CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

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One sector which has been showing tremendous growth worldwide is media. And more specifically television and then internet, and to some extent the print media. There’s no doubt television in recent times has fuelled economies wherever it has gone. It has for starters helped create employment in India. The television industry here has since 1993 helped create around half a million or more jobs in everything from cable TV to production to management of television business. The TV set population in India has just about doubled since the arrival of cable and satellite television in India, thereby serving as an engine of growth for TV manufacturers.

Television, because it is a public medium, has fuelled sales not only of television sets but also various other related and unrelated industries. Right from post-production studios to electronic and cable TV hardware to music systems to soaps to garments to food to shampoo as viewer gets mesmerised by the products that have been promoted by advertisers on TV and go out and buy them. Television is playing a major role in the consumer’s lifestyle as it plays to people’s aspirations.

We are in an information and knowledge age. There is a premium on creativity and innovation. The merging of various media is bringing about a blurring of their very structures. The television is merging with the computer and in some cases the telephone. The role of media has undoubtedly
evolved over the years. From being just an informer it has become the driving force of the way we live. It helps elect government and topple them. It creates attitudes and culture, it has been playing a very large role in shaping the human mind. And it will continue to do so in an even more pronounced manner in the new millennium which promises a lot. Viewers are using their viewing box not only for home entertainment and information but also for shopping, trading and communicating. Television is seen as a refuge for the isolate, a source of comfort and stimulation for the child who is unable to deal with the outer world. Perhaps the converse also applies - there may be the suspicion that "too much" television will create undesirable character.

In 1965, McLuhan introduced us to the twentieth- Century media by saying that 'The medium is the message, and these words are still part of media researcher's jargon. It has also been said that 'TV is the theatre of life'. Salomon (1981) was the first to attempt to find if there is a connection between a medium's formal features and the user's mental skills development, and Clark (1983) in an attempt to refute these ideas, generalized by proclaiming that there are no learning benefits to be gained from employing any specific medium to deliver instructions. Research on the same issue conducted by Greenfield and Roos (1988) re-supports McLuhan's theory. They found that 'across different ages, social classes and ethnic groups, cognitive responses to audio and audiovisual representation differ for the same content, while there are common responses to each medium, across different content'. More specifically, they proved that 'audio was more powerful as a stimulus to the imagination, while
material presented in an audiovisual (TV) format was more memorable, and that 'although audiovisual presentations led to greater overall recall, each medium appeared to highlight particular types of information, which were then recalled better in that particular medium.'

MASS was the term in the eighteenth century for what has been described as the 'mob'. The Oxford Dictionary defines mob as a 'mass of human beings' a compact body; an aggregate in which individuality is lost. This means that a mob or a mass of people acts collectively as a group (probably stimulated by emotional and primitive elements). Television is an example of a mass medium. Television can be used as a 'bridge' a permanent highway leading to knowledge and respect of other cultures, a tool for analysing world problems and for mastering the languages, which endow these representations of others with meaning. This is because television provides a world wide, multicultural view.

Time have changed. Today, children are born into 'television families' regard television as a permanent fixture in their lives. The TV set is as familiar to them as the faces of family members, sometimes even more so. Unlike human beings, the TV set is always there, to entertain and to keep children company, especially when no one else is in the mood to play, chat or interact with them. Little children love the way a television set responds instantaneously to the press of a button; they enjoy feeling they can control it and make it do what they want. For the child of the nineties, television has come to represent a state of
complete bliss. Although the popularity of television is widespread, there is a good reason to be concerned about its effects on children and youths.

According to Lull (1990), 'The role and meaning of television in families also depend on the level of socio-economic class within countries, not just on the overall level of national development. India offers such clear examples, for the urban elite in India, television now is just part of the mixture of modern appliances that surrounds them. For the poor, however, television assumes great importance, taking them from 'dark to light.....' Television can empower audience members giving them access to information and entertainment they didn't have before- as in case of India and China. Most recently, ownership of a television set, especially a colour model, is a source of status in these countries, too, just as it had been in the more developed countries years earlier.

The growth in the pattern of TV set ownership and the level of exposure to the medium suggest that more families are watching television for longer periods of time but not necessarily together. This was conformed by the study: on an average, children in Delhi watch approximately 17 hours of TV every week (which means that atleast 50% of them watch significantly more than that since this is an average figure). By their own estimates a number of children are spending more time now in front of the small screen than on reading, creative hobbies, activities, home work and even meals (Unnikrishnan and Bajpai, 1996). A quick calculation based upon this response indicates that the average
A year-old would, over the next 10 years, have spent about 68 hours every month, 30 days every year, and one entire year out of 10, exclusively, on watching television. This figure is likely to increase further as more families take to viewing the new options being offered on Doordarshan as well as other Cable and Satellite channels.

Researchers insist that it must be considered as a significant developmental experience. The experience pool that each child's build is affected by what the child is exposed to and influenced by, and television increasingly is contributing more to this pool and such traditional institutions as the home and school are contributing less. Furthermore, the television set, by occupying a central and almost permanent position in our homes, is like a member of the family. As an experience, therefore, it has an enormous impact on children, especially on those under six years of age.

Television not only has the important function of bringing the child to ranges of events and experiences that lie outside the environment with which he is in direct contact, but it exerts its influence at a time of life when the child's knowledge of the rules and conventions that govern social actions and moral behaviour is incomplete and immature. We would therefore, expect that what television programmes portray to the child especially, but not only, to the youngest viewers and those who view most heavily about the kinds of acts that outside the familiar environment of school and family, might be very influential.
The conceivable outcomes of watching television are numerous, but the majority of them fall into three broad categories. First, there may be effects upon a viewer's behaviour. New habits or skills may be gained, or the frequency of activities in a child's existing repertoire may alter. Secondly, a person's knowledge and interests may be affected as a result of what he has seen on television. Thirdly, the viewer's attitudes may be influenced. These, three categories are by no means unrelated, and they are certainly not mutually exclusive. Attitudes are partly determined by knowledge, and both of these may influence an individual's actions. Children's behaviour, attitudes and knowledge are each affected by many things, television being one among numerous influences.

**EFFECTS OF VIEWING**

Hornik (1978) pointed out the consequences of television viewing could be negative with the television displacing time from more beneficial activities such as reading, hobbies, artistic and creative skills, or imaginative play (Neuman, 1988) On the other hand, the consequences of viewing could be positive. Television not only may entertain, but may inform and stimulate as well. It provides ready access to world wide news, cultural events, and positive role models. It may stimulate interest in academically relevant topics to which a child may not otherwise be exposed. Other writers (Rubinstein, 1983) have theorized that television may have differential effects, taking time away from those who live in
beneficial environments, thus inhibiting their mental development, but adding new dimensions of intellectual stimulation to those children in the deprived environments, thus improving their cognitive skills. Several previous studies have suggested a negative effect of television (e.g. Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince, 1958; Thompson, 1964; Witty, 1967; Singer, 1980; Williams et al, 1982) Other studies have found a positive effect (e.g. Greenstein, 1954, Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961), while Hornik (1978) found no effect over the short term, but a negative effect on reading improvement over time.

Media professionals should not underrate children's ability to handle great complexity, nor should they under-provide for that need of children for relevant complexity. Children television is notoriously given the smallest budgets and least attention, and economic reasons are too often justified by reductive assumption about children's semiotic abilities. Educationalists, parents and researchers alike should take this generally despised area of children's lives and development more seriously and with greater respect for its actual and potential value. However, there can be too much television watching by children. Though television is functionally redundant up to a point, there will be a decreasing return from heavy viewing as more of the same kind of viewing displaces other important activities. So it is generally more important for adults to limit the total time spent viewing than to select the programmes viewed.
As with the development of language, it seems that children's systems increasingly approximate to adult systems as they are exposed to, and allowed to operate in, adult systems. This means that educationalists and parents need not be too concerned at children's watching the most popular adult shows. Parents and educators can recognize and use the contradictions of specific programmes to help to clarify some fundamental social issues, for children and for themselves. They should do this, not only by relying on children's active processing of the message, but also by making children more conscious and aware of what they are processing and how. Television is a factor which modern education cannot simply deplore or ignore, but should come to terms with as part of its primary function of equipping students to be adequate citizen's in the society in which they live.

In the early days of television there was a considerable anxiety about the conceivably damaging influence of viewing upon eye- sight and experts gave all kinds of dire warnings. An article published as late as 1959 confidently recommends that the child should be seated directly in the front of the screen at a distance six or seven times its width. The screen should be at the eye level and no other light must fall upon it. The child must not eat while watching television; nor should he be put to bed until at least fifteen minutes after the end of the programme.
The fact of the matter is that no conclusive evidence of damage to eyesight has emerged. A Japanese study did show that viewing can temporarily reduce the eye's ability to adjust and focus, but the effect is temporary, and full recovery takes place within an hour. Undoubtedly, eye strain can occur if viewing conditions are poor and if children sit very close to the set, but the children who watch television do not suffer more frequently from eye complaints or headaches than those who view little or not at all. Some children with poor eyesight report strain and headaches after viewing, but the findings make it clear that the same amount of time spent in alternate activities involving concentrated visual perception—reading, for instance—would have similar effects.

**AMOUNT OF TV VIEWING**

Television is almost as pervasive as everyday language in most homes. Just as one drop of water on a stone seems to leave the stone unaffected but continual dripping in time can wear away a hole, so with television we must be careful to pick up effects that may be invisible at the level of a programme, or series, but important over a lifetime. Our children are more vulnerable than adults to this whole process. Researchers have accused television of being the 'plug-in-drug', a kind of narcotic dangerous because it reduces its audiences away from reality. Some viewed it as the former of a 'one-dimensional mind', a mind that is stunned, paralysed, incapable of criticism or opposition. Instead of forming a version of reality that penetrates and determines the general sense of reality, it builds up an alternative world, which sucks helpless victims.
Vast majority of children devote fairly large amount of time to watching television. The choice of 'watching television' was strongly influenced by context and time. About 31% of children choose watching TV as their most enjoyed activity for the part of the day immediately after the school, while only 11% choose it for weekends and a mere 5% choose TV as the most enjoyed activity for holidays. Children like television most when they are relatively tired and feel a need for relaxation. In Britain during 1971 every home containing a television set had it switched on for 5.2 hours, on average, each day. The corresponding figures for 1972 and 1973 were 4.8 hours and 5.6 hours. In one American investigation the cameras attached to television sets recorded that only three hours of viewing, occurred for every four hours, that families reported in a television dairy, and for every six hours, they claimed to have been viewing when answering interview questions about what they had seen on the previous day. While viewing TV children were seen to engage in a range of activities including scratching, untying knots, throwing objects and nose-picking. The amount of time a child spends with television is not determined solely by the child himself, and in most cases it is affected by parental controls. A minority of parents, around one-third, impose definite rules that restricts the hours when their children watch. American social scientists have quoted estimates of the total number of childhood hours that the child spends in front of the tube, the average figure being in the region of 15,000 hrs. This is more than the total amount of time each child spends at school or in all other leisure time activities combined.
Children differ in their attraction to television, age makes a difference. Viewing time rises over the preschool years, shows a slight drop around school entry, and then increases in early adolescence, after which it declines. Boys watch slightly more TV than do girls from the preschool years on (Huston et al., 1990). And at all ages children with lower IQs, who come from low income families, and who are members of poverty stricken ethnic minorities tend to watch the most (Huston, Watkins and Kunkel, 1989). Excessive TV viewing is also associated with adjustment problems, such as family and peer difficulties and less trusting perceptions of other people (Libert, 1986; Singer, Singer and Rapaczynski, 1984).

This television explosion was experienced by the west almost 30 years ago. However, there is a large body of concerns related to television which have been addressed at the micro level - individual, parent, teacher, group, community - as well as at the macro level - national, policy, legal etc. Attention has been drawn to the fact that:

- The more TV a child watches, the greater the influence it has on the child.
- Watching TV for long hours adversely affects reading and writing skills.
- Television promotes violent and/or aggressive behaviour.
Television as a passive activity takes children away from other, more direct experiences.

The passivity induced by watching too much TV can lead to obesity.

In India, a whole new generation of TV children is slowly coming of age. In rich and poor families, children are now watching much more television than even before. They also have much more to watch, with TV options growing and expanding rapidly on Doordarshan, cable and satellite networks and video. As viewers, children are becoming part of a universal tribe of human beings for whom TV is as real and influential as a parent or a school. Over a last decade television in India has undergone a complete transformation, moving from a single channel, government controlled service to multi-channel, multi-optioned, transnational programming. Out of 730 children and families covered in this study, 95% had TV sets at home. Of these, TV-owning families, 69% had already acquired colour television sets, more than 40% owned black and white sets and about 55%- or more than five out of 10 families - had VCRs. By Doordarshan's own estimates there were 26,95,537 (over two million) TV sets in 1982. Exactly a decade later- the number of TV sets had gone up to 3,48,58,000 (almost 35 million) This put the TV audiences at close to 125 million. According to latest market research estimates, TV viewership figures were up to almost 200 million in the year 1992-93, while the figure for TV owning households is estimated to now exceed 40 million. On an average, children in Delhi watch approximately
17 hours of TV every week (which means that at least 50% of them watch significantly more than that since this is an average figure). By their own estimates a number of children are spending more time now in front of the small screen than on reading, creative hobbies and activities, home work and even meals (Unnikrishnan and Bajpai, 1996).

CONSEQUENCES OF REGULAR TV WATCHING UPON CHILDREN

Researchers insist that it must be considered as a significant developmental experience. The experience pool that each child builds is affected by what the child is exposed to and influenced by, and television increasingly is contributing more to this pool and such traditional institutions as the home and school are contributing less. Furthermore, the television set, by occupying a central and almost permanent position in our homes, is like a member of the family. As an experience, therefore, it has an enormous impact on children, especially on those under six years of age. Passivity and shorter concentration spans are two harmful side effects that may result from watching television for long periods of time over many years.

Mander (1978) draws attention to a number of fear linked to the effect of television and its technology on the mind. To list just a few:
Television is in itself a commodity and an expensive one too. Unlike any other inanimate object, it is an active player. 'Television literally enters inside human beings, inside our homes, our minds, our bodies...'.

Television as an experience is one that is available to virtually everyone at the same time. It aids commercial efficiency because it gradually models millions of people into thinking, behaving and desiring the same sort of things. It replaces the natural curiosity of the human being to learn and discover through real experience the wonders of the world. It tricks viewers into thinking that they have travelled far afield and seen it all by just sitting in a room and watching the sights and sounds on television.

Bower researched on co-viewing (1973) based on a national probability, sample of about 1900 households, is subject to the same limitations of self-report and lack of time segment break-downs, and the questions asked all refer to joint viewing patterns. However, Bower finds that in multi-set households sibling viewing is the predominant pattern (in 43% of the cases), followed by husband-wife viewing (33%), entire family viewing (12%) and parent-child viewing (7%). For single set households, the most common joint viewing pattern is the entire family viewing (55%) followed by husband-wife (17%).
siblings (13%) and parent-child (13%). Bower also finds that mother and children view together, the mother determines the programmes in 33% of the cases and in 27% of the cases, there is a joint decision. The potential benefit of family viewing is interaction between parents and children about programmes and commercials leading to learning. A good children programme should:

(a) be comprehensible to children
(b) have positive effects on children
(c) have no negative effects on children
(d) be exciting
(e) involve children
(f) be familiar for children
(g) be humorous
(h) be realistic
(i) having depth
(j) be original, and
(k) be aesthetically pleasing.

Also it is concluded that families that discuss TV with their children in a democratic way helped the children to understand more from the medium (Singer, 1980; Howe, 1983). The child who over watches is lonely, shy, listless and pampered; the child who avoids TV is depicted in less negative terms: active, less irritable, has friends; the child who neither avoids TV nor is addicted to it is clearly seen in more positive terms: obedient happy, healthy, easy to get along with, and well rounded (Himmelweit, 1958).
Hornik (1978) pointed out several possibilities of the kinds of effect of watching TV. The consequences of TV viewing could be negative, with the TV, displacing time from more beneficial activities, such as reading, hobbies, artistic and creative skills, imaginative play (Neuman, 1988). On the other hand, the consequences of viewing could be positive. TV not only may entertain but may inform and stimulate as well. It provides ready access to worldwide news, cultural events and positive role models. It may stimulate interest in academically relevant topics to which a child may not otherwise be exposed. Other writers (Rubinstein, 1983), have theorized that TV may have differential effects, taking time away from those who live in beneficial environments, thus improving their cognitive skills. Several previous studies have suggested a negative effect of TV (Thompson, 1964; Witty, 1967; Singer, 1980; William, 1982). Other studies have found a positive effect (Greenstein, 1954; Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961). Hornik (1978) found no effect over the short term, but a negative effect on reading improvement over time.

Literature on amount of TV viewing reveals that the developmental perspective is crucial. Is there something about children's ways of responding to TV that will affect their adult life? Are there kinds of early experience (of TV or excluding TV) that will equip them better to be critical effective citizens in a modern democracy? To answer this we must take a developmental approach.
THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

The act of 'reading television' (Fiske and Hartley, 1978) decoding and interpreting its messages and relating them to the other systems of meaning in everyday life, obviously draws on general cognitive and perceptual strategies. In order to understand it we need to set it in a more general framework taking account of the development of children's perception, language and thought. There have been a large number of different lines of research which have explored the development of structures of language, thought and perception in humans. In spite of differences of approach and terminology there is a surprising degree of consensus that has emerged, a consensus that can be deployed usefully on the topic of children and television.

An immense amount of development has occurred before a child takes a real interest in the television set at about 2 years old. These first 2 years of life see a number of crucial developments, but because children are not very forthcoming in describing them we can only observe their behaviour and hypothesize and reconstruct the processes. The obvious starting point is perception. From the moment of birth children make distinctions, and hence develop paradigmatic structures. Children also make simple connections. They integrate elements to form simple syntagms. Perhaps the major intellectual achievement of the growing child is the acquisition of verbal language. Many writers have set up an opposition between language (verbal language) and
thought, asking whether one determines the other (cf. Whorf, 1956; Piaget, 1959). In terms of semiotic theory the whole issue shifts its ground. It is clear, as Piaget has shown, that children can think before they have acquired any facility in verbal language. Thought itself, however, must proceed in signs of some kind, since without a system of representations no thought is possible (Polite, in Greenlee, 1973). The acquisition of verbal language must follow the development and deployment of other semiotic systems which together constitute the possibilities of thought in adult human. Verbal language, like the other semiotic codes, is the product of thought, and can only be learnt and used as a result of thought. Cracking the verbal code is major intellectual concern of infants and children; occupying large amounts of time and energy. It would be surprising if the strategies and processes involved were unrelated to other more general features of thought.

Infants observing the adults around them interpret other before the verbal code. They develop the paradigmatic structures that are the basis of the full phonological system or the basic alphabet of sounds of their language. But they do not begin to crack the phonological code as a system till much later: about 12 months old. However, verbal language is more than it sounds. Children follow a regular progression in the kinds of utterances they can produce. The first stage (lasting until about 8 months) consists of one word statements, supplemented by pointing or intonation. These are paratactic synchronous syntagms. The next stage consists of two words utterances: dichronic paratactic syntagms. It takes about six months to go on to next stage, three words
utterances, which are hypotactic structures. Children's syntactic range increases rapidly to stabilize at an average of about four and a half words by the age of 4. By 5 years old most children have acquired the basic rules that generate the basic sentence types of the language. What they cannot easily perform is syntagmatic transformation.

In describing cognitive development, the work of Piaget (1975) has been very influential. Piaget focused on what he called 'schemes' which are syntagmatic structures, which constitute the practical science of the infant, its theory of relations, and hence of the world. Piaget saw a general progression in the kinds of 'schemes' children have. Up to the age 2, is the 'sensorimotor' period: the period is defined by the semiotic modes which he presumes are dominant. During this period the infant's scheme passes from synchronic to diachronic and concepts, such as the notion of the object are acquired. The next phase is called "pre-operational" by Piaget. Again it is defined by the semiotic mode that distinguishes it. It is the power of representational thinking which enables the emergence of complex dichronic structures, since it allows a representation to stand for an original structure which is no longer present. This is also the pre-condition for development of modality, because it is now possible to produce a range of deliberately false representations: lies, fantasies, games. This stage coincides with the acquisition of the basic forces of verbal language.
The next stage, 'concrete-operational', begins at about 5 years old. During this stage the child acquires a number of intellectual capacities that are in effect transformational operations, equivalent to such operations as the passive transformation in language. Over this period children rapidly accumulate transformational operations, some later than others. By the start of adolescence (about 12), children are ready to move on to the fourth stage, 'formal operational'. This stage allows more powerful transformations: transformations of transformations, multiple successive transformations, the abstract, hypothetical logical thought. Piaget's major contribution has been to the study of syntagmatic structures in their evolution and transformation, with a less consistent focus on the development of paradigmatic structures. Two more theories are useful to our consideration of the development of perception and thought because the basis distinguishes the scientist.

Piaget's major contribution has been to the study of syntagmatic structures in their evolution and transformation, with a less consistent focus on the development of paradigmatic structures. Two more theories are useful to our consideration of the development of perception and thought because the basis of one's work is visual, the other social. First Witkin et al. (1962) distinguished between what he called 'field-dependent' and 'field-independent' perception. A person with the field-dependent perception is less able to decompose and rearrange a visual syntagm, to focus on particular elements or recreate new wholes from their parts. That is, such a person tends not to organize the field in such a way as to allow both integration and differentiation (lack of hypotactic
structuring), and does not, therefore, have transformational facility. Witkin's later work (Witkin, et. al. 1977), suggests that adults who are field-dependent have many features of what Piaget called ego-centrism, and they also tend to have dogmatic, authoritarian views.

Berstein (1971), has developed a similar case about language and perception. He distinguished between object-oriented perception and structure-oriented perception. Since middle-class children are socialized into elaborated code language, structure-oriented perception and negotiable role relationships, Berstein argues they have access to sources of power that are closed to those without them. As with language, and cognition, so with social structures: the child's growing capacities for perceiving and operating on structures are confronted with complex hypotactic structures of the adult world. Such abstract forms as class consciousness or national consciousness are only possible in terms of these broad hypotactic structures, and the child's consciousness initially cannot contain them. Since the smaller-scale structures are still highly functional— even adults are usually members of family groups—it is likely that these structures, like L-forms of language survive strongly into adulthood, coexisting with hypotactic structures and related to these in a variety of ways, ranging from complementarity to antagonism.
FACTORS EFFECTING TV VIEWING

FAMILY:

Favourable cognitive development and social development have been associated with the predictability and regularity of home environments, that is, with homes where things have their time and place—where meals, bed times and other routines are regular and where the child has a place for her belongings, a safe place in which to play and a quiet place to study (Bradley and Caldwell, 1976). High levels of noise and stimulation from which the child cannot escape adversely affects cognitive development. If the home is noisy, small and overcrowded, with the TV on most of the time and with too much stimulation from family members or visitors, the cognitive level of the child may be depressed. Such environments are associated not with poor performance on standardized tests of intellectual development in infants and young children but with lower teacher ratings of creativity and lower spelling and language achievement test scores in school age children (Heft, 1977; Michelson, 1968). Noisy, disorganised homes lead to less efficient information processing and less focused attention in children (Heft, 1977). The availability of some kind of stimulus shelter, such as a quiet situation or room to which children can escape, is a good predictor of positive cognitive development in children (Wachs and Gruen, 1982). TV can be thought of as an environmental organizing event whose availability can affect children through altering social interaction patterns among family members (Parke, 1978).
What happens to family relations when television becomes a member of the household? TV increases the amount of time families spend together viewing TV but decreases the amount of time families spend in non-TV-related joint family activities or with friends, relatives, and neighbours (Belson, 1959; Lyle, 1971; Maccoby, 1951; Robinson, 1971). Moreover although the family may gather around the TV set, they are isolated and have less conversation and less interaction as they attend to programmes (International Institution of Mental Health, 1952). In addition, TV is often used in ways that intentionally reduce family interaction. A survey (Steiner, 1963) found that one-third of parents rated "baby sitting as one of the main advantages of TV". It has been found that in crowded home situations, families who spend a great deal of time in TV viewing report a high level of family tension (Rosenblatt and Cunningham, 1976). This was not found in uncrowded home situations. Although these results could be interpreted to mean that TV viewing may increase family tension, it could also mean that TV viewing serves as a tension-control technique in crowded households. Stressed families may avoid fighting by focusing on the TV set instead of each other. Some support for this is found in reports that TV break downs are associated with increased tension levels and conflict in families (Steiner, 1962) When the TV goes off, the fights come on.

The family roles of mothers and fathers are provided consistent evidence that in contrast to their earlier counterparts, modern TV mothers are frequently seen outside the home (Cantor, 1991; Lichter, 1988; Moore, 1992;
Pingree and Thompson, 1990). It is unclear, however, whether roles inside the family have altered as well. Although Cantor (1991) has reported that contemporary fathers often are involved in traditionally female tasks, such as meal-preparation, and also has concluded that both spousal and parent-child relations are characterized by relative equality and indistinct role requirements, other studies offer at least indirect evidence that modern TV family life and family relations continue to be portrayed in fairly conventional ways. Not only are wives more likely to seek information and husbands are likely to provide information, regardless of family type (Skill, Wallace and Cassata, 1990), but mothers are commonly expressive—that is, they are nurturing and supportive—whereas fathers are more usually engaged in instrumental activities, such as those involved in problem-solving (Dail and Way, 1985; Shaner, 1982). Similarly, some researchers have reported that in parent-child relations on TV, children typically conform to parental authority (Skill and Wallace, 1990), and are more likely than parents to seek support and attention (Shaner, 1982), and parents are more likely to command and provide reassurance (Greenberg, 1980) again suggesting a conventional family model.

Single parents, however, may not have the resources to fulfill both sets of needs as well as two parents can. Smaller and Youniss (1985) argue that divorce disrupts the coordinated division to parental labour, and mothers or fathers with sole custody of their children have difficulty keeping up with the family’s financial needs while also finding time to discuss emotional issues.
and daily concerns with their children. For all children, the media may provide an alternative source for instrumental or expressive need fulfilment. When the instrumental leader of the family is absent, children must turn to other sources through which they can learn the values and priorities of society. TV and radio may become those sources. Or, when single mothers take on the instrumental role and are forced to sacrifice attention to expressive functions within the family, adolescents may be more likely to use media for mood management or for models of family interaction. Brown, et. al (1990), found adolescents with working mothers and/or absent fathers would spend more time with media. Lack of access to parents (mother was employed or no father was in the home) generally increased the time adolescents spend with radio and TV. Coviewing was higher among parents who believe more in TV power to influence (Dorr, Aimme, Kvaric, Peter and Double Day, Catherine, 1989). Children of socio-oriented families had viewing patterns more in direction of their parents. Parents with greatest experience of TV evaluated TV as less exciting, less interesting and less important (Murray, John, Kippax Susan, 1977).

SEX

Brown, et. al. (1990), reported 746 white males, 699 white females, 300 Black males and 311 black females (all aged 12-14 years) completed a questionnaire to assess personality characteristics and media use, and found that blacks and girls spent more time with TV and radio than whites and boys; TV use declined with age, while radio use increased. Lyle and Hoffman (1972)
found that 12 and 16 yrs. old girls watched TV and listened to radio more than boys of their age did. Mcleod and Brown (1976), however, found no difference in TV viewing time among 12 and 13 yrs. old in their study. Older girls (15-16 yrs.) watched TV much less than any other group. Stroman (1986) first speculated that girls watched more TV than boys, but on analysis it was found that boys watched more TV than girls.

PERSONALITY

Children who for one reason or another are socially insecure, or who do not have satisfactory relationships with their families or with other children of similar age, are likely to be heavy users of television (Schramm, Lyle, Parker, 1961). For them it appears to serve as a kind of retreat, a haven from some of the frustration of real life. High viewing levels in children are associated with conflicts and maladjustment between children and parents, and in particular the kinds of conflict, perhaps more common in the US than in Britain, caused by the parents setting higher levels of aspiration for their children than the children themselves accept. In general young people, who during adolescence are relatively light viewers of television and read more than the average tend to put greater emphasis on the use of television as a means of acquiring information than other young viewers. Those who continue during adolescence to spend a great deal of time watching TV are found to use it largely for entertainment. The later group can be characterized as "seekers of fantasy", whereas the
adolescents who spend less time viewing tend to choose activities more closely attuned to reality (Schramm, Lyle, Parker, 1961). In the twelve to fifteen year old range, who were most likely to watch television on their own, and solitary viewing was most common among children from higher social class backgrounds (Wober, 1974).

CHANNELS

Adolescents in homes with rich TV and radio environments spend more time with TV and radio than adolescents in homes with fewer media channels (Brown, et al., 1990). Family preferences for local cable was found 10.9%, satellite TV - 21.37%, Doordarshan - 65.32%. No response was given by 2.41% in a study conducted by Unnikrishnan and Bajpai (1996).

DISTORTION OF REALITY

An American study has provided a systematic examination of the manner in which TV content distorts reality is one important aspect of modern living, that relating to jobs and occupations (Defleur and Defluer, 1967). Previous research had shown that seventeen percent of the jobs depicted on TV were connected with TV work, and a similar proportion of the characters are criminals (Dominick, 1973). The authors points out that systematic and objective information about people occupational status and roles is noticeably lacking from formal school education, and TV, therefore, becomes a potentially important
source of knowledge the children require in order to acquire the knowledge required for making realistic choices concerning their own occupations in adulthood. At present, for many children TV may well provide the richest source of information about roles and occupations in the years preceding their joining the labour market. Children who watched TV more frequently gained higher scores than children who watched infrequently, in test of knowledge about TV contact roles. This was the case for the other job categories. In other words, knowledge of job occupations portrayed on TV, was enhanced by heavy viewing, whereas knowledge of the other job categories was unaffected. Another finding was that children of seven years and over, when asked to order the various jobs in terms of status and prestige, ranked TV contact occupations both more consistently, as measured by degree of agreement, and more similarly to adults, than the other kinds of occupations. The findings of this study show that television provides a more powerful source of knowledge about occupational status than either personal contact or the general culture of the child's neighbourhood.

The evidence indicates that TV projects to children a highly distorted view of the world, and does nothing to allay the suspicion that some children may be misled about important aspects of life in the twentieth century. The next question is, Are they actually misled? To what extent are children aware of differences that exist between reality and what they watch on TV? And, what kinds of children are likely to be led astray?
One American report concluded that forty percent of poor black children and thirty percent of poor white children were ardent believers in the realistic nature of TV contents, compared with only fifty percent of the children from white middle-class families. Adolescents and children did not perceive violent programme as being any less than non-violent ones (Libert, Neale, Davidson, 1973), and forty-six percent of the American adolescents agreed with the statement that crime programmes tell about life the way it really is. Delinquent boys and those who were rated as being aggressive were more likely than others to perceive the violence in drama series shown on TV as being realistic.

TV does distort reality and many children do perceive what they see on TV as being closer to real life than it really is. Therefore, we can definitely expect that some children, in particular those for whom heavy exposure to TV is combined with an absence of alternative forms of experience and social interaction, will acquire a distorted understanding of the way things really are. Children do believe that what they see on TV is more accurate copy of reality than it really is. Research into child development has shown that there are a number of less-than-obvious differences between child and adult reasoning, and they contribute to the child’s greater vulnerability to misleading TV contents. Some children are more seriously misled than others, but the majority of children accept some glaring distortions as real. If we accept the notion that the view of
the world which a child acquires constitutes an important component of socialization processes - a basis for attitudes and a guide to actions - we cannot escape the conclusion that children are influenced, sometimes harmfully, by the content of their TV viewing.

**Socialization**

Weigel and Jessor (1973), found individuals in whom psychological involvement with television was rated as being high were found to have patterns of thought and action that were conventional in that they closely conformed to the established norms, traditional majority values and expectations of adult society. Compared with lighter viewers they tended to place more value on academic success. They were also less tolerant of abnormality and deviance, and less critical of the current state of the world. It appeared that their involvement with TV tends to be associated with somewhat rigid authoritarian attitudes, but not with noticeably virtuous patterns of behaviour. Results obtained by Defleur and Defleur, 1967 support those obtained from studies which directly investigate the effects of television upon children in indicating that TV does provide an important agency of socialization for children.