

Viewing Doordarshan (TV) Programmes : Preferences of High School Students

B.C. DAS and S. DAS

Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, India.

Abstract : *Many Television (TV) programmes telecast in Assam are development oriented with urban and rural focus. They have been found successful in the field of education, human resource development, family welfare, development of agriculture, food, nutrition and hygiene too. They also help in developing interest and positive attitude towards a number of important issues like increasing productivity, national integration, etc. Television as an instructional aid, has the potential to facilitate better communication and retention in the teaching-learning process. So, it is imperative that teachers should take note of various programmes sponsored by Doordarshan (Govt. of India owned TV network) Kendras in India. Moreover, in view of non-existence of systematic researches in the area of TV viewing preferences of high school students, the present study attempts to find out the viewing preferences of high school students, particularly of class IX in relation to various Doordarshan Programmes that would inform us on how this media can be used in the learning process.*

Introduction

Education and Development are two inter-related terms and one cannot think of 'development' without education. It is only through a well planned and well organised educational system that development of a nation can be achieved successfully. Education as an effective instrument has a great role to play for rural as well as urban development. Like education, communication is another term which is also very much related with development. Communication is actually considered the heart of the educational process. The purpose of communication can be said to be three-fold, i.e. to inform, to persuade and to entertain. The scientific and technological revolution in mass communication has brought about new problems and possibilities in social transformation, especially for the developing countries like India. A developing country cannot afford the luxury of general programming and therefore, the media must cater to education and enlightenment and share a large part of educational workload.

Television in the modern world is regarded as the third parent of the child. Children in

the school going age constitute 40% of the TV audience in India. As the television has a great role to play in the field of education as well as all round development of children, there is a need to study the viewing habits, attitudes and likings of students when they watch Doordarshan programmes. The outlay for TV has been increasing from one plan period to the other. If this outlay is to be regarded as productive, software planning has to receive a lot more attention than it has received so far. In other words, hardware expansion has not been matched by adequate investment in software. So, there should be equal attention towards both, hardware and software, if the country's development is to be enhanced in a proper and smooth way.

Background of the Study

Though television service was inaugurated in New Delhi on 15th September, 1959, the TV network started functioning from Shillong in 1982 and under INSAT in August, 1983. Asiad 1982 at New Delhi, Olympiad 1984 at Los Angeles and Asiad 1986 at Seoul served as catalysts to popularise Doordarshan. According to Mc Luhan (1969), the use of new audio-visual aids can be used to revitalise traditional cultures. This is especially true in bringing the tribal culture to the mainstream. Social evaluation of Satellite Instructional Television Equipment (SITE) by Agrawal and others (1977) have highlighted the tremendous impact of TV on children and youth. According to Chanda Committee (1966) the purpose of Doordarshan is "a social transformation in the country by eradicating illiteracy, providing conventional lessons of high quality and bringing within the reach of many, education in its broader concepts". In this regard, research studies conducted by Mohanty (1976), Rahman (1977), Modi (1978), and TV and Video World (1986) reveal that pupils are very much interested in viewing various programmes sponsored by Doordarshan Kendras and they can learn well if they are instructed through TV. Greenstein (1954), Scott (1956), Scharm et al (1961), Nelson (1963), Slater (1963), Thompson (1964), Blonda (1966), Witty (1967) and Lyle and Hoffman (1972) state that grades of the TV groups are higher than the non-TV group in reading. Also, oral composition grades of the TV group are significantly better than the non-TV group. Most of these studies reveal that there is a negative relationship between TV watching and achievement. However, TV is helpful for both, knowledge as well as language development. In fact, all these studies are micro-level researches and have not been focussed exclusively on the TV viewing preferences of high school students. In other words, systematic researches on TV viewing preferences of high school students are particularly non-existent. It is in this context, the present study was undertaken to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the TV viewing preferences of the students at the High School level especially of Class-IX;
2. To find out the extent to which the respondents exposed themselves to TV programmes;
3. To find out the Socio-economic status of the viewers;
4. To find out the differences between boys and girls in TV viewing preferences;

5. To find out the effectiveness of various programmes on their education;
6. To find out the influence of TV programmes on the different aspects of their lives and;
7. To suggest measures for better utilization of TV for human resource development and improvement of the programmes on Doordarshan.

Methodology

The study was essentially a survey investigation intended to find out the TV viewing preferences of the high school students, especially of Class IX. In order to conduct this investigation "Normative Survey Method" was adopted. Personal visits to different high schools provided data to achieve the objectives of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of the present study comprised all the students of high schools especially of Class IX in Shillong. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample of fifteen schools based in the different areas in Shillong. The respondents were selected at random from the fifteen high schools. Equal number of boys and girls (100 boys and 100 girls) were selected for the study. Thus, the final sample of the study consisted of 200 high school students belonging to different linguistic groups such as Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Hindi, Khasi, Marwari, Mizo and Nepali. Their age range was between 14-18 years. However, majority of them were of 14 and 15 years age group.

Tools

A questionnaire developed by the investigators and socio-economic status scale developed by Kupuswamy (1976) were used as devices for gathering data needed for the study. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of "Total Design Method" suggested by Dilman (1987). The questions which provided data for this study were standardized to a great extent, but depending upon the nature of information required, free response questions were also included.

Data Collection

The final data collection was done during the months of March and April, 1997. The tools were personally administered to 230 students belonging to 15 schools. Out of those 230 respondents, 30 incomplete cases were removed. Finally, only 200 responses covering 100 boys and 100 girls were selected .

Findings

This part of the study is devoted to the analysis of data and interpretation of the results along with the major findings as they have been traced from the study.

Demographics

The sample consisted of students from different socio-economic classes. 16 per cent of

the respondents were from the higher class, 75.50 per cent belonged to upper middle class, 7 per cent belonged to middle class, 1.50 per cent students belonged to lower middle class, and none from the working class.

Further, out of 200 students, only 37 (18.50%) students had working mothers. Also, most of the students didn't have a joint family system and more than 50 per cent of the families had 3 or lesser number of children.

As different students know different languages other than their mother tongue, their numbers as found out from the study are given in the Table No.1.

Table-1: Languages other than mother tongue known to the students.

<i>Languages</i>	<i>% of Boys</i>	<i>% of Girls</i>
English	100	100
Hindi	62	70
Bengali	25	38
Khasi	28	16
Nepali	3	6
Assamese	9	11
Mizo	2	2
Marwari	4	1

So, it is evident from the Table-1 that majority of the boys as well as girls know the major languages like English and Hindi.

Educational and Vocational Aspirations

Education and vocation are two interrelated terms. Different types of education are needed for different types of vocation. Both, the educational and vocational aspirations of students should always go together. The students' vocational and educational aspirations are given in Table-2.

Table-2: Educational and Vocational Aspirations of the Students

<i>Education</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Vocation</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
High School	7	16	Clerical	2	4
Vocational	21	9	Skilled	13	10
College	17	17	Unskilled	3	3
University	55	58	Professional/ Career	82	83
	N = 100	N = 10		N = 100	N = 100

TV Ownership

75.50 per cent of students had television in their homes while 24.50 per cent had no TV sets. Majority of the TV sets were bought between the year 1992 – 1994.

There are different reasons for the students not possessing TV sets, which are given in Table-3.

Table-3 Reasons of not possessing TV sets by the students

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Cannot afford	11	5.50
Do not care to have	X	X
Disturb Studies	38	19.00
	49	24.50

Interestingly, majority of those who didn't have television at home felt that it was because their parents thought that TV would disturb the studies of the children.

Viewership Pattern

Students watched TV on different days and those who had no TV sets watched it at different places. The data obtained in this regard are given in Table-4.

Table-4 Students Watching TV on Different Days and at Different Places

<i>Students having TV</i>	<i>No. of Boys</i>	<i>No. of Girls</i>
Everyday	68	70
4 to 6 Days/week	10	15
2 to 4 Days/week	19	10
Once a Week	3	5
	N = 100	N = 100
<i>Students who do not have TV</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Do not Watch	1	.5
At Neighbours' place	39	19.5
At Friends' place	9	4.5
	N = 49	24.5
In the Evening	24	12
on Holidays	25	12.5
	N = 49	24.5

It is clear from table 4 that most of the students were regular viewers. However, there was a slight difference between boys and girls regarding the duration of watching TV. While 54% of the boys watched TV on an average of 1-2 hours daily, 64% of the girls did so.

Different programmes were preferred by the different groups of students. The rank order of preferences are given in Table-5.

Table-5: Rank Order of Preferences of Programmes

<i>Programmes</i>	<i>Boys</i>			<i>Girls</i>		
	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
Comedy	27	10	21	10	10	5
Mystery/Adventure	10	24	15	16	12	10
Sports	15	10	14	10	6	10
Family	Nil	Nil	5	Nil	7	4
Quiz	30	20	9	35	30	20
Game	4	6	8	2	7	25
Police/Detective	4	10	6	6	4	4
Cartoon	Nil	2	5	1	13	6
Film	3	4	5	6	8	8
Advertisements	3	Nil	2	2	3	1
Children's Programme	2	2	2	1	Nil	2
Dramas	2	2	8	2	Nil	5

Table-5 shows that programmes like Quiz, Comedy, Mystery/Adventure and Sports were the most preferred ones.

Influence of TV Programmes on Family Members

The influences of TV on the family had been positive as well as negative sides. The data obtained in this regard is given in Table-6.

Table-6: Influences of TV on the family

<i>Reactions</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Family Life		
Closer Family Relations	186	93
Negative effects on Family Relations	12	6
As before	2	1
	200	100
Social Life		
Better	190	95
Worse	10	5
	200	100

Language Preferences

Students were of different opinions regarding their preferences of language of TV programmes. Different groups of students wanted different types of language-mix. The data obtained in this regard is given in Table-7.

Table-7: Responses to Languages used

<i>Language</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
English		
Too much	2	6
Too little	67	28
Reasonable	31	66
	N=100	N=100
Hindi		
Too much	73	36
Too little	2	8
Reasonable	25	56
	N=100	N=100
Preferred Language(s)		
Exclusively		
Mother Tongue	8	4
Hindi +		
Mother Tongue	7	8
Hindi + Mother		
Tongue + English	85	88
	N=100	N=100

Influence of TV on Students

TV has got both positive and negative role to play in the life of students and the data obtained on students' perceptions in this regard are given in Table-8.

Table-8: Role of TV as perceived by students

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
TV Helps in School Achievement		
Yes	54	84
No	46	16
	N=100	N=100
It is Effective for General Knowledge		
Yes	74	79
No	26	21
	N=100	N=100
It Helps in Vocational Interest		
Yes	67	68
No	33	32
	N=100	N=100
It Increases Quest for Knowledge		
Yes	98	98
No	2	2
	N=100	N=100

It Enhances Self-image		
Yes	48	42
No	52	58
	N=100	N=100
It Affects the Eye Sight		
Yes	51	47
No	49	53
	N=100	N=100
It Affects the Culture negatively		
Yes	28	23
No	72	77
	N=100	N=100
It Affects Values negatively		
Yes	24	21
No	76	79
	N=100	N=100
Lessons Through TV/Video Would be Interesting		
Yes	76	69
No	24	31
	N=100	N=100
Students can Learn Using TV at Home		
Yes	22	60
No	78	40
	N=100	N=100

Based on the above, the major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. There were no differences in viewing preferences of TV programmes between students belonging to higher, lower and middle socio-economic status groups.
2. All the boys and girls knew English which is a major language. Majority of the boys and girls knew Hindi and the percentages relating to knowledge of other languages were not very high.
3. Majority of the students wanted to have education upto the University level. However, 55% of the boys and 58% of the girls and 82% of the boys and 83% of the girls aspired for University education and professional work. It seems that aspirations for professional career among the students are more than that of University education.
4. Majority (75.5%) of the students had TV sets in their homes.
5. About 19% of the students had no TV sets of their own because their parents thought that it would disturb their studies and 5.50% could not afford having a TV set because they belonged to the lower/middle group.
6. Majority of the students had the habit of watching TV everyday. Those students who

had no TV sets of their own, almost all of them used to watch TV at their neighbour's or friend's places during holidays, Sundays or in the evenings.

7. Majority of the students (93%) feel that TV has brought their family relationship closer whereas 6% feel that it has disintegrated their family relationship. 95% of the students responded that TV has influenced their social life in a better way.
8. Most of the students (34%) watched TV for the purpose of education, 31.50% watched it for entertainment, 32% watched for all these purposes and the remaining students watched TV just to spend the time.
9. Programmes like Quiz, Comedy, Mystery/Adventure, Sports, Games are the most preferred programmes.
10. 99% of the tribal students have pointed out that there is too much Hindi used in TV and the use of English is too little.
11. 98.5% of the students marked that TV helps in their education through improving their general knowledge, creating scientific interest, creating vocational interest and helping them in selecting hobbies.
12. 45% of the students state that TV enhances their self-image, whereas 55% state that it does not. 49% of the students state that TV affects the eye sight whereas 51% state that it does not. Most of the students felt that TV does not affect their culture and values in any negative way.
13. 72.50% of the students have pointed out that if they are taught through TV or Video Cassettes, they will be very much interested.
14. 99% of the students have pointed out that there will be uses of TV, Video, Taperecorders, Computers, Calculators in the class room in 2001 and teachers' role will be quite different from that of today.
15. The most accepted programme by the students was the Quiz, based on different subjects.

Conclusions

Television, especially Doordarshan, can play an important role in imparting education in the North-Eastern part of India. However, while using this media, the interests and aspirations of the users, i.e. the students, should be the focal point. The contents as well as the delivery of programmes have to be in line with the specific needs of the learner group.

In the North-East India, there should be an equal mix of English, Hindi and the respective Mother Tongues while programmes on TV are developed. Further, students look forward to vocational programmes on this media. As most of the students covered in this study were interested in learning their lessons in the classrooms through TV and Video, perhaps, our country in general and each and every state in particular should arrange for that, keeping in view the students' interest. Like in the case of radio, in the future each and every school should have at least one TV set and there should be school broadcast programme on the TV daily a few hours or at least for half an hour to raise the motivation of the students to learn their school subjects.

References

- Agrawal, Binod et al. (1977) 'Social Impact of SITE on Adults', Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad.
- Blonda, La. (1966) *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, No.5, May-June.
- Chanda, Ashok K. (1966) 'Report of the Committee on Broadcasting and Information Media—Radio and TV', Government of India, New Delhi.
- Dilman, D.A. (1987) 'Response to Mail Surveys; What we don't know, and what we need to find out?' Paper read at ZUMA Konferenz Zur Schriftlichen Befragung und Telefoniashen Befragungsmethode ZUMA, Mannheim, 17-30, April.
- Greenstein (1954) *The Journal of Education Research*, Vol. 76, No. 5 May-June.
- Kuppuswamy, B. (1976) *Communication and Social Development in India*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
- 'Learning to Be': The World Education Today and Tomorrow, (1972) UNESCO Report, Paris.
- Lyle and Hoffman (1972) *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, No. 5, May-June.
- "Sun Magazine", (1986) 1st February, New Delhi.
- Mc Luhan (1969) In *American Education Research Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1.
- Mohanty, J. (1976) *Educational Broadcasting. Radio and Television in Education*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
- Modi, Bella (1978) Lessons from the Indian Satellite Experiment — *Educational Broadcasting International*, September.
- Nelson. (1963) *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1.
- Rahman, Sault et al. (1977) A Study of ETC Programmes during the In-service Teacher Training Course, Studies in Education TV and Radio Programme, ET Cell, Office of the D.P.I. for Higher Education, Orissa.
- Scharam (1961) *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, No. 5, May-June.
- Scott (1956) *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, No. 5, May-June.
- Thomson (1964) *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1.
- "TV and Video World", (1986) Minhaz Publication, 3rd April, Bombay.
- Witty. (1967) A Survey of Media Behaviour, *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 75, No. 5, May-June.

[Mr. B.C. Das is a senior lecturer and Mr. S. Das is a Research Scholar in the Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Assam-786004, India]