

# Is television a boon or a bane



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The topic "is television a boon or a bane" has forever invited mixed opinions and varied but equally justifiable criticisms. For better or worse, television has definitely provided a common platform for all genders, age- groups, races, religions, nationalities and educational level. Much has been debated and said about numerous aspects of television and its impact on our society- both good and bad. Nevertheless one facet of it has probably dodged our attention - is television taking us away from ourselves

Joshua Meygowitz gives a vivid and thought provoking account of it in his article titled " The 19-Inch Neighborhood". The theme of the article revolves around the change our society, attitudes and priorities have undergone along with the percolation of television, internet and media in our lives. Joshua feels that our present space is becoming increasingly " virtual" than " real" like it was in the earlier days. We are no longer " with" ourselves, our loved ones and our surroundings rather, we are more focused and bothered about global issues, politics, entertainment , natural calamities in distant continents and so on . Although it is commendable to be aware of what is happening on our planet, it does not make our neighborhood problems or our loved ones' sorrows any less important. Joshua aptly sums up the scenario in a single statement- " the more we rely on our video window, the less relation there is between where we are and what we know and experience, the less there's a relationship between where we are and who we are".

Television has broken down all barriers between men and women, adult and children, ethnic groups and nations. Today, if one does not have enough money to travel to exotic places, the option of clicking the remote and switching to a travel program is always there. Children of all ages are exposed to things that their earlier day's counterparts had not even heard of.

All kind of people from all walks of life have an access to everything under the sun. The international arena created by television and the media is hard to pull away from because it has subtly but firmly integrated into our being. Although this sense of awareness does broaden our horizons and cultivates a different kind of thought process, it also affects our interaction and identification with our society as well as our roles in our families.

Television has become our new neighborhood in the sense that we tend to be occupied more into our " secondary" surroundings, i. e., the world and pay less attention to our " primary" surroundings" i. e., our neighborhood per se. The more we involve ourselves in the worldly web (which is directly proportional to the time we spend in front of the T. V.), the more we distance ourselves from people and things which ought to matter to us more which eventually results in isolation.

Television, in conclusion is a paradox and no judgment- good or bad, would be fair enough to weigh its impact on our society and psyche. Joshua calls it " hijacker and liberator". It takes us to places where we are actually not and takes us away from places where we actually are. Further, it frees us from our physical space, at the same time captivating our attention.