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Perception of under Graduate Students Regarding the Role of Electronic Media in Sustenance Development and Erosion of Human Values

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Abstract

A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct along with a continuum of relative importance. The values to be cherished, nourished and promoted are those which are a source of greatest good to the greatest number of people. Degradation of eternal values like trust, goodness and beauty suggest that the whole of the humanity is under threat. This paves the way of destruction. The world of the 21st century must project a peaceful world in which media has to play an important role to preach the human values. Media, being the fourth pillar of democracy, can contribute a lot to the development of a society, in which the values are to be preserved. Electronic media by common consent is one of the most trusted media responsible for a change or development in the society. While contributing to the development of the society, it at the same time also plays destructive role to demoralize the society and has attacked certain values of the society. Thus, electronic media is responsible for both development and erosion of human values. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand and analyze the perception of undergraduate students regarding the role of electronic media on the sustenance development and erosion of human values

Key Words: Human values, Electronic Media.

Introduction: There is no denying fact that the development and erosion of human values is a great debatable topic in the present time. The perceptions of value may vary from man to man, society to society and even generation to generation. One most respected human value for one generation can be denied by other generation. One of the views regarding values reveals that values are subjective to and relative to situation, place and time and their interpretations need to be changed or modified with variations in the socio-economic environment. Still there are certain basic values which reflect morality and hence eternal. Trust, goodness and beauty are such values not created by man and free from the clutch of his desires. On the other hand, loyalty to one is a self-justified value. In the ultimate analysis, the values to be cherished, nourished and promoted are those which are a source of greatest good to the greatest number of people. Degradation of eternal values suggests that the whole of the humanity is under threat. This paves the way to destruction.

Electronic media, by common consent, is one of the most trusted media responsible for a change or development in the society. This change can be called a material change or development. While contributing to the development, of the society, it at the same time also plays a destructive role to demoralize the society and has attacked certain values of the society. Thus, electronic media is

responsible for both the development and erosion of human values. In this paper, an attempt has been made to understand and analyze the perception of undergraduate students regarding the role of electronic media on the sustenance development and erosion of human values.

Objectives:

In brief, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- (i) To study the way undergraduate students make use of the electronic media i.e. television with respect to their likings and disliking of different channels.
- (ii) To study the way the electronic media has developed or eroded the human values with the undergraduate students.
- (iii) To study the extent and types of reactions the undergraduate students have developed towards the T.V. advertisement.
- (iv) To study the influence of different media on the students.

Methodology of Study: For this study, two types of data – primary and secondary has used. The primary data have collected by using a structured interview schedule. A sample of thirty undergraduate students from three colleges out of which one is girls college (ten from each college) of Nalbari district of Assam has interviewed to find out the role of television in the sustenance development and erosion of human values. Out of the thirty samples twenty students are male and ten students are female. However, the views of the female students have not been deciphered separately at the time of interpretations of data. On the other hand, the secondary data was collected from different books and journals.

A Theoretical Framework of Human Values: A definition in its strictest form is not to enough to explain human values. Human values can be instinctively felt, grasped, discussed as a sharable experience and thus made a valid area of enquiry. The amalgamation of ideas, divergent approaches and intermixing of several stands of thought make the effort of conceptualizing human values are daunting tasks for modern scholarship. However, for a clear understanding of the ideas, it is necessary to have a conceptual framework for classifying them. Values is a principle, standard or quality regarded as worthwhile or desirable (Webster, 1984). A value system is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or state of existence. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct along with a continuum of relative importance (Academe, vol. XI no. 1, January, 2006, HPU, Shimla).

Values can be classified into two main categories – the temporal values and the universal values. Temporal values include cultural values, political values, economic values, corporal values and social values. On the other hand, universal values include human, moral and spiritual values. In the Indian tradition, absolute values are related to the absolute reality is the highest and ultimate object of human striving.

Television in India: The periods from the whole of 20th century to the present time can be called the periods of science and technology as the mankind has been gifted with a numerous miraculous inventions. One such miraculous gift of science is the television which is now popularly known as electronic media which has provided an essential ingredient of social change and an infrastructure of development. The TV has revolutionized the system of mass communication. It is a definite advance on all other media of communication such as the newspaper, radio and the films.

The TV has provided, raided and effected the social life of India with the speed of volcano. Nothing could change the social life in such a fundamental and qualitative manner as the television. Hardly there is any aspect of social life which has escaped from the pervasive influence of TV. The reason being is that the TV performs multiple functions such as the social integration, national consensus, development, information, communication, advertisements and entertainment. The TV has become an effective instrument of modernization and social change. Due to its audio-visual characteristic, the TV exercises profound impact in shaping the viewpoints of the public towards modernization. It tends to develop a common culture, thoughts and in a way has standardized the different values in a type of common culture.

Television in India made a modest beginning. It started as a part of All India Radio on an experimental basis on 15th September, 1959. The UNESCO decided to grant to grant 20 thousand dollars for setting up a pilot project to study the use of TV as a medium of education and rural upliftment and community development. In this initial stage the programme on TV were telecast for two days in a week and for this purpose twenty community centers were established in and around Delhi. By this time, the TV transmissions were confined on some of the urban centers. The regular transmission of TV was started in 1965 and later in 1967 the programmes with rural interest were introduced.

The television in India was initially meant to be used as a vehicle of social change in contrast to other developing countries where it was used as a status symbol. Thus the initial functions of TV in India were social education, rural upliftment and community development. With the passing of time, the Doordarshan in India instead of performing its initial functions of social education and rural development has started performing additional functions of advertisements and entertainments as well. Thus, we find that television in India has deviated from its initial functions and shifted its emphasis to other functions such as the commercial advertisements and entertainments. Taking into considerations these new functions, Doordarshan now telecasts four channels with other regional channels of its own. Apart from this, new channels have begun to appear on the TV screen through cable network and DTH. Now, it has reached such a stage that channels from all over the world are telecast to cater to the different needs of the audience.

The data in the following table shows the present scenario of television programmes and channels broadcast in India:

Sl. No.	Nature of Programme	Channels
1	General	DD(National) DD(Bharati), DD India etc.
2	News	DD News, Times Now, India Today, News X, CNN IBN, BBC, CNN, Al Zajira, NDTV, Zee News, Aaz Tak and different news channels on regional languages of India
3	Sports	DD Sports, Ten Sports(Ten Cricket, Ten action) , Star Sports, Neo Sports, Sony Six, Sony Kix, etc.
4.	Music	MTV, V Channel, SS Music Masti, 9XM, B4U Music, Sony mix, etc.
5	Cinema	Zee cinema, Zee action, Zee Premier, Star Movies, Star gold, Max, HBO, Pix, & Picture, Movies OK, Romedy Now, etc.

6	Entertainment(Serial)	Zee TV, Star Plus, Sony, Colours, Bindass, Life OK etc. and different channels on regional languages of India.
7	Nature/Research oriented	Discovery, National Geography, Historical Channel, Animal Planet, Discovery Science, Discovery Turbo etc.
8	Spiritual	Astha, Sanskar, Bhakti TV, God TV etc.
9	Fashion	F TV, Trends etc.

Interpretations of Data:

The analysis and interpretation of data are as follows:

➤ Favorite media of students:

Sl. No.	Media	No. & % of respondents
1	News Paper	5 (16.7)
2	Magazine	2 (6.7)
3	Television	23 (76.6)
	Total	30 (100)

Source: Field data generated by the investigator. The figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The above table shows that television is the most favorite media among the undergraduate students. 76.6 percent students responded in favor of television, whereas 16.7 percent students responded in favor of newspaper. As far as magazines are concerned, only 6.7 percent students said that it is their most favourite media. This shows that the present generation is greatly influenced by the magic spell of television.

➤ Favorite T.V. programmes of students:

Sl. No.	Media	No. & % of Respondents
1	Entertainments	12 (40)
2	News	7 (23.33)
3	Research oriented	5 (16.67)
4	Sports	4 (13.33)
5	Spiritual	2 (6.67)
	Total	30 (100)

Source: Field data generated by the investigator. The figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

When the survey was conducted to know about the role of television in the development and erosion of human values, the respondents expressed their likings for different programmes shown in the television. As shown in the above table, 40 percent respondents revealed that they liked the entertainment channels the most. On the other hand, 23.33 percent students favoured the news channels. 16.66 percent respondents expressed their likings for the research oriented channels, whereas 13.33 percent and 6.67 percent respondents are in favour of sports channels and channels based on spiritual programmes.

➤ **Comments of students regarding the role of advertisements in the erosion of values:**

Sl. No.	Comments	No. & % of Respondents
1	Yes, advertisements have eroded values	17 (56.67)
2	No, advertisements have not eroded values	13 (43.33)
	Total	30 (100)

Source: Field data generated by the investigator. The figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

In the era of globalization advertisements plays a significant role to lure the customers and occupy the markets by the products of any company or farm houses. Therefore, different companies and farm houses made very colorful advertisements and telecast through television. Most of the time different T.V. channels compel the audience to watch the advertisements with different programmes even against their will. However, the cost of the T.V. programmes shown to the audience mostly meet up by the charges collected from the different companies and farm houses for the telecast of advertisements of their products. It is believed that the advertisements shown in different television channels play an important role in the erosion of human values. When a question was asked to the undergraduate students in this regard majority of them responded favoure the belief. Nearly 57 percent respondents think that the advertisements have role to play in the erosion of human values. On the other hand, according to 43 percent respondents the advertisements have no role to play to the erosion of human values.

➤ **Influence of TV Channels on Human Values:**

Sl. No.	Comments	No. & % of Respondents
1	Development of Human Values	14 (46.70)
2	Erosion of human Values	16 (53.30)
	Total	30 (100)

Source: Field data generated by the investigator. The figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

It is often a matter of debate that the different channels introduced to cater to the need of the audience have strongly marked their influence on the erosion of human values. Majority of the respondents stands in favoure of this belief. As shown in the above table 53.30 percent students think that the different channels have contributed to the erosion of human values, whereas 46.70 percent respondents voted in favoure of the role of television in the development of human values.

➤ **Comment on Entertainment Channels Like Music Channels, Fashion Channels etc.:**

Sl. No.	Comment on influence	No. & % of Respondents
1	Positive	7 (23.33)
2	Negative	23 (76.67)
	Total	30 (100)

Source: Field data generated by the investigator. The figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

There is no denying that the entertainment channels like fashion channels and music channels cater to the tastes of only a few audience as most of their programmes are based on fashion shows, modeling and music, screening based on western cultures, sex and violence etc. But among the

undergraduate students, these channels have both positive and negative influence. Nearly 77 percent respondents revealed that these channels are against the long cherished Indian values, but for 23 percent respondents, these channels have opened up new vistas of employment avenues in the modern globalised world.

Students Comments on the overall Role of media: The study revealed that the student community has high expectations from Indian media especially the electronic media. Being the fourth pillar of a successful democracy, media is playing a vital role in shaping public opinions, public awareness and so on. The respondents feel that media should work independently and should not work under pressure or influence. Taking into consideration the influence of politics in all aspect of society, they are of the view that media should not be a borrowed product of the politician. It should use its power in the benefit of the society. As far as human values are concerned, they think that media can really play a very vital role in the preservation of values, if it works positively. Though it is working efficiently to mould the public opinions and also to create public awareness, the respondents feel that media if uncontrolled, may lead to the deterioration of our values. They feel that it is becoming more and more micro in its approach and peeping into the private life of people just to sensitize the issues and increase their TRP. Indian media especially electronic media are harping excessively on sensational news stories which are unwanted and undesirable. The study shows that 43 percent respondents feel that the Indian electronic media is moving in the right track and is playing the vital role in the development of the society and the preservation of human values. While, 57 percent respondents feel that it needs to be controlled as it is now mostly dependent on sensational news stories and cheap entertainment programmes.

Conclusion: The world of the 21st century must project a peaceful world in which media has to play an important role to preach the human values. Media, being the fourth pillar of democracy, can contribute a lot to the development of a society, in which the values are to be preserved. Electronic media, by common consent, is one of the most trusted media responsible for a change or development in the society.

The study conducted to peep into the minds of the undergraduate students to know about their reaction regarding the role of electronic media i.e., television in the development and erosion of human values shows that according to nearly 50 percent respondents the television has contributed to the development of human values. On the other hand nearly 50 percent respondents blame the electronic media for the erosion of the same in the society. However, different TV channels catering to the tastes of the audience are not made responsible for the deterioration of human values. That the present generation is worried about the preservation of the values is apparent from their view that the time has come to preserve our values. Most of the, respondents asserts on the role of media especially the television, in the sustenance development of the human values. Hardly there is any aspect of social life which has escaped from the pervasive influence of TV as it performs multiple functions such as the social integration, development, entertainment etc.

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