

The Reach of Television: Viewing Habits and Patterns in Kerala

¹C. Karthika, ²P.P. Vijayalakshmi and ³Maya L. Pai

¹Dept of Visual Media & Communication,
Amrita School of Arts & Sciences, Kochi,
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.

karthiac839@gmail.com

²Dept of English & Languages,
Amrita School of Arts & Sciences, Kochi,
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.

drppvijayalakshmi@gmail.com

³Dept of Computer Science & IT,
Amrita School of Arts & Sciences, Kochi,
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.

mayalpai@gmail.com

Abstract

Today, television has emerged as the major source of entertainment and learning in our country. All kinds of television programs, especially the serials, film clipping, news and news based programmes, sports and cartoons, affect people irrespective of gender, age and other demographic variables. The study was conducted to throw light towards various television viewing habits among the Malayali audience. . A Sample of 360 respondents from four districts of Kerala were selected for analysis. Structured Questionnaires were distributed to them and the responses were collected. Chi- square test is used to analyze the collected data. The study also highlighted the TV program preferences among the viewers.

Key Words:TV Viewing habits, progamme preferences, mass media, audience, media Effect, prime time Pressure, tv viewing patterns, gender

1. Introduction

“Television is a medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time, and yet remain lonesome” T. S. Eliot

The mass media is a tool of communication that facilitates dissemination or transmission of information and entertainment to a large number of consumers. They are highly varied in content and in forms and comprise a very wide range of activities which could affect our society. They manufacture and distribute information and related messages massively. They are only mediators of the messages. However, Marshal McLuhan, the media prophet, proclaimed that “the medium is message” (McLuhan,1964). According to him media are technologies; they are also messages and massages. They can also be looked at as cultural or entertainment industries. Cinema, radio, television, cable, and the press are recognized as “mass media”. But nowadays, the term also includes recent technologies [sometimes termed as “new media”] such as smart phones, laptops, tablets and computer with highspeed internet as mass media.

Wilber Schramm said that mass medium is a group organized for distributing the same message, at about the same time, to large numbers of people. (Schramm, 1960). But the drawback of this definition is that it excludes traditional media, group media, interpersonal communication such as grapevine, education, and preaching, where communication is not “mediated” by a device. Further, the term “mass” suggests that the experience delivered by modern media are mass and they transmit mass culture instead of being individualistic. The term “mass” also proposes that the interaction with media is homogenous, inactive and unquestioning.

Media Audience

The study of media has always proceeded with certain assumptions, certain paradigms and models, about time and space (Hay,2001). The term “Media Audience” can be defined as per one “s perspective of the role of communication in society. Sociologists define it as a “conventional gathering”. Beyond that it is a collectivity of persons who use media or their components for any purpose (Kumar,2010). However, this can’t be found at one place or even at a particular time.

The play theory by William Stephenson focused on how we use media for any kind of gratification and also how media changes our lives according to its contents.

The composition of groups and there is sometimes predictable, and sometimes unpredictable. The value and nature of the response is also unfamiliar (Kumar, 2010). The content of the media or the genres or components of the media are a part of the socio-cultural experience of the audience. Audience read or comprehend the message by the medium in terms of these experience.

Media effects are associated with the needs and activities of the audience. They use media to live out their imaginary lives and to get other gratifications, or even to inform and educate themselves about the world and its people (Katz,1974) . It is also assumed that audiences made supplementary and compensatory uses of the media (Kumar,2010)

Television in India

Early experiments in television were made in United States and Europe during 1920's. The television made its first appearance in US and made its advent to India in 1959. In 1959 Philips [India] offered transmitter to the Government at a reduced rate. Government accepted the offer with the aim of using it on an experimental basis (Bela, 1988). With a UNESCO grant and a US offer of some equipment, the Delhi Television Centre went on air on September 15, 1959. Entertainment and information programmes were introduced from 1965, in addition to the social education.

The real breakthrough in the history of Indian television came through the success of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment [SITE] in 1975, which brought to India international prestige and the country appeared ready for satellite television.

The media scenario in Kerala witnessed a huge change with the advent of television. The age of television blossomed in Kerala with the onset of Doordarshan, the official television channel of the government of India, which began broadcasting on 1 January 1985. Simultaneously Malayalam news telecast was started.

The popularity of TV increased with the launch of private cable television channels. The first private Television channel of the state, Asianet by Asianet Communications Ltd. started the telecast of Malayalam programmes on 30th August 1993. Till date, Keralites had only one Malayalam channel and one news bulletin. But Asianet started more and more programmes and more news bulletins. The channel enjoyed a non-rival situation in private channel industry for around a decade.

Television and Audience

Television has emerged today as the most powerful of all mass media and the most versatile among them. In developed and developing countries, it is noticed that an addiction to TV is growing.

Television is an institutionalized medium. It acts as a source of information for creating awareness about the innovations (Inder, Kaur& Singh,2015).

People are ardently engaged by television; they feel television gratifies personal identity needs like legitimization of the values or insights. They often feel television connects them to the rest of the world through an imaginary community by showering knowledge on the happenings of other places and

often offering common topics to discuss every day. They often act as a critical television viewer who laugh at the conventions, speculate about the real lives of the actors, and decode multifaceted advertisements intended to tease them (Liebes&Katz, 1995).

The unique feature of this small screen is perhaps its capacity to serve the function of the cinema, theatre, newspapers, sports arena and concert hall all rolled into one. In fact, it is assumed that, with the advent of TV, cinema attendance, radio listening and the reading of books have decreased among addicted viewers. Though considered as a medium for information and entertainment, it provides more entertainment and less information. (Blakley, 2001).

The essence of this popular medium is entertainment. It is watched as a part of relaxation and is switched on after work and has to compete for attention with everything else that happens at home, from the call of dinner to the ring of the telephone.

People are worried because TV invaded the home which enjoyed a certain autonomy and sanctity in the past. What purpose does TV serve? This question was raised in India and in other countries time and again. The dispute is about having but also about the quality of content. People "s life is a beautiful blend of the useful and the beautiful. There is no difference h between craft and art, the entertainer and the entertained, and work and play. Television in India has turned into a major source of "passive forms of recreation", and also became a mechanism of "fantasy escapes from life".

Research Questions

- Who are watching more Television more?
- What kind of programmes are watched more by the audience?
- Do they experience any kind or confusion of discomfort during prime time?

Objectives

- To find out the difference in time allotted for watching Television
- To find out what type of Television programmes are preferred
- To find out whether audience experience prime time pressure during prime time

Hypotheses

- There is a significant difference in time allotted for TV viewing gender wise, age wise and education wise
- There is a significant difference in Television programme preference gender wise, age wise and education wise
- Audience experience a kind of "prime time pressure" during the peak hours.

2. Review of Literature

There have been a plenty of studies done in India and abroad on television with special reference to its viewers. The studies come up with different perspectives and results on changing media scenario.

According to John in today's world technologies offer a big deal for everyone. Our culture is swamped by a digital tsunami (Tierney, 1997).

The supreme significance of Television and other media in our society can hardly be over emphasized. The role of media has become more and more universal and has become an integral part of the society. Knowingly or unknowingly media plays a very influential role in shaping our thought processes and attitudinal patterns (Sinha, 2013).

David Morley asserts that the need to separate the study of "what" of television viewing, the way in which the television content is manufactured and responded to has been transformed to the "how" of the television viewing and to the practice of viewing it (Morley, 1986).

In the book "*Four arguments for the elimination of Television*" by Jerry Mander, points out four arguments that he thinks are the reason for eliminating the idiot box from our living rooms: the mediation of experience, the colonization of experience, effects of Television on human beings and the inherent biases of television (Mander, 1977).

A research study on Television Viewing Habits of youngsters in Punjab revealed that most of the young Indians watch television most often and spend about 3-5 hours daily. (Inder, Kaur & Singh, 2015).

R. Pugalendhi conducted a research on Television Programme Popularity among Chennai Urban Women and found that the TV viewing habit of homemakers and workingwomen are similar. But the content of the TV programmes have a great influence on the minds of women as they are narrowminded by what they watch (Pugalendi, 2015).

"*Television- Critical Methods and Applications*" by Jeremy Butter makes the connection between the concepts and specific practices of television that together produce an impact. He explains the ways in which camera style, lighting, set design, editing, and sound can be combined to produce meanings that viewers take away from their television experience (Butter, 2011).

"Television in India" by R.N. Acharya, enquires into the mass communication, specially the emergence of television as the most powerful mass media in recent years. He states that the expansion of television network has been hazardous and there exists a wide gap between hardware and software. It has the potential of becoming a sensitive mass medium by fulfilling the goals providing a

“people-oriented, problem-oriented and development-oriented “television, especially in Indian context. This potential cannot be achieved without a sound television policy based on integrated communication and information perspective. The aim of the study is to formulate such a framework (Acharya, 1987)(Ponsindhu, 2017).

In the study “*Children’s Attention: The case of Television viewing*” carried out by Robert Krull and William Husson, children “s viewing is introduced on the basis of studies done earlier on children’s selective attention to complex visual stimuli and their behavior in front of TV sets. Its aim is to explain complicated patterns of attention without requiring abilities beyond the intellectual capacities of children (Krull &Husson, 1979).

The study “*Media Policy, Audiences, and Social Demand : Research at the Interface of Policy Studies and Audience Studies, Television and New Media*” asserts that the media usage is both public and private. It is organized by both social and political institutions and the individuals who live them. (Raboy, et al., 2001).

The Impact of TV on viewers by Dr. Andal Narayanan says that Television all over the globe has meant different things to different people. It has been called “opium of the masses”, “the biggest aspidistra in the world”, etc. The advent of TV in India has understandably raised intriguing questions on its timeliness, usefulness, suitability, potential, the promises it holds for the future and its inherent perils. Its effects on the viewers are kaleidoscopic and this subject has been debatable everywhere (Narayanan, 1987),(Ponsindhu, 2014).

3. Significance of the Study

Television has an astonishing skill to draw our attention. It has become the most preferred leisure time pursuit in most of developed world with people giving it increased time with each passing year. (McDonald, 2004). We started to earmark much of our time to think about how a particular character in a soap opera would react in a particular situation. We often find some people who weep and cry, when their favourite contestant gets eliminated from a reality show. Some people forgot to change a news channel when a breaking news scroll on. But their responses are only expressed in living rooms and are not that empathetic to the exterior society. Their responses to the real-life incidences in the society is less humane. The television content in the media has narcotic attributes [narcotic dysfunction theory], becoming an addictive force and conceptualizing everything as commodities. (Amaresh, 2017)

But a relevant question to be raised is Who are watching more Television regularly? What kind of programmes are watched more by the audience? Do they experience any kind or confusion of discomfort during prime time?

This study finds answers to such questions and tries to get a rough sketch about the viewership pattern of television programmes, with special reference to Kerala.

The study requires a questionnaire survey. The survey will be helpful to find out difference in time allotted for watching Television programmes, to find out what type of programmes are preferred more on the basis of demographic factors and to find out what kind of gratification viewers achieve while watching Television programmes.(Salim, 2017)

4. Limitations

The study required an interstate survey for generalizing the topic. But there were time and economic constraints for the same.

5. Methodology

To research is to get nearer to truth, to understand reality. Questionnaire Survey is the methodology used in this study since the research aims to find out the “The Reach of Television: Viewing Habits and Patterns in Kerala”. A structured questionnaire is given to the 1000 audience from the districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam, Kochi and Kannur and is asked to fill it out. Purposive sampling is opted to collect the relevant data. Chi square test is the method used for the hypotheses testing. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 is used for analysis. (Gnanavel, 2017)

6. Analysis of Data Received from Questionnaire

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant difference in time allotted for TV viewing gender wise, age wise and education wise.

For testing this hypothesis, we use Chi square test

Gender Wise Comparison

Chi-square test is used to analyze the available date. The result is as follow:

Table 1

Test Statistics			
	TV Time	Male	Female
Chi-Square	47.822 ^a	.000 ^b	.000 ^b
df	3	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	1.000	1.000

The Table 1 above shows that Chi square value of 47.822 [df(degrees of freedom) =4, N(Total Number)=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 4 degree of freedom, showing that there is a significant difference in time allotted for

Television viewing between male and female.

In the study it is proved that women spend more time for watching Television. This may be because Television is the most preferable entertainment medium for women who spend more time at home. Men have several outdoor activities and have lesser time to watch television.

Age Wise Comparison

Table 2

Test Statistics		
	TV Time	Age
Chi-Square	47.822 ^a	17.778 ^b
df	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001

The Table 2 above shows that Chi square value of 47.822 [df(degree of freedom) =3, N=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 3 degree of freedom and Chi square value of 17.778[df= 4, N= 1000], p<.05, is significant at 4 degree of freedom, prove that there is significant difference in time allotted for Television viewing age wise.

More than half of the age group ‘above 60’ allot more than 4 hours for television viewing. People ‘above 60’ are usually retired hands and may not have expertise in newer technology. Hence, we can say that for them tv watching is the main source of entertainment.

It is found that television is the most preferred recreation medium for children under the age of fifteen. They also find time to discuss about the programme they watched with the peer groups at schools and tuition centers. This has an impact on their studies also.

Education Wise Comparison

Table 3

Test Statistics		
	TV Time	Education
Chi-Square	47.822 ^a	82.578 ^a
df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

The Table 3 shows that Chi square value of 47.822 [df(degree of freedom) =3, N=1000], p<0.5 is significant at 3 degree of freedom and Chi Square value of 82.578 [df= 3, N=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 3 degree of freedom, prove that there is significant difference in time allotted for Television viewing education wise. This indicates that education is a determining factor in Television viewing.

It is seen that the respondents under the education category up to Plus two spend more time for watching television. Interestingly, the time allotted for television.

From the above results we can conclude that there is a significant difference in time allotted for TV viewing depending on the demographic variables.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference in Television programme preference gender wise, age wise and education wise

For testing this hypothesis, we use Chi square test

Gender Wise Comparison

Table 4

Test Statistics			
	Male	Female	Favouriteprogramme
Chi-Square	.000 ^a	.000 ^a	258.528 ^b
df	1	1	6
Asymp. Sig.	1.000	1.000	.000

The Table 4 shows that Chi square value 258.528 [df(degree of freedom) =6, N=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 6 degree of freedom, showing that there is significant difference in programme preference between male and female.

It is interesting that no female respondent who participated in the survey showed interest in watching news and news based programmes whereas half of the total number of male respondents prefer watching news. This indicates that programme preference is also dependent on gender.

Age Wise Comparison

Table 5

Test Statistics		
	Favouriteprogramme	Age
Chi-Square	258.528 ^a	17.778 ^b
df	6	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001

The table 5 shows that Chi square value of 258.528 [df(degree of freedom) =6, N=360], p<0.05 is significant at 6 degree of freedom and Chi square value of 17.778[df= 4, N= 1000], p<.05, is significant at 4 degree of freedom, prove that there is significant difference in programme preference age wise.

TV serial is the most preferred programme among the age groups ‘below 15’, ‘46-60’ and ‘61 and above’. For the age group 16-30 Music reality shows are mostly watched. Sports is only preferred by the age group ‘below 15’. Age group ‘31-45’ and ‘61above’ like to watch News and news based programmes. Hence, we can conclude that age is also a factor that affects programme preference.

Education Wise Comparison

Table 6

Test Statistics		
	favpgm	Education
Chi-Square	258.528 ^a	82.578 ^b
df	6	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

The Table 6 shows that Chi square value of 47.82258.528 [df(degree of freedom) =6, N=1000], p<0.5 is significant at 6 degree of freedom and Chi Square value of 82.578 [df= 3, N=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 3 degree of freedom, prove that there is significant difference in programme preference education wise. This indicates that education is a determining factor in programme preference.

Respondents having educational qualification PG and above prefer news and news based programmes more whereas those who are less educated, i.e. up to Plus Two, prefer entertainment programmes more.

From the all above results we can conclude that there is a significant difference in Television programme preference depending on the demographic factors

Hypothesis 3

Audience experience a kind of “prime time pressure” during the peak hours.

Table 7

Test Statistics			
	Primetime	Female	Male
Chi-Square	352.044 ^a	.000 ^a	.000 ^a
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	1.000	1.000

Prime time pressure is a kind of discomfort and confusion which people experience during the prime time due to excess flow of programmes. The table 7 shows that Chi square value 352.044 [df(degree of freedom) =1, N=1000], p<0.05 is significant at 1 degree of freedom, showing that viewers do experience a kind of pressure during the prime time irrespective of gender or age or education.

They may face confusion in selecting the channel or programme when more than one favourite programmes are telecasted at a time. They will surf from one channel to another in search of the desired programme. In short, most of the viewers do not watch a complete film or programme at a time. The general tendency of human beings to search for better ones always. This is same in the case of television viewing which will end up in the experiencing of “**Prime Time Pressure**”.

7. Conclusion

The importance of media, especially television, in our society can never be ignored. It has become an integral part of the society. They cater a wide buffet of programmes. Hence it is important to understand the difference in time allotted and programme preference according to the demographic variables.

As India is moving forward with technology, more and more entertainment avenues are open. Media convergence brings all types of media in single platform. Even then, Television is still the major source of recreation for the majority of the population.

From the results we received, it is proved that the television viewing and programme preference are affected by demographic variables like gender, age and education. Although there are chances of variation in personal choices, from the above received results we can come to a generalization. The results show that TV serials in all languages are most preferred expect for the youth (age group 16-30) who prefer music and reality shows more.

We are provided with wide varieties of programmes through different languages. Most of these are almost same in content or format. This will lead us to experience a kind of prime-time pressure everyday. Selecting one programme or sticking on one is always difficult for us. This will bring a sort of discomfort or confusion. The effects of prime-time pressure are also an important matter to be studied. It is believed that this pressure will create a lot of mental turbulence to people unknowingly. We can say that prime time pressure is an aftermath of our problem or inefficiency in decision making. It is found that the continuous exposure to television especially during the prime time creates a kind of fatigue or lethargy among the viewers.

The study has brought to the notice of this investigator, the alarming rise in television viewing by children under the age of 15. Further, it also points to the absolute need for a serious study of the effects on the physical health, mental ability and behavioral aspects of children and the relevant steps that have to be taken to rectify the situation.

References

- [1] McLuhan M., *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, American Quarterly 16(4) (1964).
- [2] Schramm W., *Mass communications; a book of readings*. selected and edited by Wilbur Schramm, Urbana, University of Illinois Press(1960).
- [3] Hay J., *Locating Televisual, Television and New Media*, Sage Publication (2001).

- [4] Kumar K.J., Mass communication in India, Ahmedabad: Jaico (2010).
- [5] Katz E., Blumler J. G., Gurevitch M., Utilization of Communication by the Individual, CA and London: Sage Publications (1974).
- [6] Ody B., The Commercialization of Indian Television, ICA conference, New Orleans(1988).
- [7] Inder Amar Singh, Kaur Manpreet, Singh Sukhwinder Kharoud, A study of TV Viewership Behaviour Among Youngsters In Punjab, International Journal of Business Management and Scientific Research 6 (2015).
- [8] Liebes T., Katz E., Patterns of involvement in television fiction: A comparative analysis, European Journal of Communication (1986), 151-172.
- [9] Blakley J., Entertainment Goes Global: Mass Culture in a Transforming World, Norman Learn Centre (2011).
- [10] Tierney J., Technology Makes us better; Our Oldest Computer, Upgraded, The Newyork Times (1997).
- [11] Sinha S., A Study of Viewership Preference Patterns of News Channels with Special Reference to Zee News, International Journal of Education and Psychological Research 2(2) (2013), 79-85.
- [12] Morley D., Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure, London: Comedia (1986).
- [13] Mander J., Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, Goa: Other India Press (1977).
- [14] Pugalendi R., A Study on the Television Programmes Popularity among Chennai Urban Women, International Journal of Humanities And Social Science 20(2) (2015).
- [15] Butter J., Television-Critical Methods and Applications, London :Routledge Communication Series (2011).
- [16] Acharya R.N., Television In India, New Delhi:Manas Publication(1987).
- [17] Krull R., Husson W., Children's Attention: The case of Television viewing. London: Routledge Communication Series (1979).
- [18] Raboy M., Abramson B.D., Proulx S., Welters R., Media Policy, Audiences, and Social Demand : Research at the Interface of Policy Studies and Audience Studies, Television and New Media, Sage Publication (2001).

- [19] Narayanan A., The Impact of TV on Viewers. Bombay: Soumya Publications (1987).
- [20] McDonald R., Television, materialism and culture: An exploration of imported media and its implications for GNH, *Journal of Bhutan Studies* 11 (2004), 68-88.
- [21] Amaresh M., Sureddy S.S., Rashmi K., Gayathri R., Ponsindhu, T., Mitigation of Malicious nodes using T-AODV in MANET. *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 11(4) (2017), 349-356.
- [22] Gnanavel G., Arunkumar B., Ponsindhu T., Portable camera based text and product label reading from hand-held object for blind persons, *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 11(4) (2017), 356-362.
- [23] Ponsindhu T., Jyothi A.N., Ambily A.S., A study on the impact of strategic leadership skills of MSME employees towards business performance, *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems* 9 (2012), 784-802.
- [24] Ponsindhu, Nirmala S., Role of MSME in Women Entrepreneurial Development, *International Journal of Research and Development-A Management Review* 2(4) (2014), 10-14.
- [25] Salim A., Sulphey M.M., Thilagar P., A Study on the Relationship Between Long-Term Orientation, Self-Efficacy and Certain Behavioral aspects of Women Micro-Entrepreneurs, *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems* 9 (2017).
- [26] Ponsindhu, Nirmala S., Women Entrepreneurial Development and MSME'S, *International Journal of Research in Computer Application and Management* 4(12) (2014), 32-35.

