate people can be educated through television. Many activities are taught to the Indian farmers through television. Through television uneducated persons can be taught about their responsibilities. Television is a good link between the masses and the government. In the context of changing paradigms of media landscape, Globalization has received much attention. The people of India were not enamored of the sprout of globalization in its initial stage. Intentionally or unintentionally the globalized television has brought about significant changes in people’s attitude, lifestyle, behavior, etc, the various elements of culture. Thus globalised TV has become cultural theme. Television played a complicit role to bring the concept of globalization into minds of Indian mass in the form of Globalization. Television has played a vital role in changing the personalities of Indian women by improving their thinking and understanding abilities. It acts as a social platform to create awareness for women about their fundamental rights and benefits. Television can be a powerful influence in developing value systems and behaviour in children. It has brought about a substantial change in the experience of childhood in our culture. Any change in the behavior and value systems of children will in turn change the future of society. In this sense, it can be seen that the technology of television is shaping society. Television brings families together while computers isolate. In their own worlds. Nevertheless, new research at the University shows that television unites the family and creates interaction between children and their parents. Families with young children in particular spend time together watching television. Truth about television is that it is an excellent learning tool.
when used in moderation, and when it is used in conjunction with other activities and experiences. The research shows that proper use of television can carry multiple benefits for children the future pillars of our nation. Research studies have pointed out that perceptions of the television messages, images and ideas shape the entire social system. The present out reach of television has created awareness and appreciation of the socio-cultural ethos of our different regions. Television has contributed to breaking the social barriers and inculcation of the scientific temper in our masses. Studies have shown that exposure to media leads to the appreciation of social and cultural ethos.

**Keywords:** Television, Society, Mass Media, Communication, Social Change, Globalization, Education, Entertainment, Infotainment.

**INTRODUCTION**

Television was invented in the year 1926. It is the brainchild of John L Baired. In India Doordarshan became the first public broadcaster channel. Doordarshan inaugurated in the year 1959. At that time it was the only channel of entertainment and information for the people. But today there are hundred’s of private channels. Today private channel are specific in telecast. Some channel are news specific which telecast the current events for example Zee News, Aaj Tak, India TV etc, while few channels are sports oriented for example Ten Sports, ESPN etc. There are some channels which are entertainment specific; Zee Cinema, MTV, HBO etc. come under this category. Compare to other mass media, television stands at the top in attracting the audiences. It eventually leads to the high number of viewers. The reason behind the popularity is because of setting no bar such as age limits or qualification parameters. Prior to the invention of the television, information was mainly gathered from libraries, newspapers and radios. However, these sources lacked visual stimulation through animated illustrations. Without the tediousness of distributing newspapers or having to travel to libraries relatively far from home, the television provides a convenient medium for citizens to receive information on current events. The efficiency of the television is evident in the large amount of information that can be conveyed in a relatively shorter amount of time compared to reading the papers. From this, it can be seen that the main intention of the television is to educate the people about the happenings of today. Explaining the importance of television, Joseph aptly mentions, “Having earned a niche for itself in ways that are inimitable and unprecedented, TV has worked its way as an indispensable
member of hundreds of millions of families across the world. For in the seven decades since its invention by John Baird, the fascinating minutiae of how the medium works and influences has put it in a class of its own. From an apparently innocuous box it has metamorphosed into the protagonist, altering the very character of human transactions and shaping the way human beings think and behave.

This has opened a Pandora’s box and fulled a stormy debate on the role of television in human society”. (Part 1: 269). In view of the fact that television in India is fast developing as a major source of mass enlightenment, leisure and pleasure, it is essential that its impact in various areas is analyzed.

INDIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

India offers astounding variety in virtually every aspect of social life. Diversities of ethnic, linguistic, regional, economic, religious, class, and caste groups crosscut Indian society, which is also permeated with immense urban-rural differences and gender distinctions. Differences between north India and south India are particularly significant, especially in systems of kinship and marriage. Indian society is multifaceted to an extent perhaps unknown in any other of the world’s great civilizations—it is more like an area as varied as Europe than any other single nation-state. Adding further variety to contemporary Indian culture are rapidly occurring changes affecting various regions and socioeconomic groups in disparate ways. Yet, amid the complexities of Indian life, widely accepted cultural themes enhance social harmony and order.

Hierarchy

India is a hierarchical society. Whether in north India or south India, Hindu or Muslim, urban or village, virtually all things, people, and social groups are ranked according to various essential qualities. Although India is a political democracy, notions of complete equality are seldom evident in daily life.

Societal hierarchy is evident in caste groups, amongst individuals, and in family and kinship groups. Castes are primarily associated with Hinduism, but caste-like groups also exist among Muslims, Indian, Christians, and other religious communities. Within most villages or towns, everyone knows the relative rankings of each locally represented caste, and behavior is constantly shaped by this knowledge.
Individuals are also ranked according to their wealth and power. For example, some powerful people, or “big men,” sit confidently on chairs, while “little men” come before them to make requests, either standing or squatting not presuming to sit beside a man of high status as an equal.

Hierarchy plays an important role within families and kinship groupings also, where men outrank women of similar age, and senior relatives outrank junior relatives. Formal respect is accorded family members—for example, in northern India, a daughter-in-law shows deference to her husband, to all senior in-laws, and to all daughters of the household. Siblings, too, recognize age differences, with younger siblings addressing older siblings by respectful terms rather than by name.

Indians spend much of their timing in front of television. Radio and television takes full credit for the entertainment in their lives. It gives away information about numerous things in a different way for diverse cause.

At the same time, the unheard voices are given the opportunities to speak boldly. It is become a manifesto for the unemployed talented youths. Radio is another media where people from every corner can connect with the unified thought process.

Both television and radio are an easily available and accessible media forms. The impact has a last longing effects on the viewers. The viewer’s get addicted to the level where they can’t exist without television. People starts to compare and develop their livelihood with the evolvement of advertisements. The dramatic effects of television pave way to the connectivity and relevance of the day to day scenario in the society.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF TELEVISION

"The MAIN purpose of television is to educate, rather than simply to entertain." TV is mainly for education when organisations or the state utilise this platform to spread positive messages or educate audiences on morally right behaviours. Utilising television as such a platform allows positive messages to be educated through entertaining visuals which illustrates more and attracts the attention of audiences, allowing the messages to be more efficiently inculcated in the audience. For example, there was an advertisement made on the television regarding the consequences of gambling. This advertisements not only entertains the audience through the short video of the inner thoughts of a friend of a gambler, it also educates the audience on the
fact that you should take action to stop your loved ones from gambling. This illustrates the fact that television can be used to focus on educating the audience whilst having a small part of entertainment incorporated in the shows, programs and advertisements.

In the modern world, time is money. The opportunity cost of watching television just to entertain yourself is the precious time lost that can be used to learn. As global citizens, we all have the thirst for knowledge and want to learn new skills every day. However so, watching television is mainly for education but at the same time entertain. For example, watching the National Geographic channel allows us to explore the wild without going out in the open while learning about interesting animal facts and survival skills. At the same time, it intrigues animal-lovers which serves as a entertainment as a side purpose. Therefore, TV is mainly for education but also serves as a side purpose for entertainment because of ‘While I Live, I Learn’ motto.

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The world we lived in now is in perils as we face threat from terrorism and an increasingly uncertain world thus the masses need to be educated. Television programs have huge viewership due to the increasing middle class in various societies. Thus, it has become one of the easiest ways to disseminate information. Due to the circumstances, TV will need to shoulder part of the responsibility of educating the public. Hence, its main purpose is to educate.

Every TV show or movie must have some learning points within and filmmakers always make sure that their movies have values and message that the audience can get from the movies they watch. These values and learning points can educate viewers to be better individuals in the society or to the people around them. Even a show that seems shallow such as "Keeping up with the Kardashians" also teaches the audience about the importance of supporting family members.
The statement: It doesn’t matter whether the program is educational or not. This is a television myth. Children who watch high quality educational programming in moderation actually show numerous benefits. Co-Director of the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center Dorothy Singer, EdD confirms that “Children who are watching good programs do make gains, both cognitively and socially.”

The statement: Television causes language delays. Although this is a popular belief, the evidence simply doesn’t support it. Rather, the research shows that it is lack of interaction with children that slows language development. Watching television doesn’t cause language delays, but failing to interact enough with your child can. Experts recommend that you watch a television program along with your child and encourage a discussion of what is being viewed – this is the best of both worlds.

Keep these simple truths in mind when choosing your kids’ television viewing:

- Television is a great source of new education and experiences
- Educational programming is always better than the alternative
- Watching television in moderation has proven benefits for children

The truth about television is that it is an excellent learning tool when used in moderation, and when it is used in conjunction with other activities and experiences. The research shows that proper use of television can carry multiple benefits for children.

**POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS**

The Television media increase an overall awareness of the masses. They enhance the general knowledge by providing us with information from all over the world. News broadcast through different media helps us know about the day-to-day events in the world.

Door Dharshan is exclusively for the rural area people to create awareness among them. Children are addicted to the cartoons. Women prefer to watch the serials and youth centered programs. With the interference of private cables and satellites, the intensity goes to the films and interviews.
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Cable and satellite TV focuses on the serials, popular soaps like saas-bahu serials, family saga and legends life stories. Some educational-cum-entertainment programs like the Kaun Banega Crorepati quiz show are there to improve the knowledge of the viewers. But the importance of TV in particular throws light on adventure, gossip, emotion-packed drama, with a high glamour quotient.

Music- and dance-based programs like the ‘Indian Idol’, ‘Zee Sa Re Ga Ma Pa’, ‘Dance Masti’ are designed to attract the children and youths. The fast growing technology changes the total style of art and fashion to the needs of ever evolving trends. Music and films are given much importance. So the filmy touch are there in every program they telecast.

News, telefilms and documentaries revolving around social issues increase a social awareness in children and develop their concern towards society. They also contribute to the enhancement of our knowledge, language and vocabulary.

Quiz-based TV and radio shows, and the many programmes on history, literature, science, philosophy and art and culture on channels like Discovery, BBC and the National Geographic contribute to development of people’s minds and attitudes, widening knowledge and culture.

Research has revealed that media are responsible for influencing a major part of our daily life. Media contribute to a transformation in the cultural and social values of the masses. Media bring about a transformation in the attitudes and beliefs of the people.

The persuasive nature of the content presented over media influences the thoughts and behaviour of the general public. It helps in moulding ideas and attitudes. It influences lifestyle and culture.

Media has brought about a major transformation in the way people think. Media has given them an excellent platform to present themselves before the world and contribute in their own way to the changing world scenario. Media has been responsible for making the world a smaller place to live in. The recent advent of blogging in the media world and practices like public polls and citizen journalism have led to the achievement of a social control

These concepts have strengthened the relationship between the media and the common man and contributed to the development of public opinion on national and social issues. The media has
played a major role in positive developments like the fight against racism gender bias, and world
poverty, and spreading awareness about the need for world peace.

While India’s strong traditional heritage has always been significantly characterized by the
traditional roles of women as homemakers and mothers, the portrayal of women on television
has challenged this ideal, and therefore cultivated a new perception of womanhood for the Indian
woman.

CONCLUSION

Television propagates for both informative and entertainment purpose. It has positive as well as
negative effect on people. It is prominently seen growing dependency of Indian on television has
many social effects in their lives and thus leading Indian on the path of progression and
development. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the consumption of media
became an increasingly solitary experience. It gives us information about the nation, world,
science, finance and sports etc. TV also helps in spreading awareness among people. Due to
which there is decrease in dowry system, child marriage (Bal Vivah) etc. From TV people get
information that all these practices are legal offense. TV disseminates information relating to
health issues, which in turn helps in decrease in polio patient, TB patient and the population of
the country. Today people are getting information related to diseases and there causes from the
TV. Yoga also becomes popular among people through the TV. Today there are hundred’s of
reality shows on TV , where one can show his/her talent in front of millions of people. TV
assisted in globalization of culture. Due to which people comes to know the culture of other
people. Now Bhangra is not only famous in Punjab but in other parts of country also. Today
Yoga is not only practices in India but in other nation also. It also helped in spreading the
western culture in our Indian society. All these facts facilitate in increasing tourism and in the
growth of country’s economy. Thus, a powerful fact is created that television as medium of mass
communication has brought a social change in Indian in a positive manner.

REFERENCES


