

Television and what
changes it has
brought to our life



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Television has changed significantly the life of people and remains the central mode of information and entertainment in our present-day global culture. Television is a set of formal, narrative, and representational structures and capacities which mark out as a distinctive or unique experience. TV can be beneficial in gaining knowledge as there are many educative and informative programs which are shown on television like Discovery channel, National Geographic and much more. The world's first electronic TV was invented by Philo Taylor Farnsworth, a 21-year-old inventor. The first television signal was transmitted on September 7, 1927, which was successfully demonstrated by Philo Taylor. Television is the source of entertainment admired by all ages and can influence viewers both in positive and negative ways. According to Wasko (n. d), television is the central presence in individual homes and difficult to avoid. This essay describes the positive and negative effects of TV on people especially children and how TV has changed our lives.

TV has become the primary source of news for many people. The availability of international news now seems a familiar part of multi-channel television, and their impact on the broadcasting ecology of news-making continues to influence the culture of journalism. According to Pelton (2004), communication satellites have made our world global and interconnected. Where one news may have taken several days to travel from country to country, rolling news stations now deliver the news immediately. With the help of satellite communication, the news stations can transmit the news even from the remote location. Rolling news channels are an important form of communication where the elected officials are expected to hastily respond

to the events while journalists need to react live on air to the news with limited time to explain why and what they are currently reporting (MacGregor, 1997).

These days individuals are living within the television society. The remote control of TV has changed our viewing habits by allowing us to effortlessly change from one to the next channel without ever leaving the couch. According to Garber (1980), people are now completely in control of what they choose to watch. TV holds the viewer's attention because the experience is pleasurable, and they are interested because they are fascinated by something, they find horrific or ghastly. Different viewers at different times will engage consciously with what they see and be aware of thinking about it, speaking, or expostulating in response. TV obstructs the ability to think, but it does not lead to freedom of mind, relaxation, or renewal, however, leads to more exhausting minds (Mander, 1978, p. 214).

Standard TV viewing remains a popular pastime for many millions of people, children included. For kids, it is difficult to escape from TV. Educationalists argue that television viewing would displace reading and harm children's school performance. TV has a deleterious influence on family interactions, family members no longer talk to each other as they used to, which leads to a breakdown in the essential bonds that are so crucial to a stable family environment and to the development of socially responsible children. Children do not absorb uncritically what television offers. How TV information is absorbed and then stored by children is affected by what they already know or believe or feel (Collins, 1984).

Nowadays, we are constantly bombarded with television commercials which try to convince us how the quality of our lives could be improved by purchasing their products. In the last 20 years impact of TV commercials on people and their behavior is the topic of debate in the countries open for market competition (Boddewyn, 1984). Consumer socialization can be described as “ the processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace” (Ward, 1974). The advertisements targeting the children as consumers forcing the family members to buy the products from them regardless of their needs. Children who watch more TV commercials, ask for more products by brand name. According to Lewis and Hill (1998), half of the commercials aimed at children were concerned about food. Recently the food commercials are criticized as being less healthy food choices (Dalmeny, 2003).

However, TV has come to be recognized as a potential tool in assisting the learning of language and it is not a separate world that has to be introduced. Moreover, TV can be beneficial to children as a constructive way to use their time and can bring them into contact with aspects of life they would not otherwise become aware of it. Nowadays, TV can be used to create occasions when family members come together and act as a source of mutual interest and conversations. Television plays a role in defining the viewer’s sense of personal identity (Fiske, 1982) and can provide a source of learning about personal and social problems (Faber, 1986). Additionally, children are developing a better understanding of TV content, and are becoming progressively more able to make fine distinctions between

programs and critical judgments about them (Collins, 1979). Entertainment-oriented programs like “ Sesame Street” for children have the capacity to provide awareness and impressions of aspects of life that are unknown and unfamiliar to them. According to Wober (1988), TV is regarded as having a potentially powerful shaping effect on children’s perceptions of the world around them.

This study reveals that though TV has a positive and negative influence/effect on the viewers, even then it is the widespread powerful electronic medium that has changed our lives. Furthermore, its utility in terms of education, information, and entertainment content in its programs cannot be discarded in present-day society. Television as a medium has a deterministic moral impact but the viewers require a moral imagination to make sense of what they are viewing. TV viewing has inaugurated new television-related behaviors. We have called television despite the wide-ranging changes in the norms and experience of this technology. TV not only means different things but has different functions and uses in societies globally.