CHAPTER - SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

One aspect of development which is receiving a lot of attention is that of human training and human resources. It is becoming increasingly evident that it is not only the capital and material resources of a society that ultimately determine its economic and social development but the human resources. Without developing and channelising human skills and knowledge, no society can even envisage, leave alone realize its development ideals. A nations’ advancement in any sphere, be it material, economic, political or cultural, hinges on the progress of its people, which involves the harnessing of their energies and their potentialities.

The critical responsibility of performing the task of developing human skill and knowledge in any society falls upon its formal educational system. Without it the appropriate utilization of the potentialities of its people is quite impossible. One can even say that school and teacher constitute one of the primary items in the agenda of a developing country.

While dealing with the issue of formal education and development, one of the questions faced by the planners in the third world societies is regarding the role the mass media can play in augmenting the meagre resources. The main contribution that modern communication can make in the field of education is to reduce the cost per student taught, raise the efficiency of instruction and extend it beyond current facilities. Instruction through media in general is a popular trend and technique in the field of education. Various forms of mass media have been used for this purpose. But television, in particular, is one medium of communication that is cornering a major share in educational endeavours in the present times.
The role of TV in education has been the subject of study since many decades. There have been different views regarding television’s impact on education. One viewpoint postulates that television has a definite positive impact on education. Scholars like Greenhill (1959), Kuppuswamy (1976) and Mohanty (1992) believe that teaching with the help of TV produces better results than teaching through the conventional methods, i.e., by a teacher. The second view contends that television has absolutely no impact on education. Johnson and Harty (1960), Abe (1963) and Woodward (1964) etc., have provided evidence that the conventional teaching methods are better than education through TV. The third viewpoint holds that television is neither better nor worse than a teacher in imparting education. Gordon (1965), Daniels (1959), Shukla and Kumar (1977) etc. have found both the methods of instruction to be equally effective. Moreover, whenever any of these schools tries to present its case with the help of factual data, the opposite group counters it with contrary empirical material. The upshot is that even after forty odd years of the existence of ETV, the issue regarding its utility is still open for debate.

TV has been used for education at the primary, secondary and high school levels; at the college and university levels; and for adult education. Our concern in this study, however, is the role of TV in education at the college and university levels only. We have chosen to focus on college and university because we believe that in development and training of the expert manpower in any society, the role of higher education is more important than that of the primary and secondary school or of adult education.

Television has been utilized for educational purposes in Iran since 1950s. Earlier the educational programmes were broadcast by the privately owned stations but later on this enterprise was taken over by the state. In the initial stages most of the programmes were imported from the west but since 1970 the National Iranian Radio and Television Organization (NIRTO) is producing and broadcasting such
programmes. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution great efforts have been made to tackle the problem of illiteracy through ETV programmes which can reach even the most remote areas. ETV programmes for people from different walks of life are broadcast dealing with a variety of subjects. College and university students, too, receive some programmes dealing with their course curriculum. However, ETV does not seem to have received wide coverage and acceptability which can be seen by the limited number of programmes aimed at the college and university students. As a result there have not been any empirical studies dealing with the examination of the impact of ETV programmes on the academic performance of such students in Iran. This study was undertaken to counter this deficiency, albeit in a modest way.

Keeping the above background in view, this study aimed at (a) the analysis of the demographic, social and economic profile of the students and teachers in a select university in Iran, (b) the collection and analysis of information regarding the attitudes and perceptions of university students and teachers towards education by TV, (c) examination of the effectiveness of TV education programmes among the students in a select university in Iran through a comparison of the performance of B.S. students who have been taught through TV with that of the B.S. students who have studied on their own and those who have received only classroom education and (d) to study the inter-subject differences in the impact of TV programmes on the scholastic achievement of B.S. students in Geography, Geology and English language.

For this study, both library research and field research were undertaken. We made use of a number of libraries and research centres in Iran and India. The field research was carried out in the Islamic Azzad University of Iran in two stages. The first stage involved the preparation and administering of a questionnaire to the students and teachers in our sample which was used to obtain information regarding
the respondents, as well as, regarding their perceptions on the role of TV in education. The second part comprised of the experimental method.

Out of the 416 students of the University Summer Courses in four subjects including Mathematics, Foreign Language (English), Geography and Geology, we selected a sample of 208 through the systematic random sampling procedure. All were administered a questionnaire in order to elicit information regarding their general background and their perceptions about the role of TV in education. Of these, only 156 returned the questionnaires. Similarly, of the 107 teachers in the university, 50 were chosen by systematic random sampling, of which only 34 filled and returned the questionnaires.

Our research revealed that a large proportion (54.5%) of the student respondents were male; 63.5% respondents were single; 78.5% were between 20-30 years of age; 88.2% were urban based; 52.5% were working in different jobs along with their studies, 73% of the employed being primary teachers. We also found that almost 75% of them earn less than 30,000 T. per month, with almost 55% falling in the 20,000-30,000 T category. A majority (73.8%) of the fathers of the students were educated only upto high school and 21.5% were completely illiterate; 76% of the fathers were employed in various occupations like farming, business and government service with almost 80% earning less than 40,000 T. per month. In the case of the mothers it was discovered that almost 58% were educated upto high school while 40% were illiterate; 91.3% of the mothers of the students were housewives.

Findings regarding the teachers showed that 67.65% of teachers taught Art and Literature; 41.2% had an M.S. degree along with which they were also doing their Ph.D.; only 11.75% already had Ph.D. degree; 91.2% of the teachers were male; 85.3% were married; 53.1% were in the age group between 31-40 and all of them had an urban residence. We also learnt that 62% of the teachers' fathers had
studied upto high school level while 18.7% were illiterate; only 30% or so of the
fathers were employed, the rest falling either in the retired, re-employed and
unemployed categories and most (82.3%) earned less than 40,000 T. per month. In
the case of their mothers, too, we found that 58% had less than high school education,
39% were illiterate and all were housewives with no income.

Since our primary concern was to explore the relevance of TV education
programmes at the college and university level, we examined the perceptions of
both students and teachers regarding the role of TV in education. We began by
asking the respondents which media were used by them. In the case of both students
and teachers TV was found to be the mass media which is most popular, followed
by radio. When asked how many hours were spent on the various media, we
discovered that many students watch TV for 3-4 hours daily while they listen to the
radio for less than 2 hours every day. However, the TV viewers among teachers
spend less than two hours per day on it. Both the students and teachers watch TV
mainly for obtaining the world news, entertainment and for educational purposes,
although the proportion of students watching TV for the latter two reasons is higher
while the proportion of teachers watching TV for world news is higher.
Understandably, a much larger proportion of students watches direct educational
programmes on TV as compared to the teachers.

In the next segment the students and teachers were asked about the preferred
method of study and teaching, respectively. The data show that books and pamphlets
are the most popular methods of study among students. A similar response came
from the teachers most of whom preferred to teach with the help of books and
pamphlets. When asked whether they considered TV an important tool for teaching,
most teachers replied in the affirmative, although a fair number of students were
undecided about this issue. However, the notable thing is that very few students
and no teacher felt that ETV was completely unimportant. Nevertheless, both students
and teachers perceived the extent of TV's influence on teaching as marginal.

When asked whether TV should be used for teaching with or without the teacher, almost all the respondents (students and teachers) felt that TV is useful only as an additional tool for teaching and could never replace the teacher. Both students and teachers consider 2-4 hours as the ideal time for education by TV.

Since, the Malayear University has summer courses in Mathematics, Geology, Languages and Geography, we asked our respondents regarding the subject they felt that would benefit the most from ETV. The largest proportion (44%) of the students felt that ETV is most useful for languages. The rest were almost evenly divided in terms of their preference for the other three subjects as 20.4% felt that Geology would benefit the most from ETV, 18.2% favoured Geography and 17.4% felt that Mathematics could be taught most successfully through TV programmes. Teachers, however, felt that Geology (38.2%), gained the most from ETV, 26.5% mentioned Languages, 20.6% preferred Geography and only 14.7% felt that Mathematics could be successfully taught through ETV.

Finally, when asked directly whether or not TV could be a substitute for teacher, intriguing results emerged. A large proportion (44.3%) of students replied in the negative while understandably as many as 61.8% teachers felt the same way. Not a single teacher felt that TV could replace a teacher while 6.7% students did offer this view. But the notable thing is that as many as 49% students and even more interestingly, 38.2% teachers were undecided on this issue. This is probably so because most students and to some extent teachers have not really given this issue a thought. Moreover, they are by and large unexposed to teaching by television. Hence their uncertainty.

In order to determine the impact of education by ETV programmes on students' scholastic achievements, we conducted an experiment on the B.S. students of the
Islamic Azzad University. The experiment was conducted on students of three subjects, namely, Geography, Geology and English language, since the Mathematics students were unavailable to us as they had completed their courses and left for home. Forty four students from Geography, 30 from Geology and 30 from English Language were selected by proportional stratified sampling. Each of these subject groups was further divided into two groups (through systematic random sampling) which were our Experimental (TV) and Control (Teacher) Groups respectively. Thus, we had six groups in all, three Experimental and three Control Groups.

All the students in the six groups were given a Pre-test for which they had to study on their own. The two hour long test was designed by a specialist teacher in each subject and its purpose was to ascertain their educational level in Geography, Geology and English language. Results of the Pre-test showed that the knowledge level of students of all three subjects was almost similar.

The two types of groups - Experimental and Control - were then taught some lessons in their respective subjects. The Control Groups were taught by teachers while the Experimental Groups were taught the same thing by TV (video tape). The six groups were again given tests (Post-test) in their respective subjects on the same topics.

The experiment produced the following results in the three subjects - Geology, Geography and English language. In all three subjects the students scored much higher after their ETV lessons than they had when they studied from the books on their own. They performed better in English as compared to Geography and Geology, implying that the unavailability of high quality reading material in English made ETV programmes necessary, as well as, beneficial for Iranian students.

When the performance of the students taught by ETV lessons and by teachers were compared it was observed that in the subject of Geology, teaching by TV was
slightly more effective than instruction by teacher. One reason for the success of ETV programme in Geology can be that this subject offers more opportunities for education by TV, as it makes use of a lot of pictorial material which has a better chance of looking attractive on TV. The attractive visuals may, thus, have provided stimulation for the students who watched ETV programmes in Geology. This result has been supported by many others studies like Greenhill's (1959) study in the Miami University and Macomber and Siegel's (Rossi and Biddle, 1962) studies, also in Miami. Further, in our study, in Geography as in English language, teaching by teacher was found to be better than teaching by TV. But, the difference between the mean scores of teaching by TV and teacher in Geography was less than that found in the English language (DG = 12.0455 < DL = 19.2833). This shows that TV has more impact on the teaching of Geography than English language.

This could possibly be because language teaching is different from other subjects and primarily involves development of language behaviour on the part of the learner which requires personal contact and presence of the instructor. Also, since English language is the second language for students in most developing nations, they have problem comprehending and pronouncing the words of this alien language. Here again, the presence of teacher is imperative. Thus, it is clear that TV has impact in education but the impact varies in different subjects depending upon the nature, content and requirements of the subject concerned.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study have been divided into two distinctly separate sections, one presenting the opinions and perceptions of the university teachers and B.S. students along with relevant background data on them and the other presenting the difference in the scholastic achievements of the students taught by teacher and by television. It can be seen quite clearly that the two sets of outcomes
by and large support each other, as the results of the experiments provide us with conclusions quite similar to those which the data on our respondents’ perceptions furnishes us with regard to the impact of ETV on education.

The main findings of the study on the B.S. students have highlighted favourable results towards the positive influence of the ETV. Till now the educational decision makers and authorities of educational institutions have been using audiovisual media only as tools of exhibition and entertainment. It is however, becoming clear that these can be used to expand education as well. It is also apparent that the Experimental Groups taught by TV have shown superior mean achievement score in one subject (Geology) and not in the other two (Geography and English language). Thus, the degree of ETV’s impact in education depends on the nature of subject and its course content.

Another major point on which our data on the perceptions of our respondents and the experiment coincides is regarding the mutually complementary role of TV and the other tools of instruction. An educational medium can nowhere be used effectively alone to meet society’s priority needs. When one medium is used in response to a serious problem, we find it always being used in combination with other learning resources, such as, monitors and discussion groups, special reading materials and experiments, correspondence work and the like. In short, any educational medium must be seen as a component of teaching and learning system which works best when all the components of the system are well integrated and balanced. Thus, when television is used as a teaching tool we must look at it as an additional instrument which helps augmentation of education.

Once we have established that television is here to stay as a tool for teaching, both our respondents and ourselves feel that there is a need to streamline the production and broadcasting of the ETV programmes. Therefore, certain things have to be kept in mind while propogating and expanding the use of ETV in education.
Suggestions

First, the method of education by videotape or ETV programme is of greater utility in rural areas or for districts of the country that can not provide teachers and face to face education. For this purpose there is need to establish, prepare, repair and expand the audio-visual halls in educational centres at all levels, namely, primary, secondary, high school, college and university and adult education.

Secondly, education by TV should continue for the whole semester or annual education year and at least two subjects should be taught with the help of TV programmes during a week, in order to maintain the impact of TV in education.

Thirdly, it is necessary to have systematic and similar programmes all over the country. If it is not possible to use short circuit TV it will be better to prepare technical audio-visual facilities and use educational video tapes for teaching.

Fourthly, it should be possible to combine smaller classes and at least 100 students should be taught in an audio-visual hall to extract maximum advantage from time, facilities and manpower. It is clear that all these will be feasible only if we have suitable conditions including sound, picture system, air conditioning and video tape content etc.

Fifthly, a special organization should be responsible for preparing and producing educational programmes using educational experts and experienced TV producers and directors. Its job should be to supervise the quantity and quality of video tape contents. Literacy Movement Organization, Ministry of Education or Ministry of Culture and Higher Education could accept this responsibility.

Sixthly, different subjects require different kind of treatment. Hence the nature and requirements of each subject must be kept in view while preparing ETV lessons.
Seventhly, TV programmes on education should be able to hold the interest of the students. For that purpose there is need to invite experienced experts in different subjects including education and teaching who, with the cooperation of TV producers and directors, graphic experts and animators can produce high quality educational films. ETV programmes must be appealing, as well as, engrossing and should create motivation in viewers and attract them, because insipid and dull educational programmes will not be successful and will not provide good results in education.

Finally, it must be realised that ETV is only an instrument to help education and should not be seen as a competitor and an alternative to teachers. In fact, the presence of an experienced teacher in an audio-visual hall is imperative to solve probable problems of students during instruction by the ETV programmes.

Thus, we would like to conclude by re-iterating that instruction through electronic media, especially television, is undoubtedly a valuable and profitable trend in the field of education and by bearing in mind the above suggestions, the education system in Iran and other such developing nations, can make the best use of this ubiquitous and far-reaching medium as a supplement to the conventional classroom teaching.