

PATTERN OF VIEWING TELEVISION: A STUDY AT GOLAGHAT TOWN OF ASSAM

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Introduction

Television is the wholesale distributor of images. It contributes greatly to popular culture. It also brings into homes images and messages. People today are exposed to the struggles, joys, conflicts, ways of behaviour of men and women and types of relationships. There are many potential benefits from viewing some television shows. Some of these are promotion of positive aspects of social behaviour, such as sharing, manners, cooperation, morals, values, cultural experiences, sexual and relationship norms. Constant exposure to advertise portraying masculine and feminine stereotypes directly influences role expectations. Such socially learned gender form attitudes and become the guide to behaviours in society. Since advertising is so pervasive, people absorb its messages without necessarily analyzing its hidden meaning. Advertisers hope that by reaching out people they can cultivate a favourable attitude towards their brand and product. In this study focus has been made upon pattern of viewing Television as tools of mass media communication.

Television has been a subject of discussion ever since it was introduced in India as an experimental educational service in 1959. Tremendous development in 24 Hours private channels, their content, and portrayal of lifestyles and cultures that are foreign to the local culture demanded that we study their influence, if any on people.

Possession of Television in India

For more than a decade, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting managed to hold out against demands from educational institutions, industrialists, politicians and indeed the middle classes in urban areas for the introduction of television. On September 15, 1959, the Delhi Television Centre went on air. Entertainment and information programmes were introduced from August 1965, in addition to social education programmes for which purpose alone TV has been introduced in the capital. By 1970, the duration of the service was increased to three hours, and included, besides news, information and entertainment programmes.

In 1977, terrestrial transmitters were put up at Jaipur, Hyderabad, Raipur, Gulbarga, Sambhalpur and Muzaffarpur, to extent television coverage to a population of more than 100 million. For the first time in the history of Indian broadcasting, political parties shared equal radio and TV time with the ruling party for their election campaigns.

Meanwhile, the success of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) brought India International prestige; the country appeared ready for satellite television. NASA, ITU-UNDP, Ford Aerospace were major foreign actors in this success; the minor actors were General Electric, Hughes Aircraft, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and representatives of Western nations at the ITU's World Administrative radio Conference. The INSAT series of domestic communication satellites and microwave cable networks have provided the country the infrastructure for a national satellite hook-up.

Television as style of depicting everyday life (Genres)

(1) Television News

A TV newscast cannot match the wide coverage and in depth report of radio news. The time taken up by visual material does not allow for a probe, or even for adequate background information. Indeed, a TV newscast cannot present the most interesting and significant news since the cameras just cannot be present where such events take place. A TV newscast is however, the ideal medium for presenting ceremonial events like coronations, swearing – in –ceremonies, arrivals and departures of VIPs, signing of treaties, parades, inaugurations, and sports.

(2) News Bulletins and Current Affairs:

News bulletins, general news magazines, and panel discussions on public affairs are some of the popular news programmes on news channels on Indian television. Major networks like Doordarshan, Star, Zee, Sun, Sahara, NDTV, TV Today have at least one news channel as part of their bouquets. Business news channels too form part of networks like CNN, NDTV, and Aaj Tak. Examples of these include CNBC, NDTV, Profit, AwaZ, and Zee Business. All these are either in Hindi or English, like most other programmes on the National network.

(3) Advertising in the News

The news media in India are, as in other democracies, vigorously supported by the advertising and public relations industries. Besides, television news channels and news bulletins received the biggest patronage where in content soft advertising is concerned.

(4) Crime-based Programmes on the News Channels

Crime-based programmes also called ‘crime specials’, have become an integral part of round the clock news channels. Each channel has its own flagship crime show. The attempt is to reconstruct and dramatize real life crime stories. Besides crime based stories, news channels have also turned to Reality TV shows and Lifestyle shows to seduce the Viewers away from the general entertainment channels.

(5) Documentaries or Features Television

Television documentaries, like cinema documentaries can feature any subject of interest to a number of viewers, such as the state of pollution, poverty, famine, the cultural scene or the plight of construction workers. The aim of documentaries is to enlighten, arouse, and motivate, or simply to entertain. The format of a TV documentary take the form of a ‘direct presentation’ of the substance of a problem or an experience or a situation by contrast with the ‘discussion’ in which a situation or problem may be illustrated, usually relatively briefly, but in which the main emphasis falls on relatively formal argument about it. TV channels dedicated to the production and screening of documentaries include: Discover, Animal Planet, History, and Planet Earth.

(6) Children Programmes

These are defined as programmes specially made for and offered to children, at certain special times. Cartoons, puppet shows, ‘live’ stories and plays, and educational items are some of the items that make up a children’s shows. Feature films in Hindi for children are screened occasionally. Television channels exclusively targeted at children and young people are: POGO, Hungamma, Disney, Nickleodeon, and Cartoon Network.

(7)Religious Programmes

Religious/Spiritual programmes do comprise a popular genre in the Indian context. In recent years a number of religious channels have drawn millions of faithful, each to his own religion. The major elements that make up religious TV programmes are discourses, readings from the scriptures, rituals and services, the singing of bhajans, and finally the request for donations. Some channels have introduced programmes on Ayurveda, Yogo, Vastu and Astrological Forcasts. Punjabi channels transmit the ‘Gurubani’ direct from the Golden Temple. The Indian religious channels are Sanskaar, Astha, Zee Jagaran, Jain TV.

This work undertakes a research study on the patterns of viewing television in a developing urban setting i.e. Golaghat town of Assam.

Objective of the Study:

- (1) To analyze the pattern of viewing television.

Methodology:

The study has been located in a district town namely Golaghat in Assam. The rationale of selecting this unit for the study is that Golaghat is the headquarter of the district of Golaghat, Assam. Although, it is one of the developing town of the state of Assam but it is located in the remote area of the state as well as of the country. This seems to be very suitable in finding out the patterns of viewing television.

Techniques of Data collection

The study is focused on a set of the respondent namely television viewers. During the initial fieldwork it was observed that the changes in the field of television are taking place at faster rate. The important players in the field of television in Golaghat are Dooradarsan, NETV, Ne-Hi Fi, PRAG channel, News Live, DY 365, and all other paid channels available. Thus, the study is focused on a set of 60 respondents who have accessed to television in Golaghat town. The respondents are selected by using purposeful sampling of television viewers.

Variable of the study

The variables of the study are as follows:

- (a) Pattern of viewing Television.

Pattern of viewing television:

For the understanding of the patterns of viewing television among the respondent, the study will be done in terms of Ownership of television, Time spent on watching television, Place of watching, Channels watched, Programs watched.

Possession of television

Table-1
Possession of TV

Have T.V.	Frequency	Percentage
No	0	0%
Yes	60	100%
	N=60	100%

In the course of investigation it was found that out of total 60 respondents 100% respondents possessed Television set at Golaghat town. Table -1 shows the result.

Days of watch T.V. in a week:

Table:-2

Days of watching TV in a week

Watch T.V.	Frequency	Percentage
Don't watch T.V.	0	0
Daily/ Regularly	60	100%
5-6 Days	0	0
3-4 Days	0	0
1-2 Days	0	0
Rarely/Occasionally	0	0
	N=60	100%

Table -2 shows that 60(100%) respondent did watch television daily/regularly at Golaghat town. Respondents of watching television for 5-6 days, 3-4 days, 1-2 days and rarely or occasionally were zero.

Having cable/ dish Television

Table: - 3

Having cable/dish television

Having Cable/ Dish T.V.	Frequency	Percentage
No	0	0%
Yes	60	100%
	N=60	100%

Television is another vehicle of communication. In this study we looked into the exposure of the respondents to television whether they have cable or dish television. Table-3 showed the number of respondents having cable/dish television. Table:-3 showed that out of the total respondents 60(100%) possessed cable/dish television.

Hours spent on watching T.V. Daily:

Table: - 4

Hours spent on watching television daily

Hours of watching T.V.	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 Hours	17	28.33%
3-4 Hours	23	38.34%
More than 4 Hours	20	33.33%
	N=60	100%

The respondents of television viewers at Golaghat town were found from heavy viewers to light viewers. We may consider the Viewers who watch more than 4 hours daily as heavy viewers. While the viewers who watch two or less than two hours daily may consider light viewers. Watching TV 3-4 hours daily may be

considered as medium viewers. In the investigation we found that out of 60 respondents of television viewers 17(28.33%) watched television 1-2 hours , 23(38.34%) respondents watched television 3-4 hours, and 20(33.33%) watched television more than 4 hours daily. Table-5 showed the result.

Types of programme watched on TV mostly:

Table:-5

Type of programme watched on TV mostly

watch T.V. Programme	Frequency	Percentage
News	08	13.33%
Music	03	5.00%
Drama	01	1.67%
Sports	03	5.00%
Documentary	05	8.34%
Educational	01	1.67%
Dance	08	13.33%
Debate on current affairs	03	5.00%
Business/Marketing	02	3.33%
Children's Programme	03	5.00%
Mythological	09	15.00%
Fashion	02	3.33%
Interior designing	04	6.67%
Feature film	02	3.33%
Serial	04	6.67%
Others	02	3.33%
	N=60	100%

Table:-5 shows that among the 60 respondents of television viewers at Golaghat town 08(13.33%) respondents interested in watching mostly programme on News in television. The table also shows that 03 (5.00%) and 01(1.67%) respondents used to watch programmes on music and drama respectively. The programmes of sports, documentary and education were watching 03(5.00%), 05(8.33%) and 01(1.67%) respondents mostly. watched Documentary mostly than other programmes. Table:-7 further showed that in case of dance, debate on current affairs and business/marketing 08(13.33%), 03(5.00%) and 02(3.33%) respondents did first preference and watched this programmes mostly.

The respondents were asked whether children's programme and mythological programme they preferred or not. The table showed that 03(5.00%) and 09(15.00%) respondents watched children's programme and mythological programme on television respectively. The study further revealed that 02(3.33%) and 04(6.67%) respondents watching programmes of fashion and interior designing on television most respectively.

Table-5 showed that the programmes of feature film, serial and others were watching 02(3.33%), 04(6.67%) and 02(3.33%) respondents mostly.

Kinds of Films prefer:

Table:-6

Kinds of film preferred by the respondents

Preferable Film	Frequency	Percentage
Romantic Films	12	20.00%
Adult films	05	8.33%
Comedy Films	11	18.34%
Art Films	05	8.33%
Action Films	19	31.67%
Any Other	08	13.33%
	N=60	100%

After knowing the types of programmes watched mostly on television the researcher asked the respondents what kind of film they prefer most. The study revealed that 12(20.00%), 05 (08.33%) and 11(18.34%) respondents preferred mostly romantic film, adult film and comedy film respectively.

On the other hand, the study further revealed that 05 (8.33%), 19 (31.67%) and 08 (13.33%) respondents preferred mostly watching on television art films, action films and any other films respectively.

Language of Film preferred:

Table:- 7

Language of film preferred by the respondents

Preferable Film Language	Frequency	Percentage
English	02	3.33%
Hindi	26	43.34%
Assamese	30	50.00%
Bengali	02	3.33%
Other (Specify)	0	0
	N=60	100%

During the study the researcher inquired of the respondents about their preferable language of film to watch. Table - 7 showed the preferable language of film of the respondents. Film in English language has been preferred by 02(3.33%) respondents. While a large number of respondents 26 (43.34%) respondents preferred film in Hindi. The study further revealed that 30 (50.00%) and 02 (3.33%) respondents preferred to watch film in Assamese and Bengali language respectively.

On average how often watching TV daily:

Table: -8

On average how often watching TV daily

Watching TV daily	Frequency	Percentage
More than 9 times	10	16.67%
5-8 times	14	23.33%
1-4 times	36	60.00%
	N=60	100%

In the study, the researcher also inquired the respondents on average how often watching television daily. Table -8 reveals the facts of the matter. The table shows that 16.67%) respondents watching television more than 9 times daily. 14(23.33%) respondents watching television 5-8 times daily. Majority of the respondents i.e. 36 (60.00%) respondents were watching television channels 1-4 times daily.

Findings: The following findings have emerged from the analysis of data regarding the pattern of viewing television by the respondents.

1. In the course of investigation it was found that out of total 60 respondents 100% respondents possessed Television set at Golaghat town. Table -1 shows the result.
2. Table -2 shows that 60(100%) respondent did watch television daily/regularly at Golaghat town. Respondents of watching television for 5-6 days, 3-4 days, 1-2 days and rarely or occasionally were zero.
3. Television is another vehicle of communication. In this study we looked into the exposure of the respondents to television whether they have cable or dish television. Table-.3 showed the number of respondents having cable/dish television. Table:-3 showed that out of the total respondents 60(100%) possessed cable/dish television.
4. The respondents of television viewers at Golaghat town were found from heavy viewers to light viewers. We may consider the Viewers who watch more than 4 hours daily as heavy viewers. While the viewers who watch two or less than two hours daily may consider light viewers. Watching TV 3-4 hours daily may be considered as medium viewers. In the investigation we found that out of 60 respondents of television viewers 17(28.33%) watched television 1-2 hours , 23(38.34%) respondents watched television 3-4 hours, and 20(33.33%) watched television more than 4 hours daily. Table-5 showed the result.
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6. After knowing the types of programmes watched mostly on television the researcher asked the respondents what kind of film they prefer most. The study revealed that 12(20.00%), 05 (08.33%) and 11(18.34%) respondents preferred mostly romantic film, adult film and comedy film respectively. On the other hand, the study further revealed that 05 (8.33%), 19 (31.67%) and 08 (13.33%) respondents preferred mostly watching on television art films, action films and any other films respectively.
7. During the study the researcher inquired of the respondents about their preferable language of film to watch. Table - 7 showed the preferable language of film of the respondents. Film in English language has been preferred by 02(3.33%) respondents. While a large number of respondents 26 (43.34%) respondents preferred film in Hindi. The study further revealed that 30 (50.00%) and 02 (3.33%) respondents preferred to watch film in Assamese and Bengali language respectively.
8. In the study, the researcher also inquired the respondents on average how often watching television daily. Table -8 reveals the facts of the matter. The table shows that 16.67%) respondents watching television more than 9 times daily. 14(23.33%) respondents watching television 5-8 times daily. Majority of the respondents i.e. 36 (60.00%) respondents were watching television channels 1-4 times daily.

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