CHAPTER I

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1.1 Introduction

The world has shrunk to a “global village” owing to advances in technology. Mass media such as the newspaper, radio, cinema, television and the internet have brought the world under an umbrella. Communication across and among nations has grown manifold, and with it, the media have taken centre stage. And India has a big role to play in the new scheme of things.

Now a days Media is promoting a lifestyle that seeks quick and constant change. They are giving rise to a use-and-throw culture that threatens to sweep away traditions and values. People are exposed to new forms of communication and there is a tendency among them to try too many things at a time. It may destroy their initiative. “We live in a world of media implosion and we cannot but be engulfed by the omnipresence of the media”[(Srampickal (1997) and Marshal McLuhan (1964)].

India witnessed a communication boom with the birth of the new millennium. We have increasingly gravitated towards Western culture and have forgotten our traditions. For example, joint families, which were core to our culture, have disintegrated. We now prefer nuclear families — couples and their children — which form the core of the society. We have lost our identity with the demise of the joint family system.

The television has become an integral part of nuclear families. In families where husband and wife have to work, children are left with the television for a companion. Here they become passive listeners. Even elders in the family are attracted to this aural-oral medium, and seek the company of television programmes. They even neglect responsibilities such as housekeeping, care of children. The television, however, has pros and cons as a medium affecting the social life of people. It plays an important role in providing information and entertainment.

Outlining the need for media literacy, Jose Plachicakal (1997) says that this decade is witnessing the visual media storming the thresholds of the entire society. Media’s influence seems to reverberate through the society. The television influence the viewer
directly through its message and does not involve social or interpersonal interaction. Moreover, it is embedded in another agency called the family. Watching television has become a central leisure activity the world over. It remains a major source of gratification. Its positive influences are in the areas of information, entertainment, marketing, etc., whereas the negative impact includes stunting children’s development through overexposure to films. A general awareness about the above is inherent in society.

First and foremost, the television is the ‘storyteller’ of the nation and the world. It keeps people informed about world happenings. It is the wholesale distributor of images and mainstream of popular culture. Children are born into homes in which, for the first time in human history, a centralized commercial institution other than parents, religious institutions or schools, tells the stories. The world of television shows and tells us about life, people, places, striving power and fate. It shows and tells us how things work and what to do with them. It presents the good and the bad, the happy and the sad, the successes and the failures, and it who tells us, who is at the top and who is at the bottom. The characters in television programmes do not live or die. They are created or destroyed to tell the story. This storytelling function of television is extremely important because these stories teach viewers the intricacies of the world and its people.

Television is, therefore, a connecting link and an electronic springboard of popular culture that brings various media together. Dorr(1986), referring to the television as a purveyor of information and education in popular culture, noted that films and books were the inspirations for television programmes. Theatrical films later appeared on television. Television personalities and programmes were featured in magazines and newspapers. Films, video games and personal computers were advertised on television, And an advertising campaign for a product or service was simultaneously conducted on television, radio and magazines.

The television is a unique and special medium because of its tremendous presence and attractiveness as a source of entertainment, education and information. It is a source of messages, images and cross-cultural portrayals that teach and cause people to learn. It is
unique and special because of the visibility and prestige it bestows on people, places and the things it selects to champion (Berry, 1998).

The television retains its enormous popularity because it has catered to the moods and desires of the majority of children and young people. Young people exposed to the media are fascinated and imitate heroes and heroines. Lifestyle, trends and fashion set by the stars become imitable. Teenagers are by nature imitators. They are in a phase in which they seek role models. Pop, film and sport stars attract them more than teachers, parents and educators. What their stars show quickly becomes their way of life. Advertisements present stereotypes and they are easily copied by housewives and middle class people. The preferences of stars dictate the purchases made by viewers. Television programmes, while entertaining the viewers, gradually influence their behaviour.

The television’s impact on elders is marked as they tend to visualise themselves as characters that appear in television programmes. When viewers copy characters, it creates problems. They develop superiority complex when they copy heroes and inferiority complex when they copy villains. These complexes affect their children and families. They become so intoxicated by the programmes that they are unable to live without watching the telecast. If the effect of this medium is so marked on the adults, what will its influence be on the future pillars of our country? This question has goaded the researcher to look into media behaviour, particularly of adolescent schoolchildren.

The researcher has keenly observed school children in particular and her own children in general. She has noted the viewing habits of the children and analysed their behaviour. She attempts to suggest methods to change the behaviour, if negative, of these media-viewing children. Because children in every other family in India watch television with or without parental guidance.

In olden days, a child’s development was built on morality imbued through stories. The stories, told and retold, moulded personality. The ideas of good manners were passed on through generations. But in the present world, character development is disturbed by the media.
The researcher cannot control the viewing behaviour of children but she has tried to find out how the behaviour of the adolescent school-going children gets moulded by their TV-viewing habits. A growing mind can be easily moulded. The characters that appear in programmes influence young minds and give them bad company. Reality shows aid confidence. At the same time they also make immoral behaviour to be interpreted as fashion or modern culture. Under these circumstances, the question before us are; Do the media, especially the television, strengthen our values? Do they enhance our dignity? Do they improve lifestyle? If answer is “yes” each time, then we must inquire the validity and the range. We have to suggest methods for betterment. But if the answer is “no” we have to suggest remedial measures.

The attempt to focus only on adolescents gains importance in this context. Mass media cater to all people; the old and the young, the literate and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, the city-dweller and the rustic, ... that is people from different age groups, castes, socio-economic status, geographical background, and so on. Hence media education is important to all of them. But we limit our research to adolescents because the researcher feels that psychologically adolescence is in a critical phase of life span. It is a period when individuals fall prey to anything they are exposed to, without understanding their merits and demerits.

We send our children to schools to educate them in subjects such as Maths, Science and Social Science. Similarly, we should also educate our children about viewing television. This is inevitable because television contacts viewers directly and, therefore, does not involve social and interpersonal interaction. It stimulates different moods and affect the emotional set up of an individual. It induces thrill, mental stimulation, daydreaming, depression, fatigue and refreshment. It strongly interacts with the emotions of the adolescents. Also, it is embedded in another agency, namely the family, since it is generally viewed at home. Watching television has become a pastime all over the world and remains a major source of leisure gratification. No one can escape the desire to be popular. So they work in that direction without knowing its harmful effects. The viewing behaviour is dependent on the type of programme. The programmes mostly aim at
children, who can easily be influenced. They view attractive scenes which are ready to touch their minds and reflect accordingly.

Recent research on television-viewing behaviour of children has revealed that it has several negative influences. These negatives may overwhelm the positive side if we delay finding a solution. To mould future generations with healthy minds, bodies and attitudes, and for their all-round development, it is advisable to study their television viewing behaviour.

Hence the researcher has chosen particular areas in Madurai and studied the television-viewing behaviour of schoolchildren in the age group 13 to 15. The researcher hopes that the study will lead to a definite and adequate solution which could protect adolescents from the negative or adverse influences of television.

It is preference that leads to habits. Therefore, we must first have a clear idea about formation of habits.

1.2. Formation of Habits

Habits take root from infancy and depend on individual instincts. Many scholars have defined habit: “Man is a bundle of habits”, says Royce. According to Woodworth “Habit is a well-learnt performance”; “Habit is a tendency of a thing to be or not to be now what it was or did on some previous occasion.” reports Titchner. In opinion of William James, “Habit is a tendency of an organism to behave in the same way as it has behaved before” and “Personality is clothed in habits, Habits are the very garment of the soul” says Klapper [Kashyapa and Puree(1969)].

Actions such as speaking, walking, writing, sitting, playing, eating, bathing, working and sleeping, as well as our beliefs, prejudices, opinions, faith, hopes, fears and enthusiasm are all reflections of our habits. Psychologists believe that habits are formed to fulfill a person’s expectations. Habit enables us to meet our needs and to cope with the demands made on us by our physical and social environments. Habit can be described in terms of habitual patterns of eating, dressing, body care, child-rearing practices, working, and recreation conducting relations between the sexes and so on.
Habits prescribe a range of ways in which to behave in certain situations. The good/evil behaviour of parents will influence a child. Some children imitate the character of their teacher. They develop character by adopting habits. They learn by imitating characteristics and manners of their parents, friends, neighbours and their environment. Children learn from the society. Habits are ingrained during childhood and remain till old age. The way parents train their children determine their habits. If the parents show interest in watching television children will follow suit.

Children model their behaviour on the characters they see. Such behaviour is called modeling behaviour. When the child imitates positive models they develop pro-social behaviour whereas they develop anti-social behaviour when they imitate negative characters. Viewing habits, therefore, have a major role to play in the formation of character. The following section defines the development of behaviour.

1.3. The Development of Behaviour

Behaviour begins getting moulded right from infancy. It develops positively or negatively. Desire and necessity are forces that lead to positive action. Fear and lack of necessity are forces that lead to negative action.

Physical attributes such as height, hair/eye colour, weight, etc. contribute to a person’s behaviour, ability, temperament and emotional stability. Transmitted from parent to offspring, behaviour depends on heredity and genes, Hilgard et.al (1975). Behaviour is linked to biology, brain and psychology.

The psychology bases linked to behaviour are emotion and motivation and they are interlinked. Emotions such as anger, fear, joy and grief are motivated by hunger, thirst, sex and forgiveness. The following section deals with viewing habit.

1.4. Viewing Habit - An Introduction

Gunter and Mcaleer(1990) say: “Viewing [is a] means to pass time, of diversion, to learn about the world and the self, for arousal, for relaxation, for companionship and [becomes a] habit”. Viewers are motivated to watch television or subscribe to other media
to satisfy their wants, needs and desires. Viewing television has been more addictive than other habits. Researchers report that children are likely to view television, to learn, for companionship, as a source of conversation, for escape, for arousal and to pass time.

Many research scholars make an attempt in the field of television viewing habits. Some of the research findings are as follows. According to Larson (1996), Soap operas, which appeal to teens, may give viewers unrealistic and unhealthy notions about single motherhood. However, not all teenagers apparently interpret the same content in the same way, Greenberg (1993). In a study of teenagers’ reactions to Madonna’s video *Papa Don’t Preach*, Brown and Schulze (1990) found that coloured teenagers viewed the popular music video as a father-daughter story, rather than a story about teen pregnancy. Studying individual differences among children and teens who viewed the same media may represent the current “cutting edge” of media research.

Teenagers imitate actors and actresses as they experiment with their identity and try on different social “masks”. The idiosyncrasies of adolescent psychology seem to combine to conspire against use of contraception during early and middle adolescence, Strasburger and Brown (1998). Teenagers often see themselves egocentrically as being actors in their own “personal fable”, Elkind (1993). As much as 70% of teenagers reach the limit of cognitive operational thinking and sequential logical thinking by the age of 16, according to Piaget (1972). They may still suffer from what Elkind (1984) calls “pseudo stupidity”. It is a person’s capacity to conceive alternatives coupled with the ability to assign priorities.

At the Wichita State University in 1979, Philip Mohr reported that 85% of parents surveyed gave no guidance to their children about television viewing. When negative guidance was given, the genre most likely viewed was adult drama. Mohr (1976) also found that on Saturday mornings 92% of parents set no limit on television viewing. But 75% of parents established a cut-off time on school nights. Two decades later, the Fourth Annual Annenberg Survey of Media in the Home found that 61% of parents supervised their children’s television habits “a great deal”, and 62% established household rules for television viewing. Despite the rules and supervision claimed by surveyed parents, 24%
reported that children watched inappropriate programmes “sometimes” or “a great deal”. Surprisingly 93% parents watched television with their children at least “once in a while”, Stanger & Gridina (1999).

1.5. Factors Involved in Viewing Habits

Biological, physical, social and environmental factors, among others, form viewing habits. Biological transmission happens through genes. This factor manifests as physical similarities between parent and child. When a child tries to imitate habits of its parents, relations or neighbours, psychological factors come into play. The society itself influences television viewing habits especially where both parents are working. Some parents allow children to watch television to maintain order within house. Some use the television as a means to keep children averse to eating distracted while they are being fed. Some parents don’t allow children to mingle with neighbours while there are others addicted to television programmes. Children in such households tend to watch television. They too become television addicts.

The physical factors that contribute to television-viewing are attention span, vision and hearing. Repeated exposure attracts viewers. A newborn child’s aptitude to learn from other children falls among environmental factors. Viewing habits are also developed through activities such as reading, conversation, playing, etc.

1.6. Four Principal Variables

The principal variables that play a role in children’s use of television and other film-related media can be divided into four categories. They are: societal and structural factors, household characteristics, child attributes and situational influences. Societal and structural factors determine the number of channels available, their content, the cost of obtaining access to them, and the options thus opened before young viewers. These factors include: media regulatory policies of governments, economics of programme production and distribution, and the state of technology that determines what can be received or viewed at home. Household characteristics play an enormous role in children’s use of television and other film-related media. These characteristics include: socio-economic status (a major predictor of television use across age), leisure, and resources available.
Child Attributes affect how much and what is viewed. Most important among them is attention span. Other principal variables are age, mental ability and comprehension which leads a child to grow into an adult mode of viewing. Situational Influences include transient, but repetitive factors not firmly rooted in the practices of the household. These include presence of others (Parents, peers or siblings) while the child is viewing; clock- and calendar-based influences such as hour of the day, day of the week and season; and state of mind such as anger and loneliness. Comstock & Scharrer (1999).

1.7. The Power of Television

According to Isaac (2008), television is powerful because it attracts viewers to its colours and sound. The power of the television that shape children are sight and sound. It controls a child’s attention through colours and sounds that influence attitude.

Visual attention is more powerful than the sound. Television imposes visual attention on children which gives them many problems physically and mentally. Mandler (1998) explained this “television sucks my energy”. Thus visual attention affects viewers and will shape them.

Television controls brainwave activity, leads imagination, teaches to imitate, develops curiosity, and holds way over activities such as study and sleep. In different situations the television acts as model, teacher, mirror, window, filter, gateway or instructor.

1.8. Previous Research

The results of previous studies on television point in the same direction in the case of creativity. First, a quasi-experimental study on the effects of the introduction of television showed a decrease in creativity over time, Harrison & Williams, (1986). Second, the majority of correlation studies showed that, overall, television viewing was inversely related to creativity says Furu (1971); Peterson et al. (1987); Singer et al. (1984); Zuckerman et al. (1978). Finally, most experiments on short-term effects of exposure to films suggested that television viewing lead to diminished creativity than radio or books reported by Greenfield & Beagles–Roos (1988).
The majority of studies suggest that programmes on television in general and violent ones in particular reduce imaginative play and creativity reported by Valkenburg and Vander Voort (1994). Research has indicated that television-viewing and imaginative play was inversely related. Most quasi-experimental studies in the early years of television indicate that its introduction resulted in a loss of playtime, Maccoby (1951); Schramm, Lyle & Parker (1961).

Sex-role research found that children replicated role expectations seen in the media when asked about appropriate chores of boys and girls, Signorielli & Lears (1992). Television can also strengthen the consistency between gender-based attitudes of adolescents about chores and their actual behaviour in the family says Morgan (1987). Morgan (1990) says, the medium’s contributions to the endorsement and maintenance of traditional gender roles have been observed over time in longitudinal data and in diverse cultural contexts. Ethnographic work by Milkie (1994) has shown how teens make meanings from media content in terms of conventional gender roles. Boys reproduce gender meaning by “appropriating scenes ...that embody traditional male culture, identifying with the models of masculinity available through media content and imputing stereotypical notions of gender to the mass media”.

1.9. Programmes

Maccoby (1951) found that children of all ages watched television during hours that were not devoted to children’s programmes, indicating that they were exposed to a variety of adult programmes. As children shifted their programme preferences towards more adult programming, programme preferences became more diverse. A study by Adler (1980), based on an analysis of Nielsen data for 1973, confirmed that 3 of the top 15 shows favoured by children were on Saturday morning. The remaining were prime time shows aimed at adults. In short, children’s content preferences increasingly approximate adult patterns.

Television and movies provide a multitude of images that have the capacity to worry, frighten or even traumatising children. The intensity and variety of these images have greatly expanded over the last decade. This recent trend may be attributable to an
increasingly desensitised adult population, which patronises such contents, reports Federman (1998). It may also be a function of the wide adoption of cable television, which has spawned competition among channels to draw attention of the consumer. The growing prevalence of television news shows the increasing display of video footage of catastrophic and sensational events, the worrisome images even more, Klite, Bardwell, & Salzman (1997).

As technology advances towards higher fidelity of image and sound, reducing the sensory gap between real life and television content, concerns shift from peculiarities of television as a carrier technology and focus on the real/unreal distinction at the level of programming. This has become a critical issue because the blurring of the line between reality and fantasy on television may cause children to develop a distorted image of reality. On the other hand, the interest in effects of media migrated from television (one-way) to computer-mediated communication, which is interactive (e.g., e-mail, bulletin boards). So, current research on the effects of television viewing is mostly devoted to the effects of programming features.

1.10. Television Ratings

In the US Telecommunications Act (1996), the television industry announced a new age-based rating system referred to as “television Parental Guidelines”. The television rating system is similar to the movie rating system used by the Motion Picture Association of America. Children’s programmes are designated with one of two ratings: “TV-Y, All Children” or “TV-Y7, Directed at Older Children”. Other programmes are designated with one of four ratings: “TV-G, General Audience” (Most parents would find these programmes suitable for children of all ages); “TV-PG, Parental Guidance Suggested” (“Some parents would find this programme unsuitable for younger children”); “TV-14, Parents Strongly Cautioned” (“Many parents would find this programme unsuitable for children under 14”); or “TV-M, Mature Audiences Only” (“This programme may be unsuitable for children under 17”). Some violent television programmes also contain warnings such as “Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised”). When applicable, television programmes are designated with one
or more content codes. The five content codes are “V” (violence), “FV” (fantasy violence), “S” (sex), “L” (adult language), and “D” (suggestive dialogue).

On the basis of the available empirical evidence, we can expect these ratings will have a “forbidden fruit” effect on young viewers. Parents may try to limit children’s exposure to programmes rated “mature”, but children will try hard to see them, too. The better approach would be simply to use content codes rather than warning labels and age-based ratings. Content codes are quite informative (e.g., they allow parents to decide which programme is appropriate for their children) but they do not draw viewers to violent programs. In other words, inform viewers but do not give them unwanted advice about what they should not watch on television. The vehemence with which the television industry has attacked content ratings makes one suspect that economic fear of sponsors rejecting violent shows is what has driven the television industry’s objections to content ratings, Bushman & Huesmann (2001).

1.11. Discussion about Adolescence

While discussing the developmental hallmarks of adolescence, Brown (2000) reports that forming an identity was one of the main challenges a teen faces. During teenage, boys and girls begin to ask questions about whom they are and how they differ from their parents. Brown adds that this emerging sense of the self is fragile and malleable as teens “try on” different appearances and behaviours.

According to Brown, the second challenge of adolescence has increased independence. Parents feel less need to supervise a 13-year-old who, compared with a 5-year-old can dress, study, and even go to places alone. Teens often have jobs outside home and by the age of 16, they can typically drive a car, increasing their autonomy. Consistent with this a study says that the percentage of waking hours teens spent with their families fell from 33% to 14% between the 5th and 12th grade reports Larson (1996).

Time away from parents can provide teens with opportunities to make independent decisions. A study across the US involving adolescents in grades 7 to 12 found strong differences between teens who regularly ate dinner with a parent and those who did not, reports Council of Economic Advisors (2000). Teens who spent less dinner time with
parents showed significantly higher rates of smoking, drinking, marijuana use and getting into serious fights. Other studies, too, have documented the importance of parent involvement as buffer against unhealthy behaviour during teenage years, Resnick et al.(1997).

The third feature of adolescence is risk-taking. Today’s teens face tough decisions regarding dangerous behaviour, such as smoking, drug use and sexual activity. There is no doubt, adolescence is a time of experimentation with reckless activities says Arnett (1992). Adolescence is often characterised by challenge and turbulence, Roth and Brooks (2000). Along with other dramatic bodily changes, teens are faced with increased independence and growing self-discovery. Scholars of adolescent development refer to these changes as developmental transition or passage between childhood and adulthood Arnett (1992).

Allen (1965) found that children from one to ten years old averaged 52% visual attention to television, and those 11 to 19 averaged 68.8% (whereas adults averaged 63.5%). It meant children were unable to watch television programmes effectively while engaging in parallel activities.

The fourth feature of adolescence is peer pressure. Berndt (1996) in her highly controversial book The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They DO, says that ‘Teens spend a great deal of time with friends and place high value on these relationships’. Harris (1998) argues that parents play a minimal role in their child’s development other than no nurture and shape the child’s peer group. Peer groups certainly do make a difference during adolescence. Studies have documented the role of peers in the initiation of behavior such as cigarette smoking, Chassin (1985), drug use, Halebsky (1987) and sexual intercourse, White beck et.al. (1999). Engaging in reckless behaviour often helps a teen become a member of a peer group, and the group itself can foster a sense of collective rather than individual invincibility reports Arnett (1992a).

The hormonal and physical changes associated with puberty are accompanied by an increased interest in sexuality. A Brown, White & Nikopoulou (1993) study found that
11- to 15-year-old girls who were physically mature showed a higher interest in sexual content in the media. Most teens can be expected to be intensely curious about the opposite sex and to seek information about sexual norms, attitudes and practices in their culture. It is not accidental, then, that popular teen magazines devote a great deal of space to sexual issues and relationships says Walsh-Childers (1997).

Whether teenage years is characterized as tempestuous or transitional, there is no doubt that significant developmental changes occur during this period. Adolescents spend more time alone or with friends and less time with parents. This growing independence comes along with teens exploring their identities and sexuality. The challenge is to provide these young people with enough latitude and guidance so that the decisions they make will result in a healthy rather than risky lifestyle.

1.12. Theory

There are many theories and concepts based on media effects. Many scholars have measured media effects using laboratory and field experiments, surveys, panel studies, content analysis, and so on. Some of the theories are: Social Cognitive Theory, Priming Effects Theory, Cultivation Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, and the Agenda Setting and Persuasion Theory. These theories can apply in media, health, advertisements, politics, entertainment programmes and in minority portrayals. The following paragraphs explain these theories:

- **Social Cognitive Theory** provides a framework that allows us to analyse human cognition (or mental function) that produces certain behaviour. The theory describes the mental processes at work when a person learns. It is a direct offshoot of the more comprehensive and widely recognised social-learning theory. Advanced by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, social learning theory explains behaviour by examining how cognitive behavioural and environmental factors interact.

- **Priming Effects Theory** explores the cognitive components of information processing. Priming occurs when exposure to mediated communication relates to thoughts in the mind of a member of the audience. Media content triggers concepts, thoughts, learning or relates a message previously acquired knowledge. Priming may
influence a person’s behaviour. The person may act or react in a certain way, sometimes with undesirable consequences.

- **Diffusion of Innovations Theory** states that an innovation (ie an idea, new technique or new technology) diffuses or spreads throughout society in a predictable pattern. A few people will adopt an innovation as soon as they hear of it. Other people will take longer time to try something new. So others will take still longer time.

- **Agenda Setting:** Walter Lippmeian was the first to describe the agenda setting process in *Public Opinion* (1922). He wrote about the news media’s responsibility to shape public perception of the world and creating a pseudo-environment for each news consumer. This has three types: media agenda setting, public agenda setting and policy agenda setting.

- Persuasion research in mass communication examines the process of attitude change in audience members and the modification of behaviour based upon attitude change. Persuasion is an intentional process.

- **Cultivation Theory**, sometimes referred to as the cultivation hypothesis or cultivation, was an approach developed by Professor George Gerbner. He started the cultural-indicators research project in the mid 1960s, to study how and whether watching television might influence viewers' idea of what everyday world was like. Cultivation research is in the ‘effects’ tradition. Cultivation theorists argue that television has long-term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant.

- **Uses and Gratification Theory** assumes that individual differences among audience members cause each person to use messages differently and react to them differently. It assumes that a person’s social setting and psychological makeup are as much responsible for producing certain effects on the media messages themselves.

The researcher has selected **Cultivation Theory** and **Uses and Gratification Theory** to support her views.

### 1.13. Purpose of the study

The study concentrates on three aspects: The television as a medium, its contents and their impact on viewers. The study has excluded how the television occupies a unique
place among the mass media. It tries to find out how contents influence selection of television programmes. It is also an attempt to gauge the television’s emergence as an agency of socialisation with respect to the adolescents.

The major socio-economic variables likely to have a significant impact on the influence of television on children and their influence in the family’s structure and decision are: the age, sex and the family income. In pursuance of the above-mentioned objectives and keeping in view these variables, the study strives to discover whether there are significant differences in children’s reaction to various television programmes.

1.14. Statement of the Problem

Media environment today offers more choices than ever, children below the age of 12 on an average watch television for about 3 hours a day. No other single medium (books, computers, videotapes or video games) exceeds an hour of use per day on an average, Roberts et al. (1999); Stanger & Gridina (1999). In other words, although children today have more media options, they still tend to spend more time with television than with any other medium, just as their predecessors have. These data underscore the importance of ensuring that television delivered an adequate level of service to the child audience.

Media Behaviour of Adolescent School children – A Study on the Television Viewing Habits of the Children of Tamil Nadu is the title of this research. The researcher has selected the topic to understand how mass media particularly television has influenced the viewing behaviour of adolescent school children.

1.15. Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the research:

- To identify how adolescents use the Media
- To analyze the relationship between the demographic factors and their influence on television viewing habits.
- To identify the influence of television viewing in their day to day life.
- To identify the decision-making process with respect to the viewing of television programmes.
• To find out how content of television programmes influence the selection of the programmes.
• Analyse the media behavior of adolescents school children.

1.16. Duration

The researcher has taken five academic years to complete this research.

1.17. Resources of the Research

Primary data was collected through questionnaires from adolescent school-goers in Madurai city and analysed statistically. Books, Journals, Encyclopedia, Online Journals, Websites, thesis and reports were referred to collect secondary data.

1.18. Limitations of the Study

The sample covers only Madurai a District in Tamil Nadu, though the title is covering the state for easy identification of the location. The ‘Chi-square’ and ‘p value’ tests are statistically available for the result analysis. The researcher has chosen non-parametric analysis because of qualitative questionnaire. The students are not able to answer the three point and five point scale question. Hence the researcher converts most of the data qualitatively. The research is limited only to the District of Madurai. So, the results may not reflect the views of adolescent school children of other parts of Tamilnadu or India.

1.19. Structure of Dissertation

The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study. In this chapter the researcher discusses the impact of television on adolescents and related viewing theories. The chapter further deals with media education and helps form the conceptual framework for the dissertation.

The second chapter reviews the literature available in the area of television viewing behaviour. It examines the existing studies available on the particular topic.

The third chapter discusses the methodology of research and the data collection methods. The size of the universe from which the sample was drawn and the sampling
methods adopted are described in this section. Further, when and how the field works was conducted and the methods adopted for data processing are outlined. A frank statement of limitations is also briefed.

The fourth chapter is an organised presentation of the findings and analyses of the obtained data. It is further subdivided into smaller sections based on the objectives of the study. The fifth chapter deals with discussion. The final chapter lays out the conclusions and suggestions for future research.

In the next chapter the researcher talks about the review of related literature for this topic from the books and material collected from India and abroad. She feels that this will form the basis for devising her methodology for this research topic.