

The impact of television programmes media essay

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKThe purpose of this study is to find out the impact of television programmes on youth. As a communication technology, television has a great acceptance and is being used extensively in India. Television viewership is no more restricted to the upper and upper-middle class of India as it used to be a few years back. Being inexpensive and easy to access, television spread rapidly in India. It has become one of the common household commodities. Therefore, this study attempted to understand whether demography influenced the viewership patterns of respondents or not. Television provides a variety of local and foreign channels and helps people in selecting programmes according to their taste and choice. Therefore, the first part of this study explored respondents preferred channels and kinds of programmes, reasons for watching television, preferred time of watching and control over the remote. It justified the application of 'Uses and Gratification Theory'. This theory identifies television consumption patterns according to needs and satisfaction of targeted segment. The gratification factor leads to the exposure of programmes which in turn can generate impact. Main part of the present research comes under the impact tradition. It demands discussion on theories based on observational learning and information processing emphasize lasting impact of exposure to media contents. Thus, the study also applies 'Cultivation Theory' in terms of impact through exposure and 'Social learning Theory' which says that viewers attend and learn from models which are attractive, powerful, rewarding and similar to themselves. They do not act immediately on what they learn from television. Instead, they store such knowledge to be used when their own circumstances elicit it. Hence, the framework of this research is based on the set of three theories i.

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e. Uses and Gratification Theory, Cultivation Theory and Social Learning Theory. These theories are discussed below in relation with the present study in brief.

2. 1 Uses and Gratification

Utility Theory, often known as the "Uses and Gratification Approach" offers another way of explaining why people expose themselves to some communications and not others; why they perceive a fraction of these to which they are exposed and why they remember- correctly or incorrectly. Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratification Theory suggest that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media usage. Theorists say that media users seek out source that best fulfils their needs. Uses and Gratification Theory assumes that users have alternate choices to satisfy their needs (Griffin. 2000). 55Uses and Gratification Theory takes a more humanistic approach to looking at the media usage. The theory takes out the possibility that media can have an unconscious influence on our lives and how we view the world. The idea that we simply use media to satisfy a given need does not seem to fully recognize the power of media in today's society.

2. 2 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory in its most basic form, suggests that television is responsible for shaping or cultivating viewer's conceptions of social reality. The combined effect of massive television exposure by viewer's over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately for our culture as a whole. Thus, cultivation research is in the effects

traditions. Cultivation research looks at the mass media as a socialising agent and investigates whether television viewers come to believe the television version of reality the more they watch it. Gerbner and his colleagues argue that television drama has a small but significant influence on the attitudes, beliefs and judgement of viewers' concerning the social world. The focus is on 'heavy viewers'. People who watch a lot of television are likely to be more influenced by the ways in which the world is framed by television programmes than are individuals who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience. Light viewers may have more sources of information than heavy viewers. 58 Under guidance of this theory, this study may be able to emerge as a new theory. Essentially, the theory states that heavy exposure to mass media namely television creates and cultivates attitudes more consistent with a media fabricated version of reality than with what actual reality is. The cultivation theory asserts that heavy viewer's attitudes are cultivated primarily by what they watch on television. Cultivation theorists are best known for their study of television and viewer's and in particular, for a focus on the topic of violence. However, some studies have also considered other mass media from this perspective and have dealt with topics such as gender roles, age groups, ethnic groups and political attitudes.

2.3 Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura, behaviours and responses that are repeated, perceived as real, distinct, functional and salient are more likely to be attended to, thus more likely to be learned. When observing an event, which receives some kind of reward like social approval, pleasant experience and

when the observer feels confident to perform, it's symbolic imitation is facilitated. The social cognitive principle has been widely employed to explain in television effects on a variety of social issues such as aggression, ethnic stereotypes, alcohol, attitudes and behaviour. It also stresses the importance of viewer's cognitive activities when consuming television messages (Bandura. 1977). 63Socialization process of person is influenced by innumerable factors such as family, school, environment factors etc. Direct experience and participation are important parameters which shape the youth's impressions of the perceived structure of their environment. Mass media, particularly television plays a crucial role in bringing the outside world into homes. As an important institution, mass media enters the socialization process of an individual. In light of all these theories stated above, it is important to mention that the researcher has formulated a combination of the three theories in order to assess what is the main reason of their watching, their preferred channels and programmes. While on the other hand, it has also measured what kind of impact are taking place in the lives of the sample under study? If there are some affects that are changing attitudes of youth under the study. Are these effects long-lasting or short term. Hence, the researcher intended to explore all this for which the base of above mentioned theories was most suitable and required. It was also assumed that the youth (aged 18-25 years) are vulnerable to influences and tend to be inclined towards change. Youth would serve as a barometer to assess the influence of television. Hence, youth of age 18-25 were selected for the study to determine the degree to which their attitudes were influenced by television. Now, with the availability of the foreign channels, an important question arises: does a youth's behaviour reflect what his/her has

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watched on the television screen? The impact of foreign television programmes on youth involves a number of indispensable factors such as interest in the programmes, viewing pattern, reasons for watching, attitude towards programmes and models of social reality that these programmes promote. The study aimed at finding out whether and to what extent television affect youth in Rohtak and Jhajjar districts. The researcher aimed at finding answers to questions such as what youth think about these programmes in terms of their preferences and relevance. Is there any restriction on youth for watching television channels? Whether they experience an impact of these programmes on their attitudes or not?