CHAPTER II

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This chapter seeks to review existing research on the effects of television on children. It also describes the extent to which the present study may help to fill the gap that exists. The studies covered have been classified into nine sections. The first deals with the media behaviour of children in different countries. The second deals with the viewing behaviour of children. The third deals with the positive effects of television on children. The fourth deals with the negative effects of television on children. The fifth section is devoted to the relationship between the media and children, and parents and the media. The sixth relates to programmes, the seventh on cognitive development based on television. The eighth section deals with violence, and the ninth and final section focuses on advertisement. The major studies under various categories are reviewed and analysed in the following paragraphs.

2.1. Media Behaviour of Children in Different Countries

In this section, the researcher tries to give an overview of the studies conducted in different countries on media behaviour in different contexts, from television-related research from all over the world.

2.1.1. America:

The following titles deal with the television based research carried out in the country of America. There are five subheadings which deal with society, education, violence, culture and comparative analysis based on Television.

2.1.1.1. Influence Television on Society:

About the influence of television on society, Erns’t (1998, p35) writes: “We live in a society that is strongly defined by images, sounds and spectacles produced by the media culture that dominates leisure time, that shapes political views and social behaviour, and provides the material out of which many people construct their sense of identity of values.”
In a study on ownership and sales of television sets in the United States, Annenberg public policy center (1999) found that 99% of American families had television sets. They found that an average family owned 2.75 sets. In another study, Wartella and Reeves (1987) found that 98% American households owned two television sets. And 59% of them had two or more sets. Also, 49% of the households had a videorecorder, and more than 75% of them subscribed to either basic or paid cable channels. The report also showed that an average child watched television for two hours and 45 minutes a day. Adults watched television for a little more than four hours a day. Thus the television remains switched on for seven hour a day in an average American household. Many American studies also reported that on an average, children watched television for two to three hours a day.

According to a study conducted by Furnham and Gunter (1989), the introduction of television supplements the diversity of leisure activities available to children and youngsters. Putnam (2000) blames that in Post-War America there is an apparent erosion of participation in civic organisations due to the rise of mass-mediated leisure. Gentile and Walsh (1999) also in their first random national survey in the US reported that 62% of parents with children between the ages of two and 17 years said that their children had become scared that something they saw in a television programme or movie might happen to them. A nation-wide survey in the US also showed that the majority of youngsters from 11 to 16 years of age were involved in crime, drugs or violence, because they have seen such activities in the news. (Children Now, 1992).

Television Bureau of Advertisements (1998) reported that Americans spent time watching television instead of being physically active. The average adult watched 1,567 hours of television each year and about 4 hours per day for men and 4.5 hours per day for women. In 1997, the average teenager watched 2 hours and 54 minutes per day, and the average child saw 3 hours and 3 minutes of television each day. When the UNESCO conducted a survey on 5,000, 12-year-old children worldwide it found that 91% of the sample had access to television sets. As much as 88% of them were familiar with the Terminator, reports Groebal (2001); Strasburger (2001) found that the average American child may view as many as 40,000 television commercials every year.
The Census Bureau of US (2000) found that 12 million nine to 17 year old girls who lived in the US cared a lot about their physical appearance and mass media messages. A survey on 1,000 adults revealed that 90% of Americans believed that depictions of, or references to, sex contributed to young people having sex, writes Impoco et al. (1996). In the US alone, sales of weight-loss products and dietary supplements nearly doubled between 1994 and 2002 because of television messages. Adolescent girls worldwide are facing risks to their health from increased pressure for slimness says Hager (2002).

Sixty-four per cent of adults in the US think the television encourages young people to initiate sexual activity and the medium is considered the greatest source of pressure to become sexually active, reports Harris and his associates (1987) from their study on 1,000 adolescents. Stodghill (1998) reports from Time/CNN Poll that almost 30% of teenagers in the US agreed that they got most of their information about sex from watching television. Kunkel et al. (1999 b) conducted a study on amount of sexual content in American television. The study suggested that sex was commonplace on television with talk accruing significantly more frequently than actual behaviour. Mostly adults are shown in these programmes. Very few programmes featuring sex emphasise the possible negative outcomes associated with unprotected or unsafe sexual practices.

Scott (1956) says from his study on Television and School Achievement in California that the light television viewers — from the age group of 11 to 13 years, scored significantly higher than the heavy television viewers in total achievements, such as in Mathematics and reading. This study further showed that the light television viewers were from families with higher socio-economic backgrounds.

2.1.1.2. Television and Culture

The study by Gerbner (1972) and Barcus (1972) suggests that evolution of television programmes was a reflection of the norms and values of American culture expressed in idealised fantasy, working within the mass communication framework. The study also examined children’s television and found that aggression was correlated with frequency of television violence viewing among boys and girls. Overall, the Finnish
culture itself was notably lower than the US culture in aggressiveness, markedly evident in peer nominations, self-ratings and very low levels of parental punishment, writes Huesmann and Eron (1986).

Television programmes tend to bring about homogenisation of American culture irrespective of the educational levels of the viewers, reports Newman Russel (1982) from his study on the role of television in the homogenisation of culture in America. The author also found the interpretive response of the respondents concerning the TV programmes relevant to viewers’ personal lives and the concept of society and culture.

The findings from a study conducted by Neuman (1982) on the potential influence television exercised on cultural homogenisation in the US society showed a positive trend in response and dimensions across different educational levels. Vernan sparker (1977) made a study on cross-cultural communication between US and Canada, and found that there was little, if any, attitudinal difference or effect associated with watching the foreign television signals.

2.1.1.3 Television and Violence

The findings from the study of Gerber’s (1972) on Violence on Television suggested that high levels of violence existed on American Commercial television.

The American Academy of Paediatrics (2001) conducted a study involving parents and youth to assess the negative effects of media messages on the latter. This research showed the media had a wide range of influences on adolescents and children in areas such as aggressive behaviour and violence; they concluded that the average American child or adolescent spent more than 21 hours per week watching television. The level of prime time-violence was 3 to 5 violent acts per hour, and Saturday morning children’s programming ranged between 20 to 25 violent acts per hour.

Huesman and Eron (1976, p76) confirmed earlier findings that frequent viewing of violence on television promoted aggressive behaviour among children in the age group of 6 to 11. Such children, they be boys or girls, thought television portrayed real life and
felt a strong identification with the show’s aggressive characters. They also engaged frequently in aggressive fantasies. In the case of girls, they preferred stereotypical boys’ activities.

Feshbsech and Singer (1971) conducted an experiment for six weeks on 395 adolescent males residing in seven residential schools and institutions in the US. Daily activities were recorded on a rating sheet by a supervisor, teacher or proctors who were most familiar with each youth. The differences between the adolescents who were subjected to aggressive and non-aggressive control were greater for those in the youth homes, who were also rated higher in initial aggressiveness. The differences for the private schools tended to be non-significant. A content analysis of television programming by Groebel and Gleich (1993) found that American television was more violent than their German counterpart.

According to Cronstrom and Hoijer’s (1996) content analysis of Swedish programmes — excluding news on six television channels — 62% of the violent programmes (ie. pure sequence of violence) consisted of violent scenes of US-origin, excluding trailer time. Gerbner (1997) also examined American people and found that people preferred to watch television programmes without violence. In a study conducted in 23 countries, Groebel (1993) found that almost 90% of 12-year-old schoolchildren were acquainted with action characters such as Terminator and Rambo. Schramm, Lyle, Parker (1961), too, analysed the content of prime time television programmes. Their study revealed that violence and criminal activities appeared frequently on news-based programmes.

2.1.1.4. Television and Education

Sponsored programmes on television have encouraged conspicuous consumption, writes Barnouw (1978) from his study on The Effects of Sponsored programmes on American television viewers.
Harrison and Williams (1986) conducted a study during the introductory stage of television in Canada and found that the arrival of television led to a dimming of the powers of children’s imagination. Anyhow, the findings of Gaddy’s study (1985) show the reciprocal relationship between the television and academic achievement of high school students in America and indicate that there was no clear evidence of negative effects of television on their school achievements.

2.1.1.5. A Comparative analysis of Television viewing in US

An average American home watches television for more than six hours a day. During winter an average person devotes five hours per day, reports Schramm (1973) from the findings of a comparative study of mass media and television in the American society.

Schramm (1973) also opines that in the US watching television is the most important activity other than work and sleep. This was reaffirmed by a study conducted by Philips (1982). The studies showed that the television had an enormous potential to influence behaviour.

On the contrary, a comparative study by Cohen and Salmon (1979) on children viewing television with their parents in Isreal and in the US, found that Israel’s children learnt more than the children in the US, because they had only one channel to view on television. Furthermore, Israeli television had no commercial and the programmes were hardly interrupted. However, results in the US were contrasting. The authors suggested that television viewing would lead to learning only when it is uninterrupted. It can be concluded that the children get distracted by commercials.

2.1.2. United Kingdom

More than 60% of children in the United Kingdom have a television in their bedroom. The figure is less than 20% in Switzerland.
Young people are spending longer time on commercial leisure at home and outside, writes Brake (1985) in his study on Youth Culture in Britain. According to Livingstone (1992), the lives of British children and young people can be heavily time-tabled not only at school but also with activities organised after school. Livingstone and Bovill (1999) examined and found that two-thirds of children and teenagers in the UK have televisions in their bedroom. Moreover, children of 6 to 17 year of age are spending at least five hours a day with the media.

Susran (1982) examined the relationship between the television and leisure reading in England, and found that among those analysed, people who were heavy television viewers tended to choose books of lower quality than the light television viewers. While et al. (1996), in a survey of 1,450 students in the age group of 11 to 12 years in the UK found that cigarette advertising correlated with smoking.

More than 1,800 British children were analysed in Himmelarait et al.’s (1958) survey which concluded that crime and detective stories did not increase children’s aggressiveness. But, the children themselves spent a lot of time tube-gazing and waking. The authors worried that much of a child’s day was spent before the television screen.

2.1.3. Europe

Mathews (2007) in her article titled Children and Obesity a Pan-European project examined the role of food marketing and concluded that the European Union’s “Television Without Frontiers” directive has to ban all television advertising of unhealthy food aimed at children. She also said a common monitoring of the nature and extent of food marketing focused on children should be adopted.

Bovill and Livingstone (2001) studied European people and concluded that they had a media-rich bedroom. And as bedrooms become ever more media-rich, children were spending more and more time with the media. Federov (2000), Feilitizen (1998), Larson (1997) and Tadros (1997) conclude that in many countries, children’s programmes had better resources in the past. However, after the end of the Cold War in 1989, the resultant economic crises led to low quality and violence-related programmes.
However, domestic commercial alternatives have appeared more in the field of animation. Livingston and Bovill (1999) also suggest that children strongly associate themselves with television as a means to eradicate boredom.

Livingstone, Holder and Bovill (1999) in their comparative study on more than 15,000 children and teenagers across 11 countries and Israel found that in developed countries there was 100% access and the amount of viewing (which excludes most secondary and tertiary use) was about 2 hours or more per day. Even in a less developed region, access to television was 80% or more in the case of children. The situation was similar throughout the world.

2.1.4. Japan

From a study on Children’s Media use in Chile, Souza and Debia (2000) reported that 95% of Chilean homes had at least one television set. In 1999-2000, 34% of all households on a national level had access to cable television. Kang (1997) noted that the television influenced cultural and societal values among Japanese students. The findings indicated that the majority of Japanese children viewed television programmes that showed women in traditional roles.

Furu (1962) supports the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters and the Japan Broadcasting Corporation for the maintenance of the policy of minimising the display of violence on television. Tarasov (2000) conducted a study among 14 to 17 year old children and teens in Moscow and found that children and young people were regaled with pictures filled with violence and cruelty. Thirty per cent of youngsters liked the violence, whereas most teens evaluated them as “so-so” or voiced their dislike.

Iwao et al.’s (1980) study revealed that bad characters initiated violence against the good ones more often than the other way round. It is also found that the most important violence that is experienced by major characters is something that arouses distress and sympathy and is not something cheered. Iwao et al.’s (1980) study gives a comparative picture on television violence in Japan and the US. This study revealed that the majority of Japanese programmes were full of morality stories compared with American programmes.
Most parents felt the television had made no difference in their children’s school achievement. However 18 to 20% felt their children had done better in social studies and science subjects after their exposure to television, reports Japan’s ministry of education (1959) which studied the effect of television on children and young people.

The research conducted by the Radio and Television Institute in Tokyo (1962) on the children between the ages of 10 to 15 years found that they preferred drama with detective adventure and suspicious elements. But in the order of preferences the Western drama is followed by quiz and games.

Japan League of Non-Government Broadcasters (1961) conducted a study to gauge the impact of the television on Juveniles. The sample consisted of Junior high schools students and the potential delinquents in a special school in Osaka. The study indicated that the potential delinquents had some stronger preference for crime thriller television programmes than other children.

Hains (1955) made an interesting study in Chicago on Juvenile delinquency and television. He interviewed 100 teenage prisoners to find out their opinion on whether television, movies radio and pornographic literature had anything to do with their criminal careers. The findings show that pornography and movies played a distinct role in the antisocial behaviour of the teenagers.

2.1.5. India

The influence of television in India from 1959 onwards charts an almost flat curve followed by a steep rise in the early Eighties. From 2001 to 2006, about 30 million households, representing approximately 150 million individuals added cable service. Live telecasts, soap operas and television commercials have seen a phenomenal growth in India. The ownership of television sets has increased and might continue to increase.

Jensen and Oster (2009) found that characters on popular soap operas have more education, marry late, and have smaller families like all things rarely found in rural areas; and many female characters work outside the home, sometimes as professionals, running
businesses, or in other positions of authority. By exposing rural households to urban attitudes and values, cable and satellite television may lead to improvements in status for rural women. And also the results said television is especially true for remote rural villages; where several ethnographic and anthropological studies have suggested that television is the primary channel through which households get information about life outside their villages.

Khurana et al. (1987) examined 11 to 14-year-old children in Delhi, and Chennai and discovered that boys and girls who had televisions at home spent five hours and twenty minutes watching television on Sundays, and those who did not own sets watched for almost half that time.

In a study conducted by Chauhan (1998) he suggests that in a vast country such as India, the television can play an effective role in promoting national unity. The television unites different segments of the population, which speak different languages and follow different religions by bringing them together on a common network. Agarwala (2000) from his study on the current scenario of children’s media use in India reports that by 2000, more than 69% had owned television sets.

Harshad Trivedi (1991) conducted a study in Ahmedabad on the positive and negative influences of television viewing on children and adults. He concluded that in general viewing habits, social relations and associated problems, such as lack of interaction and conversation, developed among children and adults viewing TV for long hours.

From their study, Vaidya et al. (1996) found that when the India Vs New Zealand cricket series was televised in India, there was an increase in awareness about cigarettes and it was correlated with smoking. Verma and Kapoor (2004) study seeks to assess the possible effects of television advertising on the buying response of children from their early years to the beginning of adolescence and the role of parent-child interaction in the process. The study has revealed that the way parents responded to requests made by children for the purchase of products was strongly influenced by the age of the child and
family income. The results further implied that parent-child interaction played an important role in the children’s learning positive consumer values and in parents perceiving the influence as positive on their children’s buying response. Thus, instead of criticising TV advertisements, it would be desirable if parents resorted to more of co-viewing and explaining the intent and contents of such advertisements.

Goonasekera (1998) reports that in most Asian countries, only a very small proportion of television programmes were made for children. In 1994-'95 the programme contents statistics in China, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand showed a predominance of animation followed by drama. Furthermore, nearly 47% of all programmes for children were of foreign origin. The data showed a paucity of informational, cultural and pre-school programmes in the fare offered to children.

The findings from the study of Bakshi (1989) suggest that in India, where literacy is low, the television has assumed the responsibility of educating and informing viewers in all spheres through their audio-visual senses. The medium also has the capacity to create an informational climate that stimulates development.

Shejwal and Purayidathil (2006) report that the impact of TV viewing on academic and mathematical reasoning was examined in a group of 654 higher secondary students (368 boys and 286 girls) from Maharashtra, India. Among boys as well as girls, TV-viewing had significant negative correlations with academic achievement. TV viewing and mathematical reasoning were negatively correlated among boys alone. Heavy viewers of television were poor, compared to light viewers, in their academic achievement and mathematical reasoning. Significant differences were noted among genders in academic achievement and mathematical reasoning. TV-viewing explained 13% of the variance in academics of the students.

Meena Mathur (2009) conducted a study to map the socio-economic realities of street children in Jaipur, India. The results indicated that the majority of street children were boys (71%) in the age group of 8 to 12 years. Incidence of migration was observed and 70.5% of these children lived with their families. Gambling, watching films and television, smoking and drinking, and taking drugs were common modes of entertainment and relaxation for these children.
2.1.6. Dutch

Valken Burg et al. (2000) conducted a random survey on Dutch children. They found a decrease in fright responses to fantasy in the age group of 7 to 12. They also found girls of the same age group reported resorting to social support, physical interventions and escaped more often than boys.

Nikken (2000) conducted a study on Dutch children about the quality of children’s programmes among children of the age groups 9 to 12 years and 3 to 12 years. They formulated 19 quality standards applicable to children’s television programmes. Most standards were not accepted by the producers, while some were not accepted by mothers and children. That is, mothers expected children’s programmes to be free of violence and frightening scenes significantly more than children did, whereas programme makers were least concerned about violence, foul language and frightening scenes.

A three-year panel study using a sample of 1,050 Dutch elementary schoolchildren was taken by Koolstra (1997) on the Impact of Television on Children’s Reading Comprehension and Decoding Skills. Television’s inhibitory effect on reading comprehension was not sensitive to children’s intelligence quality (IQ) and socio-economic status but did depend on types of programmes watched. This also suggests that the television induced reduction in leisure time book reading and television induced depreciation of reading. Watching subtitled foreign television programmes was found to stimulate the development of decoding skills.

2.1.7. Africa

Von feilitzen (1998) reported that in many African countries, most children did not have access to television. Broadcast was often restricted to a few languages spoken in the countries. South Africa had low television penetration when compared with Western democracies, reports Bulbulia (1998). The author attempts to qualitatively demonstrate television’s role in cultural change. He explains about the appearance of African-Americans in local television news programmes in Chicago. Their research concludes that television content stimulated the production of what “Modern Racism is”.
2.1.8. Poland

Powell (1958) conducted a study on youth and children in Poland and found that 74% of the respondents were pleased with children’s programmes. However, the results of the study on Poland and Israel were different from US and Finland. In Poland, the family context was given more significance. In Israel the difference between city children and children from the kibbutzim was striking. The children from the kibbutzim found aggressiveness less acceptable and viewed a little television.

2.1.9. New Zealand

Hancoxe et al. (2005) in their study on children from New Zealand, analysed the association between television viewing and educational achievement during childhood. Their findings suggest that television viewing in childhood and adolescence was correlated with poor educational achievement among youths upto 26 years of age. Excessive television viewing in childhood may cause long-lasting adverse consequences in educational achievements and subsequent socio-economic status and well-being.

Landhuic (2007) analysed the relationship between childhood television viewing and attention problems among adolescents in New Zealand. The result of this study showed that the mean of hours of television viewing during childhood was associated with symptoms of attention problems in adolescents and these associations remained significant after controlling for gender. This study also concluded that childhood television viewing was associated with attention problems in adolescence, independent of early attention problems and other confounders. These results supported the hypothesis that childhood television viewing may contribute to the development of attention problems and suggest that the effects may be long-lasting.

2.1.10. Australia

Huesman’s (1996) study on Australian children found that television-violence viewing correlated with aggressive behaviour. But in the instance, a much broader range of variables, such as sex, age, aggressive fantasy and realism, entered the “mix”. The child-rearing methods adopted by parents were the most important variables that predicted a child’s aggressive behaviour.
Durkin (1990) conducted an interview-based study on Australian kindergarteners. He noted children’s reactions to *Teenage mutant Ninja Turtles* — an imported American series. The findings suggested that young children could not differentiate fact from fantasy in television. Across the nation, children were slavishly emulating the Turtles’ martial arts moves.

2.1.11. Spain

Sintas and Alvarez (2006) studied the relationship between “patterns of audio-visual consumption and the reflection of objective divisions in class structure”. The researchers concluded that higher society used media mainly for tension release on entertainment basis, and the lower society use media mainly for integrative, social and cognitive reasons. On the whole the results suggest that the audio visual consumption of the five classes such as television fans, occasional filmgoers, light filmgoers, film fans and audio-visual fans found reflected in the objective divisions in the class structure that the sociology of culture proposes.

2.1.12. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the greatest number of channels are available and yet it has the lowest viewing figures by children, while in Finland, a country with a considerable concentration on national and Public Service Channels, viewing figures are relatively high, Haenens (2001).

2.1.13. World Wide Research based on Society

Von Feilitzen (1999) conducted a study in ten countries, on television-viewing among children and teenagers. Among the ten countries, for children of all ages, the range in the amount of use was less than 1.5 hours per day and the estimates were lowest for South Korea, at 104 minutes and highest for Argentina, 191 minutes per day.

Centerwall (1989) studied the homicide rates from 1945 to 1975 among whites in the US, Canada and South Africa. The author found that in the US and Canada the murder rate among whites increased after the rate of television set ownership, whereas homicide rates in South Africa were not so affected, because television ownership was limited. More than 5,000 twelve-year-olds from 23 countries participated in a survey on the access and use of major media, conducted by Groebel (1999). The study revealed that the average 12-year-old spent three hours a day watching television.
Schoenbach and Becker (1989) studied the impact of the media on households (ie adults and children) in the 1980s across a variety of Western countries. The study found little evidence of a reduction in time spent on leisure other than the media nor did they find evidence of a reduction in time or money spent on print and auditory media. They also conclude that while there was little evidence for new media to create new audience interests so that they may provide new means of satisfaction to existing interests.

From their findings of the research of registered voters in southern western countries, Volgy and Schwarts (1980) note that a positive relationship exists between viewing entertainment programmes and the acceptance of traditional sex roles. The World Communication Report (1988) declares that television dominates media use by children and teenagers. Most national television systems in the developed world now provide a weekly average of about 20 to 30 hours of programming designed specifically for children. Britain and most continental European countries are about average whereas Japan rates above average with about 40 hours per week. In the US, tend to relegate children’s programming to more specialised networks and cable channels that deal exclusively with children’s and family programming.

2.2. Impact of Television on Viewing Behaviour

Viewing is a pleasurable experience. It commands moderate or partial attention and is often shared with other activities such as eating, conversation or reading. Only about half the audience will be unable to recall the plot of a programme. Garry Granzberg et al. (1977) suggests: “We cannot consider television to be a uniform phenomenon across cultures. Television is a different thing to different people and its impact varies according to the culture and tradition in which it operates.” Taffel and Blau (2001) used the term “second family” to represent the peer power and the media-driven pop culture that is so influential in the lives of today’s youth. They suggest to parents, teachers and clergy that the key to dealing with this second family was to be aware of its power and to guide children down the paths that are less destructive.
The impact of media-viewing on the behaviour of the respondents is analysed on the basis of gratification. The viewing behaviour of children and family and the use of television are among the other topics discussed in the following paragraphs:

2.2.1. Gratification Effect

New technology such as the television has had an impact on the viewing habits, pastimes, companionship and sources of gratification of the people, reports Elizabeth et al. (1973). The researchers furthermore found that the informational gratification from television viewing was the strongest among all gratification.

In the study conducted by Anderson and Collins (1988), On the Effects of Television on Scholastic Performance found that children who viewed television heavily, especially violent programmes, had more difficulties in impulse control, task perseverance, and delay of gratification. In another study by McIlwraith (1990), and Smith (1986), it was found that, self-labeled television “addicts” scored significantly higher than “non-addicted viewers” on measures of distraction, boredom and daydreaming.

2.2.2. Family’s Role on Viewing Behaviour

Studies conducted by Comstock and Scharrer (1999), and Medrick et al. (1982), indicated that the norms favouring heavy use of television are associated with greater viewing by children in households. Among children of mothers who are employed television-viewing is lesser than children of mothers at home full-time. Thus the results reinforce the thesis that parental education was the predominant predictor of human and social capital investments that children receive.

Television viewing has no doubt brought physical togetherness of family members and provided the members of the middle class a subject for discussion. Pat Burr and Richard (1977) study reveals parents were likely to buy a product because “others use it”. The greatest likelihood a family buying a product was reported when children “saw it on television” and wished for the prize premium attached. It usually combined with more information such as the child’s description of its use. The report concluded that children were generally more exposed to commercials on television.
They pass on the information to parents in the form of a request to buy, and positive parental response varies depending upon the nature of the child’s appeal. This study gives a clear insight into the exaggerated use of products advertised on television and the child’s reaction to being exposed to products on television.

As Strasburger and Doonerstein (2002) point out in their book *Children, Adolescents and the Media in the 21st century*, no parent with the right mind would allow a stranger to come into their home to teach their children or adolescents for 3 to 5 hours a day … yet the media do exactly that.

Gupta, Nadal and Inamdar (2001) in their survey found that aggressive behaviour among children of low-literacy and low-income parents was related to excessive television viewing or sociological variables such as ethnicity/race, education, occupation and parents’ marital status. Children of unemployed and single mothers had higher externalising behaviour scores, suggesting that family ecological variables may have more influence on the behaviour of children than the duration of television viewing.

**2.2.3. Media Behaviour of children**

Likona (1991) found that mass media occupied a prominent place in the lives of children. The typical elementary school child spent 30 hours a week watching television. By the age of 16, an average child in today’s world will have witnessed an estimated 200,000 acts of violence on television. And by the time whether same child was 18 years old, it would have viewed approximately 40,000 sexually titillating scenes. It should come as no surprise that many young people growing up in such a media culture are stunted in their moral judgment.

Four major variables that affect viewing television are age, mental ability, comprehension and innate affinity. The amount of viewing increases during the elementary school years, peaking at the age of 12. Then it declines as greater obligations, opportunities and time outside the household during the teenage suppress time spent in the vicinity of a television set.
Livingstone and Bovill (1999) show the use of media around five hours of their time daily. On an average, half the time is devoted to television, with 99% of young people watching it in their leisure time. Music is the next most popular medium, with 86% listening for about an hour daily. A similar number of young people (81%) watches videos for about an hour each day. Computer games (64%), non-School books (57%) and other personal computer uses, including the internet (55%), are the other frequently used media. Colorado Adoption Project conducted by Plomin and Defries (1985) revealed that the amount of viewing was a product of heredity and environment.

According to data from Nielson Media Research (1998) children spend an average of 6 hours and 32 minutes a day with various media. By the time the average person reached the age of 70, he or she would have spent the equivalent of 7 to 10 years watching television. There is a moderate degree of stability in the amount of television that children viewed.

Timmer and O’Brien (1985) collected data from the diaries of about 400 children and teenagers between the ages of 3 and 17. Their study indicated that, at the earliest ages (three to five) television took up only about half the time of free play which ranked second only to sleep at this age. Television was consistently ranked third on weekdays. On weekends, when there was no school, it ranked second. The prominence of television after the age of 9 was consistent with the data collected.

Noble (1983) argues that the real impact of television on the morality of children was far more subtle and elusive. According to him, television worked primarily through feeling rather than cognition. Zillmann and Bryant (1983) examined that non-vivid humour facilitated attention and learning only minimally with younger children. On the other hand, vivid humour had strong facilitating effects with all children. Lawrence et al.’s (1974) study on the opinions of children about viewing television indicates that television meant fun for them; commercials were regarded as a tedious but necessary nuisance. It was found that there were lots of conflicts in terms of choice of programmes at times of peak demand.
Sherman (1996) conducted a national survey of nearly 3,000 households and found that about one-third of those with children under the age of 12 and about half with teens had television sets located in the bedrooms of children. The financial resources often associated with higher education levels that would afford a set for a child’s room were less important than the greater concern and prescription that accompany the higher levels of parental education.

The Annenberg Public Policy Center (1997) conducted a survey of more than 1,000 parents and 300 of their 10 to 17 year old children. The following findings were revealed from reports: Children of two to 17 years of age spent on an average 2.1 hours viewing television and more time is spent in viewing television than doing schoolwork (1.3 hours), reading a book (.99 hours) using the home computer (.87 hours), playing video games such as Sega or Nintendo (.75 hours) or reading magazines or newspaper (.38 hours). Children also spent on an average 1.1 hours a day watching videotapes.

Condry (1989) charted the three most-frequently engaged in activities as sleep, school and watching television. Comstock et al. (1978) suggest the viewing time was at an increase in the elementary-school level and decreased in high school and college. It again increased in their sixties because they had more free time.

Kaiser’s (1999) study found that children between the ages of 8 and 18 spent more time with television than with any other media, including books, computer games, magazines and video games. Wartella and Ettama (1974) suggest that auditory complexity was associated with closer attention by children and that this effect was more powerful than variations in visual complexity.

Miller and Reeves (1976) found that third and sixth graders who were familiar with female television characters with non-traditional occupations were more accepting of girl’s aspiring to them. Consequently, given that viewers of all ages have favourite characters and programmes, they make deliberate viewing choices.
Allen (1965) found that children from 1 to 10 years old averaged 52% visual attention to television. Those from 11 to 19 years averaged 68.8%, whereas adults averaged 63.5%. This situation poses the problem of children’s effective monitoring of the television programmes, while they are engaged in parallel activities.

The use of programme/commercial separation devices commonly found in children’s programming did not help child viewers to recognise advertising content, as per Palmer and McDowel (1979). According to Roberts, et al. (1999) children and adolescents spend a significant amount of time in the presence of the media, whereas Bandura, et al. (1963) suggested there was considerable correlation between children’s viewing and learnt behaviour and attitude, and also people often see media exposure, especially to the television, as a cause of social problems. Robert et al. (1999) insist their children deserved an education that prepare them to effectively and critically deal with those messages.

Differences in comprehension and visual attention are not associated with Gender. Greater visual attention of males does not typically lead to greater recall of content (Alvarez et al., 1988).

2.2.4. Adolescent and Television

Churchill (1979) notes that variables, such as age, sex, birth order, socio-economic status, television viewing and peer communication, influenced the adolescents learning from media. Comstock and Paik (1991) write that the television takes a secondary place to competing activities. The major predictor of viewing television is the time available in the vicinity of an operable set. Gerbner et al. (1994) discover that children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the messages conveyed through the television, which influence their perceptions and behaviour.

An average American child or adolescent spends more than 21 hours per week viewing television, reports Nielson Media Research Unit (1998). Television viewing is part of American life from early childhood. Throughout a person’s lifespan, it ranks first among leisure activities and third, after sleep and school/work.
2.2.5. General Impact

Quin and MacMahon (1991) found that students who watched less television were better at analysing media messages than those who watched more. Comstock et al. (1978), Robinson and Godbey (1997) concluded that the time allocated to television by everyone had been similar across societies and sites despite considerable variation in the number of operations, diversity and emphasis of programming.

Barwise & Ehrenberg (1988) and Comstock & Paik (1991) found that viewing was an activity of low involvement. The people don’t remember the principal plot elements of programmes that they were sure they had seen. Comstock and Paik (1991), Cook et al. (1983); and Milavsky et al. (1982), report that young people in the elementary school, teenage, and young adult years who view greater amounts of television violence are consistently more aggressive and no attempt to ascribe this positive association entirely to the influence of some artifact or other variable, have been successful.

Razel (2001) conducted a meta-analysed model study of students in elementary, intermediate and high school. The author found that in each category studied, the optimal viewing time, the apex of the function was different and decreased with age.

Singer and Colleagues (1980) found that the viewing environment in which children encountered television was as important as any instruction in media literacy they received. After participating in an eight-session curriculum, her subjects showed an increased understanding of production techniques and television vocabulary. Thompson and Austin (2003) in their study found that, moderate-viewing was better than high- or no-viewing. The type of programming was more critical than the intrinsic qualities of the medium itself. High informational viewing generally correlated positively with achievement, while low informational viewing correlated negatively. Once intelligent quality, socio-economic status and other mediating factors were accounted for, the relationship weakened.
Jason and Michael Fries (2004) in their study suggested that youngsters who excessively viewed television had little time to develop other interests and hobbies. Using this principle, they designed different procedures to test the pro-social behaviour of children. Television viewing among children decreased after these interventions and follow-up data suggested that changes were maintained over time. The interventions and devices reviewed in this article are practical ways of empowering parents to have more influence on their children’s television viewing.

Biddle, Gorely, Marshall, Murdey and Cameron (2004) suggest that television viewing and video games were largely unrelated with physical activity. They state that although more children and youth had greater access to television than previous generations, the amount of television watched per head has not changed for 40 years.

McLuhan (1964) claims that the low resolution of the television picture accounted for the constant reflexive perceptual closure response required on part of the viewer. Salomon (1983) proposes that television was perceived as easier to process than other media and consequently was processed more superficially, with the effect of poorer learning.

2.3. Media’s Positive Impact

Technological developments have a positive impact on society. Any development is accepted if the society benefits. The TV also had positive impacts such as providing information, education, entertainment and clues to personality development. The following paragraphs detail the research findings on the positive impact of television.

2.3.1. Vocabulary – A Significant Trait

Schramm et al. (1961) found that viewers preferred adult programming over children’s programming. They chose such programmes for escape and entertainment, for information and as a socialising tool. They also found that television may contribute to speedy learning, enriched and more extensive vocabulary and a wider storage of symbolic and vicarious experience. Yet another study of Parker et al. (1961b) reported that watching television provided an opportunity for boys and girls to sit closer together.
The findings of a study by Singer and Singer (1998), *Learning About Unfamiliar Nouns by Watching Television Programmes*, revealed that the subjects performed better in their vocabulary tests after exposure to television. Parent-child television interaction (PCTVI) index correlated positively with child vocabulary level. However, this index included more parental behaviour than co-viewing and potentially confounded child IQ, reports Arrafs (1990).

After decades of research, there is little consensus on whether childhood television-viewing has beneficial, harmful or negligible effect on educational achievement, reports Morgan (1993). Hobbs and Frost (2003) conducted a study on high school English department children, and found improvement in quality and quantity of students writing, when the students were regular viewer of mass media.

2.3.2. Acquisition of Personality Traits

Television has become a great attraction for people of all ages, as it demands no special skills or abilities, and becomes a consumer of time, reports Maccoby (1951). Certain children react to frustrating home environment with a greater use of television, reports Maccoby (1954), Emery (1959) and Forsey (1963). They observed the same context and found there were innumerable personal values which the media catered to, particularly when personality dynamics and tensions generated by personal relations were considered. Tan and Kinner (1982) also conducted an interesting study titled *Social Interaction of Children Influenced by Television Programmes*. The study examined coloured children who saw a particular episode and found them engaged in friendly social interaction with the white children compared with those who were not shown this programme.

Education and socio-economic status were positively related to viewing educational television, Schramm (1961); Fuginamas (1964). Besides that, helping mentality showed an increase among children who watched *Mister Rogers* than among those in the control group, reports Friedrich and Stein (1975) from their second experimental study. Educational programmes may enhance the ability of pre-school children to be ready for school, report Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebager and Wright (2001) in their study titled *Early Childhood Television Viewing and Adolescent Behaviour*. 
According to Morgan (1987), television can also strengthen gender-based attitudes about chores and behaviour within family of adolescents. This uncertainty is at least partly due to the lack of long-term follow-up among children. There is association between child and adolescent television viewing and adult health in a birth cohort of approximately 1,000 individuals, reports Hancox, Milne and Poulton (2004). Signorielli and Lears (1992) also point out that those children will replicate the role expectations seen in the media when asked about appropriate chores for boys and girls.

Potts, Runyan, and Marchetti (1996) conducted a study of safety behavior in a sample of 52 television programmes. The results of this study indicated that an overall rate of 13 safety behaviour per hour, with over half the safety behaviors located in commercials. Most safety behaviour performed by adult male characters, held limited relevance for children, and were not associated with either positive or negative outcomes. The findings are discussed in terms of their relevance for observational learning of safety behaviours by child viewers.

2.3.3. Positive Aspects of Relational Traits in Family

Fager & Smith (1951) reported that television viewing had not affected the parent-child relationships. Most parents reported that television watching had not affected activities of the children such as scouting, dramatics and music. But most parents reported television watching had not produced bad effects either on sleeping or on eating habits or on emotional adjustment. In consistent with this, Frager and Reid (1979) report that active interaction existed between children and parents while they viewed commercials. Friedson (1953) study on schoolboys from kindergarten to sixth grade showed that they usually watched television with family members.

Children with more conflict in their family and peer relationships used television more heavily than those who experienced little interactive conflict. Children seemed generally unaffected by television physically (eg. Sleep loss, eye strain), but the fright factor was prevalent emotionally, especially where violence involved cutting or stepping into a trap. Television attracts the naturally thrill-seeking bent of children. Whether this thrill heightening would result in a greater demand for excitement in daily life is yet to be answered, reports Schramm et al. (1961, p173).
The findings from a study by Klemmack et al. (1994) on Media Awareness and Family Planning suggest that the media and television presentation on family planning had been viewed as an Informative source for potential acceptors.

A positive relationship exists between viewing daytime serials, dramas and supporting traditional family values and structures, reports Pingree, Starrette and Hawkins (1979) from their study on a sample of women in Madison.

Nathanson (1999) in his study found that parental involvement, be it limiting programming, talking to their children or teaching them critical viewing skills, tended to reduce aggressive effects. Ozmert, Toyran, Yurdakok (2002) in their study titled *Behavioural Correlates of Television Viewing in Primary School Children Evaluated by the child Behaviour Checklist(CBCL)* found that television-viewing time was positively associated with social problems, delinquent or aggressive behaviour, externalisation, and total problem scores, older age, male gender, and decreasing attention problem that subscale scores on the CBCL which increased the risk of watching television for more than two hours.

The findings from the study of Hearold (1986) concludes that positive effects of viewing were twice as strong and more enduring than antisocial effects, both in the laboratory and in more natural conditions. Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz and Walder (1972) collected data from about 800 children of 8-year-olds regarding their television viewing habits and levels of aggressiveness. Ten years later, when the children were 18, the researchers located about half the original group had obtained additional information. They found a strong positive correlation between viewing televised violence when young and measures of aggression as adults.

### 2.3.4. Effectiveness of Television – as an Educating Tool

Zencyenski (1959) examines the conditions of watching television. He points out that the viewers should be seated directly in front of the television screen at a distance of six/seven times the width of the screen. The middle of the screen should be at eye-level or slightly higher and no other light should fall on the screen.
Television exposure promoted positive results among children, such as achievement in school, classroom interaction and language development, reports Agarwala (1980). Television has a definite role in accelerating the development process by imparting education and information, writes Chauhan (1998). His study also indicates the vital role the television can play in family planning.

Sundarajan et al. (1992) from their research on television viewing and opinion survey of teachers, students and parents found that the three groups held a favourable opinion about television viewing. Brown et al.’s (1978) study established the fact that the television had become most popular source of entertainment and information. The television was found to be used by all types of people, irrespective of their education, income and age. The author also found that the people used print media for information alone while they used television for entertainment as well as information.

Singer and Singer (1998) from a series of studies under the research titled *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Barney and Friends* found “viewing-plus-lessons” group performed significantly better than watching the “viewing-without-lessons” group.

Hunt (2001) in his study promotes the use of television as a tool for teaching and testing in undergraduate organisational behavior courses by providing specific examples of how themes and characters from a variety of television shows could be used as the basis for creating both class exercises and exam questions. The author concludes with a set of guidelines for instructors who want to incorporate television in their future teaching methods.

Children become increasingly sophisticated and critical of media messages as they grow older as reported by Potter (1998). Dorr (1980) suggested that not only are they capable of evaluating the content but also begin to appreciate the forms, economic structure and institutional constraints that characterise different media.
Seventy-seven per cent of parents evaluated educational television’s impact on their children as positive and 3% as negative. In comparison, 46% and 16% responded as positive and negative respectively for cable television. Therefore, while cable, which was just being introduced, was clearly perceived as less positive than educational television, it was still evaluated positively by half the parents, Levinson & Tidhar (1993).

Yanovitzky et al.’s (2001) study suggested that although the media directly affected binge drinking, there is evidence that the impact of news stories on this behaviour was mediated by policy actions and changes in the social acceptability of the behaviour.

2.3.5. Prosocial Effect of Television Viewing Behaviour

A study by Rushton (1979) also supports strong prosocial effects hypothesis. In their next study, Friedrich et al. (1979) examined the effects of Mister Rogers on urban poor children on an experimental basis. The most successful group in terms of prosocial behaviour was the one made up of children who watched the programmes and received training in role playing and verbal labeling. That group showed significant increases in positive social interactions without any increase in aggression. The study of Singer and Singer (1998) reports that children who saw short television segments in the context of lessons emphasising prosocial themes and activities were more likely to show increases in prosocial behaviour than those who saw the segments without the additional training.

Friedrich and Stein (1973) conducted a series of studies on prosocial effects using Mister Rogers’ Neighbourhood which suggest that children from higher socio-economic backgrounds had initially been more prosocial and did not change significantly after seeing the programme. They also found no correlation between the frequency of watching this episode at home and children’s baseline measures of prosocial behaviour.

Tanner, Duhe, Evans, and Condrasky (2008) organised media campaign that focused on increasing fruit and vegetable (FV) consumption for fourth and fifth grader school students. Data from the parents indicated greater availability of FV at home and more instrumental support for their children to eat FV.
2.4. Negative Impact of Media Behaviour

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Going by Newton’s third law of motion, technology too has negative effects. The television had increased the time the family spent together but reduced the amount of Joint family activity of any other kind except television viewing, writes Maccoby (1951). The question how the society takes the effect of media is very important. So the negative effects are based on how the individual watches television. The following paragraphs deal with the negative effects of television.

2.4.1. On Family

Himmelweit et al. (1958) had expressed concern that the arrival of television was displacing “doing nothing”, a way of spending time which they saw as valuable. O’Sullivan’s (1991, p.169) interviewers recalled television as having had a much lower priority on an agenda that encompassed more outgoing social and leisure pursuits and more demands associated with household maintenance and family work.

The study by Nancy & Rothfurs et al. (1982) on social learning theory concludes that television is harmful even in terms of learning, about families and their relations. Dennis et al. (1983) writes that the commercial broadcasters present less children’s programmes. This gap was also not filled by the cable television. Generally it is believed and researchers also proved that cable television at home will increase viewing time.

Co-viewing allowed parents to discuss with their child how unrealistic the scene really was, what motivated characters to use violence, what a better response could have been, how the character might have solved the problem differently and what the painful consequences of violence are. Parents could also be reassuring if something on television seemed frightening to the child, Cantor (1998).

Clarke & Costes (1997) analyses relationships among school readiness, children’s television viewing, parental employment and educational quality of the home environment. The finding suggested that television viewing time was negatively related to parental instruction and number of children’s books in the home. Viewing time was also negatively related to children’s school-readiness skills. About half (49%) the children
reported that there were no rules in their home about how much and what they could watch on television and children over the age of 7 said they almost never watched television with their parents, Woodard and Gridina (2000).

Vandewater and Bickham (2005) have inferred from their study that time spent viewing television in the presence or absence of parents or siblings was strongly and negatively related to time spent in interacting with parents or siblings. Television viewing was associated with decreased homework time and decreased time in creative play. Conversely, there was no support for the widespread belief that television interferes with time spent in reading or in active play.

2.4.2. Negative Impact of Television Viewing on Other Activities

Maccoby (1951), and Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) in their study align with the opinion that television viewing has considerably reduced the time spent on other activities. They also report that time spent with mass media has increased. There is an increase in time spent on viewing television and a reduction in time spent on other activities. It is coordinated with ordinary household routines.

Rojek (1995) reviews the alternative leisure activities engaged in by children and young people. This invites an attention to the ways in which these activities are popularly conceptualised and here some tension can be seen between the views of adults and children and a tension that reflects a wider socio-cultural shift in the meaning of leisure, the home and the family. Himmelweit’s (1962) comparative report on leisure time activities before and after the television’s advent emphasises that leisure-time activities of children were more diverse before the advent of television. There was involvement in outdoor play and social activities. Initially television was used sparingly.

Research has also focused on interest in television and social behaviour and its relation to the development of young viewer’s creative and imaginative play. Many argue that the television’s audio-visual narratives may suppress the imagination and creative tendencies of the viewers. Some propose that the images and characters on television may stimulate fantasising and daydreaming, Valkenberg & Van der Voort (1994).
Murray and Kippax (1979), while examining the impact of the use of other media among eight to 12-year-olds, compared children in communities with no television, only one public channel and with a public and commercial channel each. They found that those without television spent longer time with radio, records and comic books than those with television. Interestingly, those with television, too, spent more time reading books but less time reading comics.

Ever since the work of Schramm et al. (1961) in the USA and Himmelweit et al. (1958) in the UK, it has been confirmed that television has stimulated book reading. Newman (1988) points out that children have never spent much time reading books. Furu (1962) found that television reduced child’s attention to radio programmes on adventure, action and other kinds of fiction. Mohindar Singh (1991) claims that, the children are under the spell of television. He states that the children are mostly spending their free time with television.

Hearold’s (1979) analysis concludes that prosocial and antisocial portrayals affect child viewers. According to Comstock (1980), the effect is greater for prosocial than for antisocial behaviour, and it reaches beyond the age range of young children, dropping off slightly with increasing age and the onset of adolescence.

A survey by Singer et al. (1998) among 2,000 children from public schools in Ohio revealed that the prevalence of symptoms of psychological trauma, such as anxiety, depression and post traumatic stress increased with an increase in the number of hours of television-viewing per day.

2.4.3. Psychological Effects of Viewing Behaviour

Subjective impressions assert that children, when they wake till late in the night, are deprived of needed rest and sleep. But they slightly delayed average bedtime, recorded by Maccoby (1951). The findings from the study of Gratiot & Alphandery (1956) on the effects of television on the lives of children found that television viewing has decreased the hours of sleep.
Owens et al. (1999) survey reports that, the parents of almost 500 public school children in kindergarten through fourth grade in Rhode Island revealed that the duration of children’s television-viewing (especially positive viewing at bedtime) and having a television in their bedroom were significantly related to sleep disturbances. They were consistent with the conclusion that exposure to frightening and disturbing images on television contributed to a child’s level of stress and anxiety. And also 9% of the parents reported that their children experienced television-induced nightmares at least once a week, Owens et al. (1999).

Zazone (1954) examined the effect of serials based on the outer space on children. He concluded that the influence of such programmes may not be long-lasting. But the study pointed out that these programmes had implications because the children admired and copied the behaviour they watched on television. Bungkingham (2000) writes that even children endorse a kind of third-person effect, claiming that only “little kids” imitated what they saw on television.

Nathason (2001) conducted a study on the role of mediation of parents and peers with regard to the anti-social television programmes. The research suggests that the parents can protect their children from television’s harmful effects by engaging in parental mediation but parental influences may wane when children reached adolescence and faced pressures from peers.

2.4.4. Children’s Aggressiveness

The overwhelming weight of evidence supports the thesis that exposure to filmed or televised violence tends to lead young children to a state of heightened excitability and to an increase in subsequent display of aggression Bogart (1973-’74).

Profiling a child most likely to be aggressive, the author says children frequently exposed to violent programs, be it a boy or a girl, believed they portrayed real life and feels a strong identification with the aggressive characters therein and frequently engages in aggressive fantasies. In the case of girls, they prefer stereotypically boys’ activities.
Bandura et al. (1963) have asserted that even non-aggressive children can be stimulated to aggression by exposure to aggressive models. It was not possible to determine whether the children recalled the model, their practice, or both. But Bandura et al.’s (1963) study showed that high retention with practice suggested that the children may recall their practice and not the model.

The findings from the study of Davis and Baran (1981) suggest that mass media entertainment, especially the television, has positive and desirable effects when used normally but has negative effects when its contents are misused. The consequences of a model’s behaviour would affect initiation of other kinds of undesirable acts, besides aggressive ones, Walters et al. (1963) suggested.

Research demonstrated the effect of aggression and the role of films in stimulating aggression. Lovaas (1961), demonstrated that pre-schoolers imitate the non-functional behaviour of adult model’s discrimination choice. Huesmann (1996) took another longitudinal look at these subjects as 30 year-olds and reported that the earlier correlation between high television viewing at age 8 and high juvenile delinquency at age 19 had become a correlation with high criminality at age 30. Where the trend had been primarily male-oriented at age 19, he now found similar correlative patterns among women subjects.

Allard, Wortley, Stewart (2008) in their article The Effect of CCTV on Prisoner Misbehaviour, indicate that violent and unplanned misbehaviour was relatively more likely to occur in view of CCTV coverage. The implications for the prevention of aberrant inmate behaviour and for researchers’ understanding of the impact of CCTV on violence are discussed.

Maeseele, Verleyee, Stevens, and Speckhard (2008) in their study results clearly indicate the psychological repercussions of this terror threat in terms of media information-seeking behaviour, risk perception and fear levels. Furthermore, the important role of government communication, the ambiguity of social support and the opposing outcomes of television and internet use are demonstrated.
Joanne Savage (2008) carried out a meta-analysis which included 26 independent samples of subjects on the relationship between exposure to media violence and aggression. Overall, “original” models controlling for “trait”, did not suggest that exposure to the media was of statistical significance. However, the size of the effect was small and conclusions based on this finding are attenuated because known biases in the coefficients were estimated.

Liss and Reinhardt (1980) found that both prosocial cartoons (those with moral messages apparent to the adult researchers) and standard cartoons contained equal amounts of aggression.

### 2.4.5. Impact on Health Related Issues

Peterson (1978) discovered the way the television developed new diseases. One disease that has been caused by television is television epilepsy. The findings suggested that the patients who had a history of epilepsy were prone to this disease. Children were found to be especially prone to television epilepsy. The disease was also caused if the room was dimly-lit or if the television set was faulty and flickering.

Sixty-one per cent reported a generalised fear or free-floating anxiety, 46% reported what they called “wild imagination” ("monsters under the bed", or “someone sneaking up on you”); 29% reported a specific fear (eg. sharks, power tools); and more than 20% reported a variety of sleep disturbances after viewing television, Hoekstra et al. (1999). Also, Harrison and Cantor (1999) in their study indicated that 90% subjects reported intense fear about something in the media, 52% reported disturbances in eating or sleeping, 22% reported mental preoccupation with the disturbing material and 35% reported avoiding or dreading the situation depicted in a programme or movie. Thompson and Christakis (2005) concluded that television viewing among infants and toddlers was associated with irregular sleep schedules.

Hess and Goldman (1962) suggested that three out of four parents interviewed said their children sometimes had nightmares after viewing disturbing programmes on television. Singer (1962) found that children were in danger of having nightmares after watching disturbing media content. Years after seeing a horror movie, children may experience such night “terrors” or have strange or weird fantasies.
Teens who watched soaps on television are reported to be more body conscious. This is especially true among girls who watched music videos. Identification with television stars (for girls and boys), and models (girls) or athletes (boys), is positively correlated with being body conscious, reports Hofschire and Greenberg, (2002).

Comstock (1991) revealed that reading habits among children decreased because of television viewing. Crespo (2001) found that Obesity in children increased with the time they watched television. Tremblay (2003) indicated that more than 60% of incidence of overweight resulted from excessive television viewing. Children who use a lot of media have a lower activity levels which is linked to a higher rate of obesity, Vandewater (2004). Analysing the data from a national survey between 1988 and 1994, researchers found that the 26% of children who watched television for four or more hours a day had significantly developed more body fat than those who watched less television. The more time children spent watching television, the greater they put on weight reports Anderson (1998). Gortmacher (1996) found that 60% of obesity among children in the ages of 10 to 15 may be caused by excessive television viewing. Dietz (1985) found that the incidence of obesity increased by 2% per additional hour of television watching.

Tiggemann and Pickering (1996) found from their study that the duration for which an adolescent watched soaps, movies and music videos was associated with their degree of dissatisfaction with their bodies and the desire to be thin. A study report of Brumberg (1997) declined that at the age of 13, as much as 53% of American Girls were “unhappy with their bodies”. This grows to 78% by the time girls reached 17 years of age. In a study among undergraduates, media consumption was positively associated with a craving for thinness among men and body dissatisfaction among women, said Harrison and Cantor (1997).

Kaiser Family Foundation (2005) described that children, in the age group of 8 to 18, spend more time (44.5 hours per week) in front of the computer, television and game screens than other activities in their lives, except sleeping. USA Today (1996) conducted a survey of girls between 9 and 10 years old, and found that 40% have tried to lose weight. According to study funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Mundell (2002), 10-year-old girls and boys were dissatisfied with their bodies after watching a music video by Britney Spears or a clip from the Television show *Friends*. 
Robinson (1999) conducted a study from Stanford University, on the relationship between television-viewing and weight. The results showed that children who watched less television and played fewer video games had a significant reduction in obesity. The children who watched their usual amount of television had higher indicators of obesity. The only difference between the two groups was the time they spent on watching television and playing video games.

Gerbner et al. (1997), in one of their content analyses, found that mainstream television programming contained a large number of references to cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs. DuRannt R.H. et al. (1997) found that one-fourth of all MTV videos contained alcohol or tobacco use. Atkin et al. (1991) suggested that adolescents like to drink either beer or liquor. It was directly related to their exposure to television alcohol advertisements. Other factors such as age, sex, social status, or parental influence were not as strong predictors of drinking behaviour as exposure to the television commercials.

Robinson et al. (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of adolescent media use and its impact on alcohol and found that music videos held the strongest correlation for beginning to drink alcohol for teens. Strouse et al. (1995) conducted a study on 214 children in the age group of 13 to 18 years. They surveyed media use among the teens and their families and found there was a strong relationship between music-video exposure and premarital permissiveness among females. It was stronger if the environment at home was unhappy.

Wingood et al.’s (2001) study of 522 African-American females and their exposure to music videos found that heavy viewing of rape videos (up to 20 hours or more per week) were associated with an increased likelihood to contract sexually transmitted diseases, not using condoms, having multiple sexual partners, and to engage in other high-risk activities. A study conducted by Kaiser Family Foundation (2001) found that programmes that emphasised sexual risk or responsibility were a rarity on television, in stark contrast to the widespread treatment of sexual topics.
Gagnon & Simon (1987), Kunkel & Biely (1999) and Silverman & Watkins (1983) indicate that the television may offer teenagers “scripts” for sexual behaviour that they might not be able to observe anywhere else. Adolescents who view a lot of media are more likely to accept stereotypical sex roles, Walsh and Brown (1993) and to believe that the unusual sexual behaviour presented on talk shows was realistic. Kaiser family foundation (1999) reported that 40% of teenagers said they learnt ideas about how to talk with boyfriends or girlfriends about sex directly from media portrayals.

Larson (1996) indicates that viewing soap operas, which are extremely appealing to teens, may give viewers unrealistic and unhealthy notions about single motherhood. Those who watch more television will have more sexist views and a mainstream hypothesis that certain groups of respondents who espoused very different views will have more similar outlooks regarding women’s role in society, as heavy viewers, Signorielli (1989). Freuh and McGhee (1975) suggest that young children who watched television for 25 hours or more per week demonstrated more stereotypical sex role attitudes than those who watched 10 hours or less per week.

2.5. Relationship between Media and People

The television is a powerful medium arrived in the family of mass media. The television has profoundly changed the structure and the style of the human family life. Based on the impact of television on families the viewing habits are categorized into i) parent and child relationship, ii) different media relationship, iii) children relationship with television are discussed here. Media intake of an individual has also been shown to be related to the quality of family life they experience.

2.5.1. Television versus Other Media

Ganesh (1999) examined the role of radio and television in some social welfare campaigns. The author points out that radio and television had a wider reach and coverage and had no literacy barrier as is the case with the print medium. But television watching reduced the time devoted to listening to radio, reports Abrains (1956) from the findings of the research on the effect of television on children’s media habits. In a study conducted by
Seagon (1951) on children’s television habits and preferences, it is shown that the viewing time of children from lower socio-economic background increases until the age of 12. The introduction of television reduces radio-listening and movie-going considerably.

Kaplan (1978) studied the impact of television viewing on the use of other competing mass media and found that it reduced radio-listening and movie-going habits. Mehling (1960) found in his study that 55% of high-school children spent more than ten hours watching television, about three hours on newspaper and about four hours on radio per week.

Koen van Eijck (2000), in 1975 and 1995, conducted a study among the Dutch about the relation between television viewing and reading and the changes in this relationship over time. The results of the study gave empirical substance to the notions of media orientation and audience segmentation. They document an overall decline in reading.

2.5.2. Parent and Child Relationship

Jordan, Hersey, McDivitt and Heitzler (2006) conducted in-depth individual and group interviews with 180 parents and children in the age group of 6 to 13 years. This study concluded that parents showed interest in taking action to reduce children’s television time but also faced uncertainty regarding how to go about doing so. Results suggest possible strategies to reduce the time children spend in front of the screen.

Kubey (1994) discovered in his research that heavy television viewers were likely to spend more time alone at home but did not report negative experiences with family. Heavy viewers felt significantly more “free” during non-television activities with family members than the light viewers.

Atkin, Heeter and Baldwin (1989) examined the degree to which parental mediation of child television-viewing (including restrictions and discussion regarding content) varied across paid, basic and non-cable households. In another study, Lin and Atkin (1989) suggested that there was a significant correlation between parental mediation
and the age of children in houses that had VCRs. They found that parental mediation decreased as the children grew older. The extent of parental mediation with these technologies, however, has been low on the whole.

Frager and Reid (1979) report from their research on the interaction of children with commercials that children and parents actively interacted while viewing commercials. Holz (1998) also found that the majority of parents reported that they imposed rules restricting the usage of television by children. Also, Lyle and Hoffman (1972) found that 40% of mothers reported that having rules limited television viewing among children. However, only 19% of first graders said they had such rules.

Kremar and Cantor (1996) note that 70% of their sample parents reported that they controlled what their children viewed. About 90% of the respondents reported, they controlled their children’s viewing when violent content was involved. On the Contrary, Strawburger and Donnerstein (1999) reported that 44% of children and teens reported that they watched different programmes when their parents were not around.

Rosenwasser (1999) conducted a series of studies on the relationship between watching adult situation comedies and pro-social behaviour. The pro-social behaviour of children was assessed by mothers. The mothers reported how often their children shared and helped others. The author found a significant positive relationship among pro-social situations, comedy viewing and pro-social behaviour. However, Valkenburg et al. (1999, p63) argued that social co-viewing was unrelated to the concerns about the negative impact of television. Rather, “parents sit down with their child merely to watch television as family entertainment or as a means of spending time together”.

Rosengren and Windhl (1997) conducted a study in Scandinavia which showed that the amount of parental endorsement had long-term implications. The amount of television-viewing by teenagers was predicted by earlier amounts of parental viewing. Kenny (1985) also suggested that the amount of television-viewing by young adults was predicted by the amount of parental-viewing when they were growing up.
2.5.3. Adolescent Versus Television

Stanger and Gridina (1999) said children and adolescents spend an average of 2.46 hours watching television every day. On the other hand they spend an average of only 1.14 hours for homework and 0.77 hours on reading.

According to Heintz – Knowles (1996) who examined a month of episodes from ten soap operas sexual behaviour was about three times more likely to be presented visually than verbally. Kaiser Family Foundation (1999) study said that the television may be a key agent showing sex. Of the 13 to 15yearolds interviewed, almost two-thirds (61%) stated their peers learnt a lot about issues such as sex, drugs and violence from television, movies and other entertainment media. Less than half (44%) the subjects said they learnt a lot about these topics from schools and teachers while a little more than a third (38%) reported acquiring a lot of information from their mothers. These findings suggested that many teenagers may have turned to the mass media for information about sex because they received little from home or at school.

Wroblewski and Huston’s (1987) research indicated that children were aware of the television’s stereotyped occupational images. Durkin and Nugent (1998) report even children of kindergarten were aware of television’s gender stereotypes and were able to predict whether men, women (or boys or girls) would be found doing a particular activity on television.

2.5.4. Impact of Gender variation in Television viewing

The choices boys and girls make, and feel are the right ones, depend on what their best friends would do. In the case of boys it was also found that their judgment was also related to what their favorite television character would do. Girls tend to view those television characters that they disapproved personally.

Milkie’s study (1994, p354) revealed how teens derived meaning about gender roles from media content. Boys reproduced gender meanings 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”.

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Boys were active and violent, whereas girls were concerned with appearances and seen more often in domestic settings, writes Thomson and Zierbinos (1997) from the findings of their research on children’s perception of stereotyped cartoon characters.

Katz and Coulter (1986) uncovered more gender stereotype among children who watched a lot of television compared with children who spent a lot of time reading. Pingree’s (1978) study indicated that television commercials influenced children’s attitudes about gender role stereotypes.

Hoffner (1995) found that adolescent girls reported using more non-cognitive coping strategies than boys. However, there were no gender differences in the use of cognitive strategies. Hoffner’s (1995) explanation was that boys were less willing to show their emotions than girls were. They avoided non-cognitive strategies, which were usually apparent to others.

2.6. Media Behaviour Based On Programmes

Television programmes fall under several formats, such as serials, talk shows, cinema-based, news and reality shows. Continuous watching of television leads to changes in behaviour, such as propensity for violence, addiction to programmes, follow role models and urge to participate in reality shows. The following section discusses the impact of media-based programmes.

2.6.1. Selection of the Programme

Herald (1980) conducted a study to examine whether parents used the viewing-information guide to recommend programmes for their children. He found there was a need to classify television programmes based on their suitability for children. The findings also revealed that most parents discouraged watching antisocial and violent programmes and encouraged watching the pro-social programmes.
2.6.2. Influence of Reality Shows telecasted

Palmer’s (2002) study concentrated on the popular programme *Big Brother*, an experiment in governance. *Big Brother* stimulated a number of debates concerning the rights and responsibilities of television producers to the subjects. It is also important to consider the ways in which the subjects of the programme used the experience as an opportunity to develop their sense of self as performers and subjects in process.

Goodale (2002) found that parents and teachers did not have to look far to find a plethora of examples of media that blatantly denigrated respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring and civic virtue. For instance, *Playboy* playmates competed on a special episode of NBC’s reality show *Fear Factor*, and the ABC aired a Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show. This prime time reality television shows were so explicit that the network decided it should blur out areas of the models’ bodies.

Dubrofsky (2007) concentrated on reality-based television shows to examine the representation of therapeutic behavior argued that a re-articulation of the therapeutic effect was necessary to understand the coupling of surveillance and therapeutics on television.

2.6.3. The Role of Serials

Television is a one-way medium, no matter how actively the child reacts to it. No affective conversation can occur between child viewers and television commentator. This limitation is recognized in an article by Fowels and Voyat (1974) article.

Lead stories are significantly powerful than ordinary stories in shaping public agenda, report Roy et al. (1985) from a study on the influence of television news on public concerns. Bogart (1962) and Himmelweft (1962) suggested that when television channels offered competing programmes of different qualities and to cater to different tastes, they crystallized or froze and did not develop.
A Thomas and Cellaharis (1982) study found that family dramas made it clear to children that money did not buy happiness. Sutherland and Sinialwiky’s (1982) study, meanwhile, showed that in soap operas, socially defined moral issues were raised without taking into account their treatment and resolution.

Lowery (1980) examined soap operas and reported that alcohol was depicted as an excellent social lubricant and as an easy means of resolving serious personal crisis. However, a longitudinal study of Robinson et al. (2000) found a positive correlation between television-and-music-video-viewing and alcohol-consumption among teens. Kunkel et al. (1999) revealed that 85% of soap operas on television featured some form of sexual content, and that about half of them showed sexual behaviour. Other studies, too, found similar content in other types of shows. The most frequent types of sexual acts in soap operas featured unmarried couples and long kiss, Greenberg & Buselle (1996); Greenberg & Alessio (1985); and Lowery & Towles (1989).

Seinfeld and Dent (2001) found that viewing several episodes of Seinfeld (a sitcom) seemed to greatly clarify the concepts and sensitise students to seeing interdependencies in their own lives. Lemon’s (1977) analysis of dominance patterns showed that comedians provided more favourable portrayals than crime dramas. Relevant occupations may be the key to the interactions between people.

A study by Smith and Wilhelm (2002) found that people enjoyed action films and television programmes not only because they could “look forward to action sequences” but also because they “enjoyed the suspense involved” in those contexts. A person likes to be there because there is enough mystery to the narrative that he would have to work hard “to figure things out” (p.151).

Another study by Sanders (2006) showed that a television series on parenting Driving Mum and Dad Mad benefited a significant number of parents. After watching the series, (6 episodes) parents reported that specific children’s behaviours such as aggression, yelling and shouting, temper tantrums, disobedience, teasing, hitting parents, fighting with siblings and lying to parents had reduced. The parents said they had increased confidence
in managing their children’s problems and behaviour at home and outside. The study suggested that television programmes on parenting were popular and had huge potential reach, enabling many to gain skills that helped improve children’s behaviour and emotional well-being.

2.6.4. Pro-social Effects on Society

Exposure to pro-social and antisocial behaviour was measured by the frequency of viewing specific programmes. Pro-social behaviour was assessed by peer nominators. Television programmes in India concentrate on different aspects of life in the country. Abelman and Newendorf’s (1985) study revealed that 75% of the programme content in the West had religious themes of which 20% was overtly political. Solicitations averaged $190 per hour. The effect of such religious programmes on the viewers was studied by Gadde and Pritchara (1985) and it revealed that watching television was like attending church, particularly among Protestants.

According to Sydney et al. (1979) studied how “pre-school tele-viewing” acted as predictor of a child’s future academic success and sociability. Greenberg, Attin, Edison and Korzenny (1980) examined the favourite programmes of a sample of fourth, sixth and eighth graders. It was found that these programmes contained an average 42.2 acts of antisocial behavior and 44.2 acts of pro-social behaviour in an hour. Pro-social behaviour included displays of altruism, empathy and discussion of feelings.

2.7.0 Media Impact on Cognitive Development

This section deals with the impact of television on cognition and education. It deals with how the television is used in personality development. Television provides a backdrop for growing up and studies show that children often play, eat, do homework and talk while “watching Television”. Huston and Wright (1991) and Huston et al. (1992) suggest that television content specifically designed for children taking into account their special needs and cognitive capabilities can highly be effective in attracting children’s attention, conveying the intended message, and accomplishing learning outcomes, as well as entertaining the child audience. The following passages deal with the impact of cognitive development.
2.7.1. Introduction

From a study by Kubby (1981) it was understood that television-viewing was a relatively unchallenging activity that required little cognitive investment and was consistently tied to relaxation, passivity and drowsiness. Schramm et al. (1960) found that bright children often made use of all available media.

Moy, Tanaka and McCluskey (2005) concluded from the results of their study that reliance on newspaper and television had different effects on knowledge about the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and trust in the institution. The effects of trust on political behaviour, meanwhile, were considerably stronger than those of knowledge. Studies by MacBeth (1996) and Wright et al. (2001) suggest that children who watched carefully constructed educational programmes for specific age levels (such as Sesame Street), did better on pre-reading skills (at the age of 5) than children who watched television infrequently, or not at all. Children who watched cartoons and other more entertainment television programmes were less likely to spend time with books or other print media, reports Wright and Huston (1995).

Frequent viewing of entertainment and general audience television programming during childhood and adolescence has been hypothesised to contribute to persistent reductions in educational and intellectual functioning because it displaces reading and homework and requires relatively little intellectual effort and promotes attention problems and disinterest in school reports Hancoxe, Milne & Poulton (2005).

2.7.2. Time Sense of Children in the use of Television

Television requires lesser effort and concentration than reading. It is highly visual and relies less on language skills, report Salomon and Leigh (1984). Salmon (1983) also found that children paid more attention to learn from television. Their mental effort and performance increased compared with what they did without such instruction.
Wober and Gunter (1982) in their report said a person’s perception of the real world was related more to viewing certain types of programmes than to the time spent viewing. The findings of these researchers indicate that people select particular types of programmes that agreed with, or reinforced their personal beliefs. A National (US) education study conducted by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1990) reported that children spent four times as many hours each week watching television than doing homework. Children who watched television for more than 3 hours per day (heavy television viewers) showed the greatest decline in reading ability, Reinking and Wu (1990) wrote.

2.7.3. Ideology of Television Character

Patrices, Greenfield and Ross’s (1988) study revealed the impact of cognitive programmes on children. These programmes had more information, but were less imaginative. They made people verbally precise and mentally less active than the generation brought up when the radio was a major medium. Parker et al. (1961) also reported data indicating that intelligence among children was less strongly related to the number of hours spent watching television on Sundays than on weekdays.

Hunt (2001) promotes the use of television as a tool for teaching and testing in undergraduate organizational-behaviour courses by providing specific examples of how themes and characters from a variety of television shows can be used as bases to create both class exercises and exam questions. The article concludes with a set of guidelines for instructors who want to incorporate television in their future teaching methods.

Bandura (1977) and Hawkins and Pingree (1982) report that the television influenced viewers’ perception of social behaviour and social reality. Gerbner (1985) wrote that the television contributed to cultural norms.

2.7.4. Cognitive and Emotional Responses

Gortmaker et al. (1990) have shown mental ability among children to be inversely associated with television use. But a study by Lyle and Hoffman (1972) showed that it was only modestly so. These differences have been declining with time,
Comstock and Scharrer report in their study (1999). Singer and Singer (1998) reported that children learning from *Barney and Friends* accounted for the educational effectiveness of the programme, which explained procedures “at a pace children can grasp”. The researchers suggested that we need a new type of aesthetic in video cinematography geared to the cognitive level of the viewing audience(p364).

The relationship between cognitive development and emotional responses to television can be very helpful in predicting the types of television programmes and movies that are more or less likely to frighten children of different ages. In addition to providing empirical evidence for the relationship between cognitive development and effective responses, these developmental findings can help parents and other caregivers make more sensible viewing choices for children, Cantor (1998).

Harrison and Cantor (1999) and Hoekstra, Harris and Helmick (1999) conducted retrospective studies of adults’ detailed memories of having been frightened by a television show or movie provide more evidence of the severity and duration of media-induced fear. Cantor and Wilson (1984) studied nine to eleven yearold children about programmes that frightened them. The findings were consistent with the idea that as children developed, they were increasingly able to modify their thought processes while watching television.

Siegler (1991) in his research indicated that cognitive performance could be uneven across different types of tasks and that children exhibited varied skill levels even within a particular domain.

### 2.7.5. Television Helps Academic Achievement

Bala (1989) said television-viewing was very helpful as the children got to know the facts of life in a natural fashion. It saved the parent the responsibility of having to explain certain things. Saksena (2000) suggested that the potential of television could be utilised to impart education and information to the masses. In the next millennium, traditional method will prove inadequate, he stated.
A longitudinal study made by Gortmaker et al. (1990) titled *The Impact of Television Viewing on Mental Aptitude and Achievement* suggest that youths with learning difficulties, attention problems and other intellectual deficits may be more likely than other youths to engage in frequent television viewing.

Low socio-economic status may contribute to television-viewing time for reasons such as restricted range of non-classroom educational activities, poor nutrition and environmental adversities associated with low socio-economic status. Inadequate parental supervision may contribute to frequent television-viewing. Also, neglected children may have attention and learning difficulties. Findings indicated that frequent television-viewing was associated with poor academic performance before but not after socio-economic status and other covariates were controlled, Gaddy (1985).

Ozmert, Toyran and Yurdakk (2002) suggest that the adverse or beneficial effects of television on education may be more pronounced in certain groups depending on social advantage, intelligence and sex. There are indications that although excessive television viewing may impair academic performance, limited viewing may be beneficial, Morgan (1993).

Wright, Huston, Murphy et al.(2001), in their Early Child Development WindowProject, *The Relations of Early Television Viewing to School Readiness and Vocabulary of Children From Low-Income Families*, found that television-viewing with respect to attention and learning problems varied as a function of variables, including age, socio-economic status and television programming content.

Milne, Poulton (2005) found that television-viewing among children in the age group of 5 to 11 years and adolescents in the age group of 13 to 15 years showed adverse associations with later educational achievement. However, adolescent’s viewing was a stronger predictor of dropouts, whereas childhood viewing was stronger predictor of non-attainment of a university degree. The author concluded that television-viewing in childhood and adolescence was associated with poor educational achievement by 26 years of age. Excessive television-viewing during childhood may have long-lasting adverse consequences on educational achievement and subsequent socio-economic status and well-being.
Koolstra and Vander Voort (1997) found that television-induced reduction in book reading in leisure. Watching subtitled foreign television programmes was found to stimulate the development of decoding skills.

Fisherkeller’s study of adolescent students (2000) and Dyson’s (2003) study of children found that they already had a great deal of media-literacy which could be built upon through a more formal training.

2.8. Media Behaviour Based on Violence

Television programmes based on violent acts, such as fighting, bomb blasts, gunshots, or scolding, infuse the urge for violence in the minds of the viewers. The following section explains the previous research based on violence.

2.8.1. Heavy Viewing Leads to Violent Activity

Heavy viewers of violence on television are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour than light viewers. At the same time, viewers of violence on television express more willingness to use violence to resolve real interpersonal conflicts, said Hutson et al. (1992). According to Kolata (2002) adolescents who watched television for more than seven hours per week were more likely to commit aggressive acts when they grow up. Heavy viewers of television violence become fearful of the world and also afraid of becoming victims of violence. Over the time, they engage in more self-protective behaviour and show more mistrust of others and an outcome sometimes known as the *mean world syndrome*.

Sullivan (2001) found that the amount of television viewing directly influenced the prevalence of violence in society and the intentions to take protective measures. It indirectly affected mean world attitude and protection behaviour through its effects on their preceding variables.
2.8.2. Media and Real World Violence

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2002) found in its studies on violent behaviour caused by television that media violence could lead to aggressive behaviour in children. Cartoon violence was actually more than violence in prime time. Violence in the media was especially damaging to young children as they are unable to differentiate between real life and fantasy. The media often fail to show the consequences of violence.

The findings of Huesmann and Eron (1986) showed that children who perceived television violence as more realistic, or identify more with the aggressive characters, are influenced more by the violence. The children most at risk for behaving aggressively when they become young adults are not only those who watched a steady diet of television violence but also those who perceived it as realistic and identified with the aggressive characters, Huesmann and Moise (1999).

Aggressive habits are often learnt early in life. Once established, they are resistant to change. They are predictive of serious adult antisocial behaviour. When a child observes media violence, it can have harmful lifelong consequences. While research has not directly correlated media sex to sexual activity in real life, it is not difficult to surmise that it could, report Strasburger and Donnerstein (2000).

The relationship between media violence and real-life violence is direct and indisputable. Comstock (1993) describes that 10 to 20% of real-life violence may be attributed to media violence. According to Whitney and Wartella (2001), 3,500 research studies have examined the relationship between the media and real-world violence.

Herold (1986) concluded that perception of realism was an important factor in the relationship between viewing violence and behaving aggressively. According to Vander Voort (1986) the more children watched a television programme, the more realistic they found it, got involved, took it seriously, perceived it as violent and judged it to be more exciting. Young children are particularly vulnerable to these affects due to their difficulties in making the necessary distinctions between fantasy and reality.
suggested by Van Evra (1990). According to Albert’s (1958) study, children chose those characters which they wanted to grow up to be like as their heroes, no matter whether they saw the villain appear to win.

Wilson et al. (1996) suggested that young children may have difficulty in connecting the climactic punishment with the initial violent act and may, therefore, believe that the violence went unpunished. Thus, learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviour from the television varies depending on the nature of portrayals and the nature of the viewers.

Huesmann (1986) has found that aggressive habits seemed to be learned early in life. Once established, they are resistant to change and predictive of serious adult antisocial behavior. If a child’s observation of media violence promotes the learning of aggressive habits, it can have harmful lifelong consequences. Consistent with this theory, early television habits are correlated with adult criminality.

Joanne Savage (2008), in his study *The Role of Exposure to Media Violence in the Etiology of Violent Behaviour*, discusses the relationship between exposure to television and film violence. The study concluded that the empirical literature on media violence and aggression has not established that the exposure to media violence caused violent criminal behaviour. Welkos (1995) reported that media violence was harmful to children and there was too much violence on television. Barrie Gunter (2008) called for a targeted approach, which recognised that some media consumers may be more susceptible than others to media effects. Gunter also said media depictions of violence could vary in the risks they represented as potential triggers for pleasant or harmful reactions among media consumers.

More scientific studies and reviews conclude that significant exposure to media violence increased the risk of aggressive behaviour in certain children and adolescents, desensitises them to violence, and makes them believe that the world was a “meaner and scarier” place than it was reports Strasburger (1997).
Viewing televised violence was causally related to children’s aggressive attitudes and behaviour, as well as being a contributor to desensitisation and fear writes Pearl, Bouthilet and Lazer, (1982). According to Doneohue (1975) described that older children were less likely to judge violence as the “right thing to do”. But the findings of research conducted by Meyer (1973) contradicted those of Doneohue (1975). According to Guttman (1994), concluded that viewing televised violence posed a risk of harmful effects on children.

Federman (1998) in his three-year research revealed that, nearly two-thirds of all programming contained violence. Children’s shows, in particular, contained the most violent acts. The portrayals of violence were usually glamorised and perpetrators often went unpunished. Cantor et al.’s (1998) research has shown that even television news could traumatised children and led to nightmares. Huston et al. (1992) said that violence tears across the television screen through many types of programs, from music videos and entertainment shows to reality programmes and the evening news. By the time the average American child graduates from elementary school, he or she will have watched over 8,000 murderers and more that 10,000 other assorted acts of violence.

Eron, Huesmann and colleagues (1986) conducted a longitudinal study on children and found a clear relationship between the amount of violence on television children watched at the age of 8, the aggressive behaviour of these same youth at the age of 18, and the seriousness of criminal acts they committed at the age of 30.

Huesmann and Eron’s (1986) research clearly showed that television violence contributed to aggressive behaviour among children, and had an effect that can last into adulthood. The study also found that exposure to television violence at the age of 8 helped predict criminal behaviour in a sample of adults. Another study by Lacayo (1995) suggested that most adults recognise that televised violence can teach aggressive attitudes and behaviors to young viewers.
The analysis of children’s programmes revealed that 75% of them contained “a lot” of violence did not carry the TV rating, Woodard (1999). National Television Violence Study (NTVS), a research conducted at the University of Wisconsin, examined children’s reactions to programme ratings. It showed that content labels (such as “Contains Violent Content”) did not increase children’s interest in programmes. However, age-based advisories did, Cantor and Harrison (1997). Thus the age-based ratings posed the risk of a boomerang effect by attracting children’s attention to the very programmes they were not supposed to watch.

David Buckingham (1996) conducted a study on children’s emotional response to television and concluded that someone desensitised to screen violence can watch violent fare without blinking an eye. But it doesn’t mean that they would not be appropriately horrified if someone was gunned down on the street in front of them.

Feshbach & Singer (1971) found that the boys who had watched mostly non-violent television behaved more aggressively towards their peers than those who watched violent programming. Linz, Donnerstein and Penrod (1988) in their study demonstrated that repeated exposure to television violence could cause viewers to become more callous, or desensitised, to the harmfulness of violent behaviour. The study by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1994) also suggested that long-term exposure to television violence could cause viewers to become more callous, or desensitised, to the harmfulness of violent behaviour. The study by Forum for Children’s Television (1982) analysed animated cartoons and drama programmes categorized as “Violence By Tools, Weapons, Magical Powers”, “Physical Violence”, “Verbal Violence” or “Violence To Death”. It was found that home-drama-type animation tended to include more “verbal violence” as an essential element.
Gerbner (1972) charged that children’s television used violence excessively, and that this use of violence caused an increased use of aggression by viewers. Ward et al.’s (1996) study on slow motion and violence showed that watching a violent act at the same speed twice caused an increase in participants’ perception of the level of violence involved. Teevan et al. (1974) revealed that individuals who preferred violent television shows were prone to commit crimes.

Venla Salmi, Mirka Smolej and Kivivuri (2007) found that viewing television crime reality programmes regularly was also robustly related to lower levels of trust. Nearly 40% of the violent acts were perpetrated by “good” characters. Even when the perpetrators of violence were “bad” characters, more than 40% went unpunished. Almost three-fourths (73%) of the perpetrators of violence showed no remorse for their actions. More than half (55%) of the victims of violence show no pain or suffering. More than one-third (36%) of the victims experienced unrealistically low levels of harm. Only 15% of the violent programmes portrayed the long-term consequences of the violence to the victim’s family, friends, and community. Even though more than half (53%) the violent scenes on television were lethal, more than 40% of them were portrayed as humorous, National Television Violence Study (1997). Tangney Feshbash (1988) found that the effects of viewing violence could be reduced by parent watching the programmes with the child.

2.9. Advertisement

Though television has a variety of programmes, it earns revenue through advertisements. Leading companies that want to advertise their products sponsor mega serials and programmes. The programmes and advertisements cannot be separated from each other. The researcher found advertisements were numerous in two leading Tamil channels during prime time: 7pm to 9pm. In the two hours, 165 advertisements were shown on Sun TV and 181 on Vijay TV. They varied in form: slides, slides and voice, audio and visual using animated or personality type, etc. Purchases are influenced by the television. Children demand products after seeing them on TV. The researcher has, therefore, dedicated a separate section for advertising. Many previous researches have
also concentrated on advertisement and compared it with other fields such as drama, news and programmes. The following section deals with research based on advertisements.

**2.9.1. Children and their Purchase Behaviour**

Kline (1993) argues that 1955 was a turning point in television advertising for children. That year marked the debut of the highly successful television show *Mickey Mouse Club*. Children in droves rushed out to buy Mickey Mouse ears, guitars and other paraphernalia, demonstrating their own purchase power. Shortly thereafter, the toy industry moved aggressively into television. Barcus (1980) in his study found that the appeals used in children’s advertisements were mostly psychological rather than rational. Instead of giving price, ingredients, or quality information, ads typically focused on what fun the product was or how good it tasted.

Comstock (1991) found in his study that young children were unable to distinguish between commercials and television programmes. They did not recognise that commercials were trying to sell something. The research report from Teen Research Unlimited (2002) indicated that in 2001, teenagers in the age group of 12 to 19 spent $172 billion (an average of $104 per teen each week) up 11% from $155 billion in 2000. In 2002, children in the age group of 4 to 12 are expected to spend an estimated $40 billion, McNeal (2002).

He also states that in 2001 children of 12 years and under, directly and indirectly, influenced the household spending of over $600 billion. McNeal (1999) found that $1.3 billion was spent on television advertisements directed at children. Counting all media, advertising and marketing budgets aimed at children approached $12 billion. Children who watched a lot of television wanted more toys seen in advertisements and ate more advertised food than those who did not watch as much television, Strasburger (2002).
Ward, Wackman and Wartella (1977) from their research *How Children Learn to Buy: The Development of Consumer Information Processing Skills* report that there were consistent age-related changes in the kind of information children preferred to select and use to describe and conceptualise the consumer environment. Children’s skills to handle money increased as they grew older. The role of the family in children’s consumer learning varied according to social status and age. Lastly, the relationship between exposure to television commercials and children’s consumer learning was not found significant. There is a clear connection between product importance and adolescent’s influence in the family’s decision-making. Teenagers’ financial resources seemed to allow them greater say in initiating self purchases but not in the decision making for a family purchase, Beatty and Talpade (1994).

Macklin (1996) conducted a study *Preschoolers Learning of Brand Names from Visual Cues*. The author suggests that the preschoolers’ learnt brand names in the context of the packaging cues. School-aged children could also be studied for similar visual effects. Palan and Wilkes (1997) studied *Adolescent-Parent Interaction in Family Decision making*. It highlighted that the children in their early adolescence had an extensive knowledge of influence strategies available to them. This study also revealed that bargaining and persuasion strategies were reported as favourite among the group of adolescents with emotional strategies favoured least.

### 2.9.2. Role of Gender in Advertisement

A study by Bijimolt, Wilma and Britta (1998) — *Children’s Understanding of Television Advertising: Effects of Age, Gender and Parental Influence* — based on non-verbal measurements suggested that most children were able to distinguish ads from television programmes and had some insight into advertiser’s intent. The results based on verbal measure were not as conclusive. The percentage of children who showed understanding of television advertising was substantially lower.
From his study Hume (1993) reports that gender bias favoured boys over girls in advertisements. Girls were more likely to show an interest in boys’ products than vice versa. Advertisers favour using boys even in commercials where gender neutral products are featured. Either boys or girls are used together or only boys are shown, writes Smith (1994).

Atkin (1978) undertook a similar study entitled, *Observation of Parent-Child Interaction in Supermarket Decision-Making*. The author observed that television exposure provided a working familiarity with the wide range of alternatives in the competitive cereal Market. In contrast, the rate of purchase initiation was seen to be higher among younger than older children and among the middle-class rather than the working-class children. They also observed a slightly higher success rate for the female children. The author concluded that advertising and promotional efforts should be directed at the younger segment of the children more effectively.

**2.9.3. Children – good observant of Advertisements**

Krugman, Cameror and White (1995) in their study found that adults paid visual attention to programming 62% of the time and to advertisements only 33% of the time. Dubow (1995) found that teens remembered brand names and recognised advertisements better than adults. Moschis (1978) and Moschis & Moore (1979) suggested that exposure to television has been linked to and increased desire for products and brand names. Evidence from a study by Buijzen & Valkenburg (2000) suggested that the strength of this relationship may decrease with age.

Lee and Browne (1995) reported that the teens disagreed with parents over the purchase of athletic shoes mostly overpriced. Interestingly, nearly three-fourths of teens spontaneously cited Michael Jordan as their favourite celebrity in shoe commercials. Almost half the teens were wearing Nike shoes on the day of the interview. Strasburger (2001) suggested that the average American child may view as many as 40,000 television commercials ever year.
Boush, Frieted and Rose (1994) conducted a longitudinal study titled *Advertising and knowledge of Advertising Tactics*. Its results showed that adolescents showed a discernible pattern of belief about advertiser’s tactics by grade six and their level of knowledge developed in the direction of adult knowledge through the school years and across grades. Scepticism about advertisements appeared to be multi-dimensional with components of disbelief in advertisers’ claims. Having higher levels of knowledge about advertisers’ tactics was positively related to being more sceptical of advertising.

Education Digest (2000) reported that school introduced brand name foods are served, advertised and promoted in school cafeterias during lunch time. Reward coupons distributed by McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Domino’s provide coupons to advertise their products. Time Magazine (1999) writes that in some districts the schools allow/sold advertisement space on sides and even the tops of school buses.

### 2.9.4. Impact of Advertisements on Children

Robertson et al. (1989) in their cross-cultural study found that heavy television viewing among children was linked to higher parent-child conflict about purchases in Japan, Great Britain and the US.

In contrast, Churchill and Moschis (1979) surveyed more than 800 adolescents and found that heavy exposure to television was positively correlated with buying products for social acceptance, even after controlling for age, sex, socio-economic status and amount of family communication about consumption. The study of Richard Mizerski (1995) also supports Fischer’s work, which found recognition or the ability to watch trade characters and product to be positively associated with the child’s age.

Gregan, Paxton, Deborah and John (1997) conducted a study on the emergence of adoptive decision-making in children and found that age differences in adaptability could be eliminated with the imposition of search costs, implicating sensitivity to decision-making cost as a major contributor to the development of adaptability in complex environments.
Robert (1985), from his research — *Styles of Parental Disciplinary Practices as a Mediator of Children’s Learning from Pro-Social Television Portrayals* — reports that the children of parents who are primarily inductive were greater consumers of pro-social fare of television and demonstrated a greater propensity for pro-social solutions to conflicts than did children whose parents were primarily desensitised. The main implication of the study was that the relationship between children and television needed to be considered in the social context of the home environment.

Moschis’s (1985) study, *The Role of Family Communication in Consumer Socialisation of Children and Adolescents*, found that children and adolescents from pluralistic families preferred information from a variety of sources, with a higher preference for parents’ advice than children from other families. Adolescents from protective families in contrast were highly receptive to peers, and to a lesser extent television advertising.

In one of the most credible studies, *Consumer Socialisation of Children: A Retrospective Look at Twenty-five Years of Research*, by Deborah and John (1997), efforts were made to review the findings of the research conducted in children’s consumer socialisation in the past twenty-five years. The findings showed that although much was learnt about consumer-knowledge skills and values which developed as children matured, significant gaps remained in the understanding of the role television advertising played in the children’s consumer socialisation.