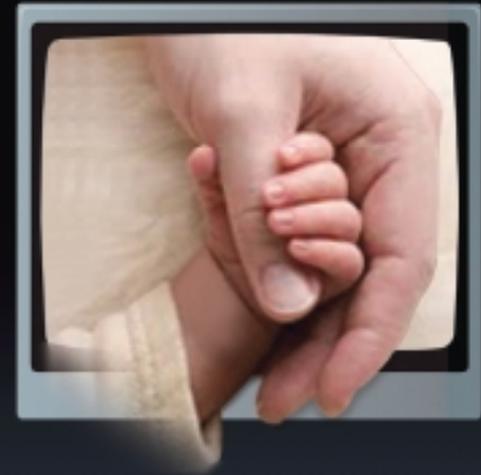# THE
# THIRD
# PARENT
### REVISITED

**GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OF
INDIAN ELECTRONICS MEDIA**

P S DEODHAR

# 'The Third Parent' Revisited

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA TILL 2009

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To

**Rajiv Gandhi**

Second revised Edition "The Third Parent Revisited"

# Preface to the II Edition

## Revisiting "The Third Parent" in 2009

Many friends and acquaintances have been requesting for me a copy of 'The Third Parent' since their book store had no copies left. No wonder, it has been out of print since 3-4 years. I had not bothered to reprint, since the broadcasting scene in India had already undergone a sea change since the first edition of 'The Third Parent' was published in 1991. The electronic Media is completely different in complexion than it was then. Not only have the contents undergone a deep change, all technologies have converged to change the face of this medium. Information, Communications and Computing Technologies have taken the world quickly to digitise the information in every form, have created many new and exciting delivery modes and made everything much more affordable even to relatively poor families. The access to information is easy as well as widespread. The world has moved seamlessly from the Machine Age into the Knowledge Age, and so has India.

The ball for media privatisation was set in motion by me in 1992 when, as the Chairman of the Broadcast Council (Air Time Committee), we made rules for Metro Channels to enable the private sector to enter the fray. At that time however I couldn't fathom the depth of changes that were to follow and with such speed!

A comprehensive media study of the last two decades, since 'The Third Parent' was released, tells me that in many ways, television has proved to be a blessing for a predominantly illiterate country like India. Our people have been starved of information; information that will help them to live better and make informed choices. Knowledge stored in print has been inaccessible to a vast majority of Indians due to functional illiteracy. Consequently their information gathering has been limited to hearsay, gossip and religious and social discourses by local gurus. Television has changed this and in a sense, freed information locked in written words. TV is pouring information in the lives of men, women and children making them 'informed' in spite of their illiteracy handicap. Information is also professionally packaged for ease of understanding, often laced with fun. It acts as a tool and is vital and indispensable in today's knowledge age. We need an ever increasing amount of information in order to maintain and enhance our quality of life.

Television is doing that job remarkably well. It is indeed making a positive impact on our society even though there are serious concerns about its misuse and the accent of some channels on relentless 24x7 violence and sexual excesses. Information and knowledge is morally agnostic but has been decided by the ruling cultural and social ethos interpreted in unique ways by media conglomerates worldwide. This in turn leads to some serious issues. Thanks to our procrastinating government a fundamental issue like content regulation of this powerful media has remained largely unresolved. Television is called 'a cultural melting pot' and its contents are known to "cultivate" social environment almost as farming cultivates the natural environment and we all know that it has been able to rapidly do so. On a very positive side it has made most of the people of our country 'informed'. A huge and almost uncontrolled proliferation of the private commercial television network in the country has remarkably altered social life even in rural India. The role models of young villagers have changed and so have their aspirations. The amazing growth of cellular phones, recently crossing the 500-million-mark, and the wider use of Internet amongst the urban young has indeed changed the way we live and how we interact in cities. The older generation of teachers and parents who did not embrace these new technology tools have further distanced themselves from the young. A technology driven life style has widened the generation gap more than the usual. I feel that the change, in spite of the growing generation gap, is indeed welcome since it has effectively in increased personal productivity in many ways. All this has made India a far better informed country in spite of extensive illiteracy. Media content has undergone change even as media has been hijacked by the commercial world. Enticing program Content is indeed just a vehicle for commercial messages. Content therefore is anything that will pull maximum eye-balls, it has little to do with right or wrong. To media owners the after effect of messages on society or children matters little as long as the

consumption grows. Everyone chases TRP since that translates into money. The advertiser's primary interest is to make people buy merchandise or use services they offer. This involves enticing and cultivating viewers to buy. The objective is to create a consumerdriven society. Over the years, the life style is becoming growingly lavish for the rich. It also motivates the not so rich to leave no stone unturned to somehow get richer. Clever marketing of non-essentials by brand owners is enticing young viewers by appealing to greed and inducing guilt. It is about making the impressionable person feel guilty of not possessing the product of a specific brand like, say, Reebok shoes. Societal norms, clever marketing and a constant barrage of messages make many feel small and 'less than others'. Interestingly society also growingly measures people by the money they have and the brands they possess. Such people have been transformed into role models driving them to use any means to get what they desire. For many more per capita consumption is a measure of being a 'developed' nation. A few of us however wonder whether this change is for the better. Money has taken centre stage in India as in the western world.

In other ways too, media is getting strong and ruthless with its growing power. Media men and women are growingly aware of their power to make or break people's careers, either social or political.

This has made basic questions like "who says what, how, to whom, with what effect and for what purpose?" growingly relevant. These questions remain important and urgent today as in 1991. Cross media ownership as well as direct (and indirect) foreign ownership of Indian media makes it absolutely essential for national leadership to be watchful. It is true that satellite and digital technologies have played a crucial role in changing the face of this medium in India but the major force for social and cultural change that the media is causing is essentially due to deregulation of television by the state and the consequential deep commercialization of the airwaves.

This profound change convinced me that I must revisit "The Third Parent" and share views that are more appropriate to the current media scene. Thanks to Internet and the print media since it has helped me to closely watch and study the broadcast media over the last 18 years. It has been my major resource for study besides my own interpretation of the way the media technology is affecting India and think of options for us to benefit from expanded range of tools of communication; the digital media with a focus on television. Television has been my passion since it can free knowledge locked in written words. Whether "Anyone Out There" is listening or otherwise; I feel that, as a concerned citizen, I must say my piece.

P. S. Deodhar
January 1, 2009

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# Chapter 1

## Key Features of the Modern Electronic Media and its Social Significance in India

During the last two decades a large number of new media products are showing up in markets in quick succession. 'Time to market' of new technological invention is so short that the 'Half life' of any new product is less than a year. Anew model with better features and faster speed are often available at a cheaper price. Their popularity and usage also is growing faster since price - performance ratio is often very attractive. It is also important to have the latest gadget since it offers new high performance services the old models don't. IT industry grows faster due to this speedy obsolescence of its products and services. However let us remember that we, as a society, should concern ourselves not with the 'medium' but its impact on 'message' enabled by advances in knowledge technology. Therefore instead of taking an inventory of new tools and technologies, we should think about the impact of modern multi-media messaging and delivery modes on prevailing cultures in various layers of our traditional society. The focus has to be how and who uses media towards what purpose.

Today "Electronic Media" is indeed an umbrella term and encompasses too many mass media and television is just one of them. Thanks to satellite packaged DTH distribution, one is exposed to global programs from many countries. Technologies of convergence and digital compression have made terms such as "electronic media," "broadcast media," and even "mass media" obsolete. Furthermore, with the transformation of industrial societies to "information" societies, and with the large-scale movement of labour-intensive manufacturing and service industry to China and India, broadcasting has, to an extent, become global without national boundaries.

Study of various different media platforms reveal that a profound change is taking place in the way people interact with modern digital media. It is clear that this interaction is becoming extremely participatory. In a very short time, the younger generation especially, has shown its ability to understand, absorb and innovatively adopt new media. This, by itself, is a huge

cultural change. The younger generation today is not only far better informed about this new communication culture than elders but they also use it more efficiently to enrich themselves and benefit in a variety of ways. A common phrase one hears in every household these days is 'our kids are smarter than we were at their age'. Indeed during the last two decades we have been witnessing a profound and ever-growing impact of the digital media on our lives. The growth indeed is exponential.

Television is the most important of new media; more important than the Internet since 90% of Indians are not using the internet. As a result, there are three distinct consequences of extensive proliferation of private commercial television channels in our country; especially niche channels like news, sports, films, and business. The most desirable consequence is the choice people are getting to be entertained or informed. This in turn makes the majority of population better informed in spite of a deep functional illiteracy in the country. The second relates to professionals involved in this business. The job opportunities in the electronic media have grown tremendously and the nature of jobs is also very wide. At the same time, there is fierce competition in the air space and is getting more severe each day and the profits are shrinking. The media company investors, strategy planners, content developers, advertising agencies are also feeling uncomfortable. I am sure for managers this is a challenge to their professional skills and creativity. As media literacy amongst them grows, there will be newer innovations in television content.

The third important consequence relates to various national Governments who have liberalised the media. Most liberal governments in the world recognise the benefits of television to their societies but today are also at loss to know how this commercial TV-bull needs to be reined in and limit its scope to carry what the majority of the population considers undesirable and harmful messages. Television's growing influence is not only limited to changing the cultural scene but also in its growing political alignments and clout. This is a matter of concern to many nations. The media today is provoking people to live beyond their means, be ruthless and selfish and is advocating freedom without

responsibility and concern for others. It has shown that it can do and undo political careers, at least in a democratic country like ours. There is a growing arrogance amongst media men. The growing power of the fourth estate is making elected governments very uncomfortable. The Internet, on the other hand, is indeed a unique Knowledge Medium. It has become an ideal personal communication medium without boundaries. It has no owners and everyone gets an opportunity to be a broadcaster. It has become a medium to sell not just merchandise but ideas and thoughts. Unfortunately elderly 30+ Indians are left out due to their fear and ignorance about computers.

I know 30+ professionals from every field, businessmen, professors and teachers who are afraid of computers. Their e-mails are opened for them by grand children. I pity these people indeed! They are keeping away from one of the most user friendly (idiot proof?) medium for learning and keeping themselves profession just out of fear! A lack of English keeps it inaccessible to another 90% of us. Internet users are however multiplying by the day and this is taking away from television young buyers for many hours. Unlike simplex television, the unquestionable superiority of the internet is because it is free, personal, participative and as useful as one wants it to be. The use of the internet is really limited by the user's ability to exploit it to achieve what one wants. It is completely different than broadcast television since it is fully 'duplex' to use a communication term of 50s.

The television media is morally neutral but is controlled by mostly motivated owners. The Internet is not just morally neutral but is also object neutral has totally diffused 'ownership', if at all. It won't be too far in time when people remained hooked on broadband with a neverending flow of information, and users challenging each other to bring new witty comments or content. Today one can see every newspaper from the print media domain struggling to convert their business models to the Internet. They are converting content to a web format, but have trouble getting enough revenues comparable to print business.

But on the media scene in India, I believe that television will still prevail for some more time. Thanks to massive illiteracy in

general and IT illiteracy in particular, the Internet can't spread as rapidly here as it has in China. In China, almost 90% of the internet is in Chinese. Mandarin is the common language of 1.3 billion Chinese and 98% of its young below 30 are literate have at least 9 years in school. The Internet in China is also in Mandarin. As a result there are fifteen times more Internet users in China than in our country. In spite of limited freedom of speech in that country, Chinese society will be far more 'knowledgeable than Indian society in times to come. The Chinese proclivity to learn and gain from foreign sources is more pronounced than India's. In India television will prevail over both, Print and the Internet, for at least the next five years if not more.

## What's in store?

The traditional forms of Indian art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life are impacted by the modern media. It is changing traditional economic, social and political conditions. Older people are finding it difficult to keep pace. Rate of technological and cultural change has accelerated and somehow I don't see any signs of slowing down. It is getting more and more difficult to predict a cultural impact on our society in times to come. The introduction of new media technologies today is sparking social and aesthetic experimentation, greatly expanding cultural choices and options. Geographical borders separating different cultures have broken due to the global reach of the media. One can see it in multi-cultural influence in modern Indian music and life styles of the young. Following are some of the distinctive features of the modern media.

1. **'Convergence of Culture'** is today occurring in not only various global cultures and lifestyles crossing geological borders but also in convergence of various communication media. Multi-media capability has made media magnets to migrate to all other media. Henry Jenkins, in his 2006 book, Convergence Culture, analyses such old and new Media convergence and points out that massive media conglomerates have been controlling interest across possible media systems and enjoying composite media power to insure that content

circulates globally. Commercialization of media hinges around 'selling' ideas, images, sounds, stories, brands, and relationships from all available media platforms. It is in their economic interest to move any successful media content from one delivery system to another in order to maximize profit and broaden market potential.

On the other side consumers of media also want the ability to control and shape the flow of media in their lives; they want the media they want when they want it and where they want it. These consumers are taking advantage of new media technologies to respond to, remix and repurpose existing media content; they use the web to participate and share the media space. This is a completely different manifestation of media than ever seen before.

2. **'Family Identity is Changing'**. Every 'able' home in India today has television, telephone, mobile phone and MP3 or MP4 portable wireless music system with a variety of combinations. 3G technology will soon make everything portable and personal. Today living rooms are indeed home entertainment centers. Media technologies are fully integrated into everyday social interactions. Research done 10 years ago shows that this has reduced communication between family members. But this will change even further with new 3G portable devices.

   Partitions within homes will grow making living rooms deserted. Youngsters will use media to unknowingly cut themselves off from the people around them. Yet strangely these new technologies will also enable greater and closer connection to more dispersed family members. This will probably enlarge the family; reversing families to a joint family, bonded closely together by digital media. Look at daily web chats and visual sharing amongst our families spread throughout the world. It is indeed a big gain, right? Bruce Sterling in his novel says that contemporary technology "sticks to the skin, responds to touch... pervasive, utterly intimate. Not outside us, but next to us." It is clear that one day a 3G phone and the future kind of i-Pods will become another organ of

every youngster; five sensory organs and one communication Organ! Media will become such a part of our daily routines that it will become invisible to us. No one knows what the full implications of this change would be on today's lifestyles. For sure one can see a sense of tentativeness to real world interactions from the way the young respond. US Sociologist Linda Stone calls it "continuous partial attention" shifting focus between the mediated and face- to- face inputs as different needs arrive.

3. The **'Personal Identity'** of a growing number of young people reflects in the way they present themselves on the internet. They often use a collage of images to express how they see themselves. Their web-pages function as a digital equivalent of old commonplace books, a heady mixture of personal expressions and borrowed materials. Artists have always borrowed and built upon earlier works in their tradition. No one needs to invent a wheel and one always builds on what's existing now. As new technologies expand so would change the individual's expression. New modes of entertainment will also become growingly participative as in use of computer and or while playing video games. Unlike television, it needs our active engagement. We do not simply consume them; we make them happen. New technologies will enable people to become part of the media experiences which matter to them so that they can create and share their own media with others. The likes of 'You Tube' and other portals will open up participative use of media giving everyone a chance to have a say and participate.

4. **'Networking'** will become a way of life: Media technologies are interconnected so that messages flow easily from one place to another and from one person to another. Communication occurs at a variety of levels - from intimate and personal to public and large-scale. Simplex form of communication, such as print media or a radio or a television, will get replaced over a period of time. That's how print media majors like the Times of India have taken to broadcast media; embracing the digital world. Youngsters have become adept at calculating advantages and disadvantages of deploying different

communications systems for different purposes - trying to decide how to communicate ideas only to those people that want to see them while maintaining privacy from unwanted access.

5. **'Cultural Melting Pot'** is working. Today media content flows fluidly across national borders and that has given us a different vision and perceptive view of the world we live in. A growing number of people will be deploying new communication networks to interact with others around the world. This will change the way we think about ourselves and our place in the world. A concept of a global village is being realized with the growth of media. Media illiteracy is still widely prevalent in India due to illiteracy. So its spread in many parts of the world is slow. Indian culture has many regional colours and innumerable traditions to go with it. All of these are also homogenising in the new media's cultural melting pot. It is clear that expanded communication will bring about greater understanding. But some see the return to fundamentalism as a reaction against threat posed by global exchanges. Some of us worry that the most economically powerful nations will overwhelm the rest, insuring a homogenisation of global cultures. One welcome change however relates to getting away from parochialism of our own culture.

6. **'Generation Gap'** is growing. Cultural traditions and norms have always been passed from one generation to another and this has influenced of educational practices in India. Throughout the 20th century as the rate of technological and cultural change accelerated, young people adopted cultural styles and values radically different and often fundamentally at odds with their parent's generation. One can see that young people and adults live in fundamentally different media environments, using communications technologies in different ways and forming contradictory interpretations of their experiences. Adults know less than they think about what young people are doing on line and young people know less than they think about values and assumptions that shape adult's relationship to media.

7. **Bharat will continue to lag behind in benefitting from digital media**. This will handicap India as a nation. The social and economic Development in India is not inclusive. Lack of inclusivity has left most of India out often called Bharat. Communication has technically reached every Indian. Radios, televisions and cellular phones are usable in rural Bharat. But economic conditions and illiteracy are keeping masses away from the participatory media world. Today their media access is limited to satellite television and radio. The cost of the rest makes it privilege of a few. Access to it represents a new 'digital divide' spelling inequality with the majority left behind. One can indeed use media power wisely to bridge this gap. Superficial efforts like village cyber-cafes will make news but would fail to grow. Media content on television can be gainfully used to speed up inclusive growth. It also has the potential of empowering rural folks to become fuller participants in cultural and civic life. Television teaches but is different than a school teacher. Mixing parental care and concern with power to communicate and ability to take the real world into private homes could be gainfully used with the help of media talents. As British research Sonia Livingstone notes: "teaching skills required to produce content is more crucial than ever. Indeed, not to do so would be positively disempowering for citizens given the present rush to duplicate, or even to displace, our present social and political institutions".

## Comparison of Print, Television and Internet

Here is a very broad comparison of different media, format and uniqueness:

| Attribute | Print | Television | The Internet |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Engagement | High engagement for Adults. Thought provoking, often serious and intellectually rewarding | Relatively less engaging, more entertaining than informative | High engagement amongst educated young because of self-chosen access to information, privacy and interactivity |
| Practicality | Most practical medium being complete by itself. Needs no batteries etc and easy access | Needs sizeable investment Limited to what is made available | Can be accessed on a variety of devices, with a variety of formats (audio,video, text, multimedia etc. |
| Ease of Consumption | Needs functional literacy. Limited to what's offered.Most Books are relatively expensive | Very easy for use. Viewing is passive and requires no efforts or literacy | Self-controlled. Easy but the user needs to be an educated literate |
| Character | Moral- Neutral but potentiated | Moral Neutral Selling views and merchandise or service | Moral Neutral and Object Neutral |
| Interactivity | None | very low | Very high interactivity, with complete personalization of content |
| Speed | 12 to 24 hours delay in delivery | Fast | Real-time delivery of information |
| Size of Information | Limited by print surface | Medium amount of information. | Quick Access to huge mass of information, text, pictures, video by browsing with highly visible activity stream |

| Collaboration | None | None | Very High Collaboration. Users can communicate, collaborate and work with each other. Think about emails, forums, or "social media" |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revenue Models | Sales of a physical object. Business models are known. | Advertising, or pay-per-view | Advertising, hosting and other models yet being discovered |
| Barriers of Entry | Functional literacy essential | No need for any educational skill | Literacy and In India, must know English |

The Internet has very high interactivity, real-time delivery of information, small titbits of information, very high collaboration potential, and low barriers of entry. However it still needs good knowledge of the English language. One aspect of the Internet still to be dealt with is the design of sustainable business models. In practice, YouTube, Face Book, RSS Feeds are yet to prove themselves.

# Chapter 2

## Indian Electronic Media Review Before Prasar Bharati - 1959 to 1997

Before analysing the profound changes in the media scene during the last two decades, let us briefly recapitulate its history when television was primarily state owned.

The radio and television in the country started and grew under the management of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and were state owned. It had the complexion of Public Broadcasting Services. Both, All India Radio and Doordarshan, may claim to have met, or have tried to meet social objectives but frankly speaking, its management was unimaginative, uninspiring and bureaucratic. I have had an opportunity to evaluate Doordarshan as the Chairman of the Forward Looking Group set up jointly by the PMO and the I&B Ministry in 1989. I was taken aback to find that many creative talents were made subordinate to the administrators. A single example will reveal the state of affairs. In spite of being an audio-visual medium, Doordarshan had no Art Director! In 1989, in my new role, I visited various stations and the program studios of Doordarshan all over the country. It was painful see the way creative people like program producers were treated by the ministry officials.

Several producers shared a small ill-equipped room. Bosses often gave them a week's notice to produce a topical program. There were no production teams like in the BBC which always had a budget and several weeks of time to make a documentary. BBC producers could research even for months and have a preset expense budget to create a documentary and the result was an engaging documentary that had millions of eyes glued to the BBC Nothing of the kind existed in Doordarshan. Videographers were a part of Engineering and not under the programming head. There were no budgets. No wonder DD produced very few high grade documentaries. And whenever they were good, it was because of the producer's creative urge. Success was achieved in spite of bureaucracy. It would be unfair to a few of those administrators who were indeed media literate but nevertheless the system had throttled them. Some of them have expressed their frustration to me during that three month study.

These men however were exceptions. Doordarshan's large viewership was because of its singular presence on the airwaves but that was often confused as popularity and acceptance. To be frank it was disgusting. In spite of having some outstanding media talents DD failed to use media to promote literacy and family planning with any measurable success.

Bureaucrats controlling DD forgot to realise that unlike cinema television was in the living rooms and bedrooms of India homes. It had no captive audience like in a theatre or a cinema hall. Programming for television has its own boundaries and possibilities. Creative men and women had no option other than DD to reach viewers. So DD was lucky to retain some remarkably outstanding producers and they gave memorable and socially relevant sitcoms like Hum Log in 82 and later Buniyad and others. Then in '86 came Ramayana and in '88 Mahabharat. These serials notched up a world record in viewership numbers for a single program.

It was All India Radio that has been a far more successful change agent than Doordarshan in spite of it being an audio medium. A very large success of the Green Revolution in late 60s should go to Krishi Darshan and rural programs like "Aamchi Mati Aamchi Mansa" in Maharashtra. All India Radio indeed brought to the fore and gave the country many outstanding singers, especially classical singers. Singing talents could grow starting from being a singer at a local radio station then could grow to be regional radio artist. The honour to sing on a Saturday night on the national broadcaster was a path of sure success. This did not happen in the case of Doordarshan. One major handicap of DD was being Delhi-centric. This kept media out of reach for 90% of creative producers and artists in the country. It was unlike All India Radio that had an 'All India' character for its programs in terms of content. Local AIR was very regional in character and reached audiences in their mother tongue. It was no wonder therefore that P. L. Deshpande, one of the most eminent Marathi playwrights, actor and director, left DD in disgust after struggling and compromising with 'system' bosses.

During his send-off party, a journalist asked him what he liked the most in Delhi. Pointing his finger in the direction of the railway station, Pula said, "The Frontier Mail, waiting to take me away from Delhi!"

**Let me list some landmark events prior to 1997:**

- Television broadcasting began in India in 1959 for a few evening hours each day and regular television programming began in 1965.

- Some of the notable achievements were rural radio Forums for agricultural development in 1967 that played a pivotal role in the green revolution, Satellite Instructional Television Experiment in 1975-76 and Kheda project from 1976 till 1989. It will interest readers to know that the transmitter in Kheda was abruptly removed and the program discontinued to enable those in power to transfer it to a politicians constituency since the election was forthcoming; what a shame indeed.

- Then came in 1995 GRAMSAT experiment using radio for training of women members of Village Panchayats (local village level governance). These large-scale projects did meet core development needs and simultaneously gave valuable lessons on software, hardware and organisational management needs of such efforts.

- One of the most remarkable and unique initiatives by ISRO was mass terrestrial distribution of DD with a satellite feed using the matrix of hundreds of Low Power VHF Transmitters, LPTs, in every district and High Power Transmitters in capital cities. A 100W LPT served a district place and surrounding villages. Politicians were flocking to Delhi to get an LPT for their constituency. During 1981 to 86 there was a rapid increase in the number of LPTs from 21 to over 400. With this DD was reaching over 90% of Indian population! This was also the time commercialisation of Indian television was set in motion where the program generation was funded by advertisers.

- 1981 brought 'colour' into the lives of Indian viewers. The forthcoming 1982 Asian Games enabled some of us to disregard objections from the Electronics Commission for

introducing colour television transmission. I recollect the meeting where Mr. Vasantrao Sathe convinced Indiraji to agree to set aside the objection and gave a green signal for colour transmission. The Asian Games dead line ensured that we could get it done very speedily.

- It was also the time for some exciting programming. India's first major social soap opera Hum Log made DD a household name. This much-acclaimed 156-episode, 17-month series was a winner and media motivator. It promoted issues such as family planning and education for the girl child. This coincides with the rise of the middle class as a dominant force in the country, with an increase in film-based entertainment programming, private sponsorship and consumerism.

- During my stay in Delhi, Doordarshan outpaced radio and print media as the first choice for advertising, hiking its advertisement rates several times between 1985 and 1990. By 1987, there are at least 40 serials on air. A media boom saw an increase in the number of publications, and importance of TV and cinema-based reporting.

- Then came 1990-91 and there was a sea-change in the Indian political landscape. Socialistic policies were changed and the move towards capitalism was imminent. The economic reform process was set in heralding an era of privatisation and liberalisation. The Prasar Bharati Act, giving some kind of autonomy to state broadcast media, was however passed much later; in 1998!  This delinked broadcasting from direct government control but like all government decisions this took several years.

- The First Gulf war in 1991 created an unprecedented demand for cable television among Indian viewers wanting to follow the CNN coverage of the war. In May that year Star TV made an entry via cable and soon other followed. It was Zee TV that transformed the face of Indian television, with its multiple channels and aggressive market-driven entertainment programming. Later others like Sony TV, Sun, and Gemini etc followed.

- In February '95 came the landmark Supreme Court judgement ruling that affirmed the first clear statement about our national priority for electronic media, It said, "Airwaves are a public property. They have to be controlled and regulated by a public authority in the interest of the public and to prevent invasion of their rights." The judgement outlines autonomy for Prasar Bharati and opens broadcasting to private players.

- It was in August 1998 that the Prasar Bharati Act was finally passed by the Loksabha with a significant amendment that the Broadcasting Authority will be overseen by a 32-member parliamentary committee. But the President's signature took its own time.

# Chapter 3

## Indian Electronic Media Review
## After Prasar Bharati - 1998 to 2009

Currently at the end of 2009, Indian broadcasting continues to flourish rapidly. Since the monopoly of the state over television transmission was broken and especially after the arrival of multichannel satellite television, the growth of Indian television is remarkably rapid. Over 270 channels are crowding the airspace and still the array of channels is growing.

Both private cable and satellite channels command large audiences. News programmes often outperform entertainment shows. Many 24-hour news channels are up and running and more are planned. Doordarshan, the public TV, operates 21 services including its flagship DD1 channel that reaches some 400 million viewers.

Multichannel, direct-to-home (DTH) TV service is a huge hit. Five operators - Dish TV, Tata-Sky, Sun Direct, Big TV and Airtel Digital TV - have attracted millions of subscribers. Stateowned 'Doordarshan Direct' offers a free-to-air DTH service. It is expected that the number of DTH subscribers could reach 60 million by 2015. The Indian cable TV market is indeed one of the world's largest. Since they were given the green light in 2000, music-based FM radio stations have proliferated in the cities. But only All India Radio can broadcast news.

At the end of 2009, Television reaches more than 130 million homes giving a viewing population more than 800 million individuals. They have a choice of almost 300 channels. Demand for home entertainment, access to even illiterates and a huge variety of programs has helped an exceptionally rapid expansion of Television in India. The popularity is also because access to satellite television in India is one of the cheapest in the world.

Approximately 65% of homes in India have access to satellite TV, born in the early 1990's beginning with Rupert Murdoch's Star TV in 1991. Sun TV in the south followed rapidly and now has 20 channels in the four South Indian languages; Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada.

The Raj Network was started in 1994 and is an important player in the South Indian cable TV industry. Hong Kong based STAR TV gave Indians five channels; MTV, BBC, Star Plus, Prime Sports and the STAR Chinese Channel. Zee TV was the first privately owned Indian channel to broadcast on cable. By 2000, Indians could watch CNN for free, Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channel.

Star also expanded its range introducing STAR World, ESPN, STAR Sports and STAR Gold. Regional channels did well along with a Hindi channels and a few English channels. By 2001 The History Channel and HBO entered India. By 2003, other channels such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Disney, Toon Disney and VH1 joined the range of options for the Indian viewer. In 2003 International and Domestic news channels started to grow.

Indians have steadily been migrating all over the globe. The diaspora is spread widely in the Middle East, UK, USA, Australia and South Africa. This has brought about a new demand for Indians separated from their TV channels. Both satellite and IPTV are fulfilling this need.

### STATUS AND FUTURE OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING

One finds that there are International Concerns about harnessing the media to meet public needs. National governments are today at loss to know how to control, regulate and prevent what they consider undesirable programming or scheduling. There are concerns everywhere and not for just some of us in India.

For instance, the EU nations have come together to protect their cultural industry from the onslaught of imports from the United States. It is however clear that the technology as well as commercial and economic factors will take precedence and such a situation will frustrate efforts especially when commercially transmitting HTML pages over broadcast television signals, data broadcasting, multiple program feeds, and electronic commerce will be available for broadcasters. Thankfully however, almost every nation including India wants to remain committed to Public Service Broadcasting. That has been the lynchpin of the communication policy of many countries in the world for several

decades. Today such a policy, even in China, is progressively under threat from both internal and external influences.

Unlike Doordarshan, all public broadcasting service systems even in the industrialised countries have a lot in common. They all are state-owned and run exclusively by the state and financed by the state. Except for Mother India these systems are generally noncommercial. They are better than Doordarshan in many ways. Out of all, the United Kingdom's license-based system for the BBC independent of the government seems to be performing the best and claims to give the taxpayer the maximum value for money.

## Doordarshan - Neither an effective Public Broadcaster nor a strong Commercial Brand

Doordarshan is a Public Broadcast Television channel and is managed by Prasar Bharati, a board nominated by the Government of India. It is one of the largest broadcasting organisations in the world in terms of infrastructure of studios and transmitters. Recently it has also started Digital Terrestrial Transmitters. Doordarshan completed 50 years of transmission in September 2009. From humble beginnings in 1959, it today operates Doordarshan in more than 30 channels across India and an international channel abroad. It will soon commence HDTV transmissions on an experimental basis, followed by a commercial rollout, in time for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Delhi in 2010.

The Prasar Bharati Board that operates Doordarshan, in reality, functions under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Most sources indicate that the size of India's Media and Entertainment Industry is over 500 Billion rupees and is poised to take a quantum leap in the next few years. This sector lives within the rules and orders of the I & B Ministry. All critical policy decisions made by the ministry can make or mar the prospects of this industry that has enjoyed spectacular growth in the post-liberalisation era. It is therefore the owner of a commercial channel like Doordarshan who also controls all other media activities in the country. From the point of view of the people the

most important part of media industry is the content and its social impact.

It is sad that Prasar Bharati which operates Doordarshan and AIR, was converted into a commercial organisation; the type of activity where governments have consistently failed all over the world without exception. In our country privatisation of the airwaves has proved to be a real threat to Prasar Bharati, our public broadcaster. This long-established state-owned broadcaster has been sidelined in the new competitive and commercial environment.

Actually Doordarshan has fallen between the two stools; it failed to not only pursue its primary role as a public broadcaster but also lost its best chance to exploit its governmentimposed role as a commercial broadcaster. With its bureaucratic straight jacket, Doordarshan's IAS managers, one after another, could do little to shape Doordarshan as a vibrant brand.

Actually Doordarshan, in terms of infrastructure and technology, has had too many strong points to have not failed as a commercial broadcaster. One can therefore only blame the leadership. Prasar Bharati failed to benefit from a decade long monopoly it had in reaching the entire community of television viewers in the country. Imaginatively structured satellite based program distribution reaching the entire nation with its network of HPTs (High Power Television Transmitters) and LPTs (Low-Power Transmitters), VLPTs (Very Low Power Transmitters) was an asset that it could have used to become the strongest media outlet in the country.

For over 10 years almost 65% of the viewers in the country were not accessible to private broadcasters and yet Doordarshan managers could not get even 15% of the commercial revenue that private broadcasters pulled in. In fact, thanks to the government, the cable network itself has been in shambles selectively hurting private channels. Since the atrocious cable distribution was largely owned by local mafia, private players failed to realise even 30% of the potential cable revenue. In spite of this, Doordarshan failed to benefit from its monopoly in reaching nearly three times the viewers. As a result, since the mid 90s it was not Prasar Bharati

but Media Moguls like Rupert Murdoch, Subhashchandra Goyal, and others who have been calling the shots.

The nineties was also one of the most revolutionary decades for global broadcasting, especially in India as well as other developing nations. Multinational media giants are now firmly entrenched in Asia, with China, India and Indonesia having liberalised their economies to allow foreign direct investment in telecommunications, computing, and mass media.

We in India now allow one hundred percent FDI in film production and advertising and have given free access to television channels uplinked from abroad. Much of television software production is with these multinational private companies or affiliates. Thanks to our IAS run government, Doordarshan, in spite of its huge physical and engineering assets, has become a pitiable non-entity looking to its owners for continued monopoly.

**Vibrant Public Broadcasting Option for India:**

In the domain of public broadcasting what is the best option for India? The nature of Electronic Media is mass-oriented and here the challenge to Doordarshan is to serve the diversity of tastes that we have in our multi-lingual and multi-cultural country.

Added to that, we have a further rural –urban divide compounded further with an informationbased divide of informed and severely less informed. I have always advocated an obvious solution of allowing various states to have provincial Doordarshan PBS. PBS in a local language makes great sense than taking Hindi programs made in Delhi to villagers in Andhra or Karnataka or even Gujarat and Maharashtra. Besides the language one needs for the kind of public broadcast are indeed different. I have tried without success to sell this option to three successive Prime Ministers from 1986 till 1993. If we are permitting any kind of private broadcaster to address our people, why not trust our own state governments? What is worrying the Central leadership? Surprisingly no state government has also made any demand for a state based PBS in spite of this being an attractive option to reach its own people.

A study can show that Delhi-centric Doordarshan, as a public broadcaster, cannot meet the needs of such a diverse community. An obvious solution for Public Broadcasting is to survive and serve the needs of people is to allow every state to have its own Public Broadcasting Channel. The physical assets of Doordarshan could be regionally divested to various state administrations so that one can see a seamless change. Much of course will depend on the role the electronic media are currently expected to play in society.

It would also depend on a relationship between the government and the PBS, internal relationships in the media organizations, programming practices etc. Monolithic systems like Doordarshan or China and the Soviet Union would eventually just drag on with no impact and not meeting its basic objective. The electronic public sphere does need to be preserved, but the question is which governments in power and which new media moguls are willing to let go and turn airwaves over to the people to whom they rightly belong.

# Media Regulation in 2009
# - Confusion & Chaos

In terms of regulating media growth and its content, the scene in our country is certainly chaotic and confusing. Everyone admits that in a democracy the need for media regulation cannot be used to exercise a state control over media. But from the point of view of public interest in a democratic society, regulating a powerful electronic media has to be carefully thought about.

For this, it is necessary to have a properly constituted, independent public authority empowered with a clear mandate and guaranteed autonomy, as envisioned by the Supreme Court of India. Over 15 years long years have passed since the Supreme Court made it clear that "the airwaves or frequency bands are a public property" that neither the State nor private industry can monopolise. The Apex court added that the use has to be controlled and regulated by a public authority in the interests of the public and prevent the invasion of their rights.

For all these years however, this important responsibility of our government has not been discharged by successive governments in power at the centre. While all this time the government continues to procrastinate, multiple government agencies are getting involved in formulating and implementing policy, drafting and enforcing legislation.

To make matters worse, they often appear to be unaware of each other's interventions and seem to work at cross-purposes. Thanks to ever-changing government leadership and coalition politics, the question of controlling media in our country has yet remained unresolved.

Regulating broadcast media continues to be debated. There has been no disagreement about regulating the media but nobody had the will and courage to act. Everywhere in the world broadcast media is regulated in various degrees and in one form or another. Media control matters since the world has seen how just a voice on radio can make people go mad as in Germany. Television media is not only a cultural melting pot but has also become a "thought marketing tool" using digitally manipulated audio visual content.

Obviously, if in wrong hands, it can blindfold masses to behave the way the media controller wants. Social impact of broadcast television has been extensively investigated by the researchers at the Annenberg School of Communications of University of Pennsylvania in the USA.

As one watches the growth of this audio-visual media in India during the last two decades, one would realise how accurate late Dr. George Gerbner, Annenberg School dean, was when he said that the aggregate flow of reiterated formulae and formats "cultivates" the social environment almost as farming cultivates the natural environment. He further stated that due to the pervasiveness of television, characteristic images of the world become the most familiar aspects of a shared cultural environment within which minds are fertilised and nurtured. Therefore one must be concerned about who says what, how, to whom, with what effect and for what purpose using this media.

Television, in any case, has always been often put to manipulative use everywhere, sometimes politically, but many more times commercially and socially. So the control of media is necessary, especially in India when commercial and media ownership is often foreign, in most of the cases indirectly.

The Third Parent was published in 1991 just before we set up Metro Channels offering air time to private media people. All along this long period the I & B administration keeps on creating policy proposals for harnessing media and then we find Media Industry raising objections and using their media power to debate on who should do it and to what extent. The objective seems to be to eventually shoot down every proposal. The television viewers of India, who indeed are potential victims of private media manipulation, never ever get heard. Our IAS run Government responds by taking adhoc actions to regulate media. Lack of continuance in governance seems to have lead to actions and reactions changing and depending on who is in power. The privatisation of media began since 1992 and my committee suggested a detailed code of conduct based on the fact that unlike cinema and its captive audience, television's place is in living rooms and bed rooms of private homes and is being watched by

everyone in the family starting from babies in arms to their great grandparents. We had worked on a simple hypothesis that all Indian homes have an almost uniform common code of conduct about one's behaviour in a home. Since television is delivering messages in a home, it should have the same code of behaviour as a guest visiting home.

Currently there is no specific control over media besides Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. The rest is achieved through the orders of the government. The Broadcasting Services Regulation Bill of 2006, till recently in a draft state, is now shelved! In the meantime broadcast media coverage continues to have a series of controversies with much of the criticism directed at news, advertising and program content. It includes a Programme Code, further revised in 2008, that imposes restrictions on the content of both programmes and advertisements shown on cable TV. In the process government, by a strange logic, puts responsibility of content regulation on cable operators! In any case, this is becoming redundant with growth of DTH and television programme delivery by Tri-band the telecom companies.

Once again, in 2008, the Supreme Court of India threatened to lay down norms for media coverage of any ongoing criminal investigation. Fake and slanderous sting operations by a television channel have usually generated widespread outrage against the media.

Private television channels relying on satellites for transmission and on cable networks for dissemination began to make their presence felt when several 24-hour Indian news channels started competing. Intense competition amongst an alarmingly growing number of private broadcasters is an important reason for media crossing the line regularly. Over seventy news channels are today in operation and each one is eager to 'break' the news. So they usually end up creating the news themselves!

Media regulation remains in limbo as in almost every aspect of governance. It is therefore unprepared to deal with the rapid proliferation of media in terms of channels and a variety of its

content. One can therefore find that its official response to media mischief is slow, hesitant and often confused.

While the government remains silent, Delhi intellectuals, repeatedly seen expressing their 'studied' opinions on every issue under the Sun, are 'used' by media owners for criticizing the government over-stepping in media control and accusing it for acting like some kind of 'culture police'. Of course everyone debates except those who should develop a policy and legislate it. The government remains unconcerned.

In 1997, the government in power wanted "to establish an autonomous Broadcasting Authority for the purposes of facilitating and regulating broadcasting services in India so that they become competitive in terms of quality of services, cost of services and use of new technologies". But the much talked about 1997 Broadcast Bill was never even tabled in the parliament.

So what currently controls the communications and the media are laws that the British framed; Indian Telegraph Act 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933, the Telegraph Wire Unlawful Possession Act, 1950, and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997. After three years, the fate of Broadcasting Services Regulation Bill, 2006 was recently sealed by scrapping it. It is interesting to notice that it was primarily opposed by the media industry and allies since it affects their business model to maximise commercial profits.

They regularly used Delhi intellectuals in precast television debates to cry wolf and express grave concern about government regulations as a threat to the media's freedom of expression.

**How does media work? Why Regulate?**

The mass media wields enormous power in today's world. They are not just disseminating entertainment, information and knowledge. What they disseminate is also shaping values and norms, moulding behaviour and modulating opinions. Many popular commercial channels are promoting life styles promoting consumerism.

The media selects what is delivered and dispense views along with news. They reiterate and try to imbibe a point of view. They hide facts and decide what the viewers must be bothered about, what issues and developments they should be informed about etc.

The media uses its power to pressurise the State to act by posing to act in public interest. The news media in particular have traditionally played a key role in democracy by creating what is known as the "public sphere", where information essential to citizen participation in national and community life is supposed to be presented and where issues of importance to the public can be discussed and debated. Such a public sphere is indispensable to democratic society because democracy critically depends upon an informed populace making political choices.

So citizens of a democracy do have a stake in the media and, consequently, they do not have the right to be heard on media-related matters - not only issues relating to media content but also concerning media policy. Indeed, the democratisation of the media is one of the important challenges of the future.

Commercial Television, in any case, can't be necessarily expected to be a 'public broadcaster'. It would be presumptuous to expect it since each commercial channel has its own agenda and character, the centre piece of its operation is either financial profit or inserting a message of interest in society's psyche. Television is a culture industry and therefore has social and psychological implications for the people of India. This certainly calls for restraints and guidelines so that media is not wrongly exploited by its owners, undermining social implications to earn profits at any cost or use it for political propaganda or some other motive.

Television is like a knife, one that can hurt or heal depending on who is using it. Many private broadcasters have indeed made watching television a rewarding activity; teaching, encouraging, enthusing and entertaining. There are many private channels that look more like public television, adding value to the viewer's knowledge.

Private channels also have given more choice. Such channels need not worry about an independent regulator. However multiple

owners with multiple interests have posed challenges for ethics, accountability and transparency across the industry. Amid intense competition, the need for quality standards and parameters seem ever more critical, both for companies as well as for audiences.

**TV Media Regulation in India - How and When?**

India's television industry is growing very rapidly. Global media players have found a new and rewarding opportunity to profit. The entry of foreign media players is almost unrestricted. In addition, we have the least regulated 'free-for-all' television. For a decade now we keep on debating who should do it.

With a government reputed for procrastinating and with a transient leadership in charge of media, it is unlikely that there would be a solution anytime soon. Competition is growing but television business remains a profitable growth industry. In 2007 reported combined revenues were about 23.0 billion rupees. The advertising agencies are happy with three hundred channels and ever growing airtime for adverts.

Like paper journalism, television as a powerful audio-visual media, has place in society because of the services they give to society. Many therefore believe that it should be almost, selfless, altruistic or charitable social service. But it is indeed a commercial business today. The Public Broadcasting Service is primarily responsible for 'self-less social service' that works either within a state allocated budget or is run by NGOs using donations or sponsorship.

Prasar Bharati, in spite of a priceless infrastructure, is neither a focussed public service television nor does it show any promise as a commercial channel that can set an example by being a model.

**Self Regulation?**

In July 2007 I &B Ministry brought another proposal in form of the Broadcasting Services Regulation Bill, 2007. This was accompanied by Self-Regulation Guidelines for the Broadcasting Sector further revised in early 2008.

Again the broadcast industry quickly and vehemently opposed both for certain provisions. The coalition Government backed out and agreed that 'The Indian Broadcasting Foundation' (IBF) and 'The News Broadcasters Association', (NBA) the two outfits of the private broadcasters, should draft guidelines for self-regulation before the government takes its decision.

Finally in December 2008, the so called self-regulation guidelines for media were unveiled. This was provoked by the 26/11 terror disaster coverage. The frenzied media coverage of the 60-hour terror strike in Mumbai had elicited widespread criticism from the public and the government.

With visual media drawing the flak for coverage India's Broadcasters Association finally acted to quench the fire by stating their hurriedly made self-regulatory guidelines like no live reporting of hostage crises and blocking information that may help terrorists etc. The broadcasters were also ordered to avoid live contact with victims and with security personnel engaged in rescue operations such as in 26/11-like situations.

Justice J.S. Verma, who headed the drafting committee, had then promised that these guidelines were the "first big step" in the direction of self-regulation that would soon follow. The then MoS for Information and Broadcasting, Shri Anand Sharma, made a further promise to the parliament that the government constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee to look into specific violations of programme and advertisement codes by satellite channels at national level and to recommend action against them for such violation. That, my friends, is more than a year ago! Shri Anand Sharma is currently the Minister for Commerce!

It is interesting that public interest is completely ignored by the government as well as the media industry! There has never been any public debate initiated either by the government or by media organisations.

The real stakeholders, citizens, are nowhere to be seen. In February 2008 the government created a number of state and district-level "monitoring bodies" meant to assess

nongovernmental broadcast entities in terms of their conformity with programme code of the Cable TV Rules. It was a good move but again poorly administered. These committees have bureaucrats, police personnel and representatives of the journalism profession.

It also set up the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content of all news channels and FM radio stations. The EMMC will certainly facilitate the regulation of private broadcast but it should not be another government department. In one more positive action, in October 2008, government created the "News Broadcasting Standards Disputes Redressal Authority", a nine-member body headed by former Chief Justice of India J S Verma, four editors from different news channels and four 'eminent persons' drawn from different walks of life.

**Why Self Regulation will not work?**

There are many more reasons why self-regulation will never work for India. We know that for law breakers there is a hidden political patronage. In addition we have on hand a nation that is predominantly illiterate making us easy victims of media manipulation for profit. Uninformed masses that watch television are indeed not 'critical' consumers. Until the consumers become media wise there is always a danger of misguiding or misleading them. It is true that government bureaucracy should not be a regulator. Such an authority has to be constituted with full time members from amongst the legal experts' sociologists' communication technologists' journalists with representatives of women etc; all of whom have to be persons of integrity and reputation. They need to be backed by a well structured telecast monitoring agency. There must be an informal feedback network from various states consisting of select men and women of repute to bring in social grass root responses and observations on media performance and out of line behaviour. Such a regulatory body will certainly not curb the freedom of India's free media. In fact, a set of prescribed codes issued by such an authority will enhance broadcaster's power of expression.

### Who is regulating Media in 2009?

Actually there is no need to bother about who would regulate before we lay down regulatory guidelines. However media owners and a week-kneed government prefer to debate this rather than establish a regulatory code. If it was in place people will then have a reference and seek help from authorities or courts to protect their right.

For the last five long years the debate is on who does this and how? The options being discussed are: government regulation, self-regulation by the industry and co-regulation involving all stakeholders, including audience, civil society, broadcast industry and also the government.

There is still no specific single national media policy. Existing regulations that govern broadcast content are primarily programme or advertising codes in the Cable Television Networks Act of 1995. Today that is inadequate, if not irrelevant, to tackle issues arising today, particularly in relation to satellite channels, music channels, news channels and direct-to-home platforms. There are many agencies that have some role in regulating media. The scene is confusing to say the least. Let us take a long hard look at the current state of affairs:

- Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting functions as a policy-maker and content regulator.
- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), at one point given responsibility for regulation of the broadcast sector (in addition to the telecommunications sector) but involved primarily with issues of technology, such as carriage regulation and pricing.
- Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) which, as the name implies, is the body to which appeals can be made for problems relating to broadcast regulation.
- Ministry of Communications & Information Technology (MCIT), which has responsibility for licensing transmission equipment (radio through the Wireless Planning & Coordination or WPC wing), satellites, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) and, potentially, Mobile TV.

- The law courts - in the absence of an independent regulator, the courts are often called upon to adjudicate on broadcast-related issues and they are playing an increasingly proactive role in matters of media regulation.
- Head post offices in various cities, given responsibility for registering cable TV networks.
- State/District level Monitoring Committees and Authorised Officers, entrusted under the Cable Television Act with the responsibility to prevent the transmission of "certain programmes in public interest" (NB: The Authorised Officer is empowered to seize broadcast equipment).
- The Inter-Ministerial Committee constituted by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to look into complaints regarding violations of the programme and advertisement codes connected to the Cable Television Act and Rules.
- National Commission for Women recommended amendments to Indecent Representation of Women Act (relating to the depiction of women in the media) aimed at expanding the scope of the Act to include electronic and digital media, besides broadening the definition of 'indecent representation,' and making punishment for infringements more stringent.
- In a parallel development, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) sought clarifications from the Ministry of Labour in an effort to determine whether or not children's participation in TV programmes, including reality shows, should be viewed as child labour and thereby violate of laws against the economic exploitation of children.
- Around the same time the Union Ministry for Women & Child Development (WCD), also weighed in, criticising the media – especially some television channels – for their handling of the murder of 14-year-old Aarushi Talwar in May 2008.
- In mid-December 2008 the Committee on Petitions of the upper house of Parliament focused its 132nd report on a petition regarding alleged misuse of the right to freedom of speech and expression by both print and electronic media and the need to restrict this under Article 19 [2] of the Constitution. Giving its

opinion on a variety of media issues the Committee came out in favour of statutory regulations to cover media – both print and electronic – in the larger interests of society.

## Issue of Media Ownership

One important issue that needs to be dealt with urgently is growing concentration of media ownership in our country with strong presence in press, radio and broadcast television. The concern arises since the real owners of media in several cases are not Indian.

There is a need to restrict cross-media ownership restrictions as currently exists in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, Italy and Greece. Still, this continues to be an issue of great debate and the Federal Communications Commission of the U.S. recently announced an intention to review media ownership rules to address the issue of media consolidation and the impact it has had on diversity of news coverage.

Essentially channels telecast what they want including damaging reputation and indulging in slander and can also ignore public outcry. One can only hope that people in this country, like in Europe and the US, will have a voice and a regulation they use to stop media misuse. There is an earnest hope that one day the government will wake up and ensure that there is accountability, transparency and clearly stated quality standards. The only option people have today is to ask courts to intervene like when the media was admonished to show restraint in covering ongoing court cases and a call for establishing content standards and guidelines.

## Regulation of content in UK

UK has always had content control to regulate broadcasting. Earlier this responsibility of regulation had been entrusted to the Independent Broadcasting Authority for commercial TV channels, the Cable Authority for content of Cable TV channels and the Radio Authority to oversee a radio broadcast.

Today all of that is replaced by a single statutory body called Ofcom. UK and almost all European countries have found that

self-regulation just does not work and believe that leaving this responsibility to private broadcasters is just being careless about their social responsibility.

The Office of Communications of the United Kingdom was established in 2002 as the independent regulator and competition authority for the country's communications industries. It is a statutory corporation accountable to Parliament but independent of the Government.

Ofcom's jurisdiction extends across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services; and its responsibilities cover both content and infrastructure in the communications sector. The new institution took over functions of the Radio Authority and the Independent Television Commission, which consequently ceased to exist in 2003.

Ofcom's statutory duties under the Communications Act, 2003, are "to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters, and to further interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition".

The specific responsibilities of Ofcom are:

- Ensuring optimal use of the electro-magnetic spectrum.
- Ensuring that a wide range of electronic communications services - including high speed data services - is available throughout the UK.
- Ensuring a wide range of TV and radio services of high quality and wide appeal.
- Maintaining plurality in the provision of broadcasting.
- Applying adequate protection for audiences against offensive or harmful material.
- Applying adequate protection for audiences against unfairness or infringement of privacy.
- Ofcom is a ready model available but we seem to be intent of inventing a wheel of our own.

# Socio-cultural Consequences of Satellite Television

### Positive Impact of TV

Mass media was enabled in the 1450 when Gutenberg invented the Printing Press in Germany. Knowledge and information found a way to spread and since then it got democratised. After that everyone could record and widely circulate their thoughts and ideas by printing copies. Anyone could acquire, store and retrieve information. After that came new inventions in the 19th century for voice recording and projecting moving pictures to enrich the mass media.

Although a vast tradition of scholarship existed in ancient India, the first Indian newspaper was published in 1780 in Calcutta. All through these centuries the growth of media has helped the human race to become progressively more productive and global in spread. The rate of technological progress in 20th century has been geometric and spectacular progress of digital technology has helped the world to quickly move from the machine age to the knowledge age. Especially a technology laced media business during the last two decades since 1990 has helped information spread to grow five times larger than growth in the entire previous century.

Television is indeed a unique breakthrough. Eighty years after the first commercial broadcast occurred in the US, television still rules the world; in fact it is captivating masses more than ever before. However television has been as reviled as it has been welcomed ever since the first broadcasts began in 1928.

Critics of television, including conservatives and culture warriors all over the world have blamed it for wrong influences and moral decline, among other assorted ills. Some go even further.

A recent fatwa in India calls using television as a sin! Last year, a top Saudi cleric declared it permissible to kill the executives of television stations for spreading sedition and immorality. However, recent history reveals that no government or religion has been particularly successful in suppressing its progress and freedom.

An in depth analysis of media in the last two decades since 'The Third Parent' was written tell me that in many ways, television has proved to be a blessing for a predominantly illiterate country like India. Our people have been starved of information that will help them to live better and have the information to make choices. Knowledge stored in print has been inaccessible to 80% of Indians due to functional illiteracy.

Consequently their information gathering is limited to hearsay, gossip and religious and social discourses. Television has freed information locked in written words. It is today pouring information in the lives of men, women and children in spite of their illiteracy handicap.

It is also professionally packaged for ease of understanding, often laced with fun. Information is vital and indispensable in today's knowledge age. Television is doing that job remarkably well. It is indeed making a positive impact on our society even though there are serious concerns about its misuse and accent of some channels on violence and sexual excess. Information and knowledge is moral –neutral but its morality is decided by the ruling cultural and social ethos. We are an information- hungry society. We need an ever increasing amount of information in order to maintain and enhance our quality of life.

As aptly said, the over-all purpose of any media is to inform, to compare, direct, influence, teach, project images or to orient. Television today is captivating masses for long hours each day. It is informing, entertaining and directly or indirectly educating viewers.

It promotes ideas, cultures and values as per wishes of those who create programs and those who watch them intently. Every program has purpose and those with high communication skill realise that objective with ease and appropriate content and presentation. Television not only informs and entertains but it is usually reiterative to stress with persuasion and to imbibe. Its influence however changes the cultural complexion of the society

slowly. The impact of the electronic media in general and television in particular has to be seen on the backdrop of our tradition and value based social structure.

The electronic Media in its current state of technology development and spread however includes many other ways that one communicates. Besides radio, television and cinema, we have computers, internet, cellular phones to enable the spread of information much wider and significantly more effective. For instance, cellular telephones have added tremendously to personal and organisational efficiency and productivity.

It is limited today to not just the elite but has spread to farmers, artisans, common citizens and children. New communication tools have helped society in innumerable ways. It has made life faster, safer and far more rewarding than a generation ago. People all over India including almost every adult illiterate are far better informed about his surroundings, his country and have brought about a change in his way of life. Voters can now learn about contesting candidates from several sources and can therefore exercise their right as a citizen more thoughtfully than ever before. It has indeed strengthened our democracy. The electronic media is serving several functions in our society. It spreads information and interprets it almost to prescribe conduct, convey it in a manner consistent to our heritage and bring about a change in our life style and preferences.

The globalisation of the world is essentially limited to commercial business. Cultural globalisation has therefore to primarily serve commercial interest. The promotion of a uniform lifestyle is one such need that serves the goal of multinationals is to expand market for a product globally. Take the example of jeans. Every young person in Asia has switched over to jeans.

Traditional clothing has broadly disappeared in China, India and all other Asian countries. Most of the young have developed a need for a Nike or a Reebok and a craving for a Mac or a coke.

Creating global brands needs cultural globalisation and that has happened; thanks mainly to television. It is therefore natural that

electronic Media in general and television in particular is today deeply invaded by sponsors of consumerism.

There is yet another thought at work. The marketing challenge twenty-five years ago was taking the largest market share of the goods and services that people want. The new marketing skill is to develop a market by creating a demand. The ambition to ensure limitless business growth needs to sell goods and services even to those who do not need it. This needs not just only luring the masses but making then greedy. In fact businesses have more or less succeeded in making young consumers guilty of not possessing specific branded merchandise.

The mantra that media masters have successfully embedded in people's mind is beg, borrow or steal but be a proud owner of even a useless - and often harmful - product. Technologically improved products to innovatively improve working life and leisure time sell by merit of their utility.

But selling coke or bottled water needs very clever marketing. That's where television is a very useful medium for stroking fear or lure to create demand for non-essentials. Then of course media must provoke more by making what was sold quickly obsolete with a new model with irresistible features.

Commercial Satellite television is therefore here to stay and grow. The growth process of commercial television, both on ground, in the air and the way it is created and capitalized makes a remarkable story. Commercialized mass media has in fact created a new culture. Even though frivolous, it has taken deep roots in Indian society. It is indeed a global phenomenon. The even more morally unique concept of global village of human community has been hijacked, making globalisation limited to the commercial relations. It has become increasingly clear that world media relations have changed since the late 80s when I wrote 'The Third Parent". Today what was then happening in US, has caught up with our national and regional cultural ethos and in many instances their roots are in the western cultural ethos.

One of the potentially more dangerous parts of media behaviour is its focus on children. Ever since commercial television entered

homes, businesses recognized children as a distinct consumer market. In the last few years in India advertisers have been focusing on strategies to reach the child consumer. A growing interest in children as consumers has been paralleled by increased concern of parents and sociologists about consequences of marketing aimed at children especially in television advertising.

These concerns are fuelled by empirical evidence that children's exposure to television advertising may indeed lead to materialistic attitudes, increased purchase requests, and parent-child conflict. In absence of parental mediation it is found that potentially undesirable advertising effects are severe. Parental mediation however does affect the influence of television advertising on materialism, purchase requests, and parent-child conflict. At least in middle class literate homes parental mediation is found to be the most effective tool in management of television's influence on children. Very young children in these households usually watch television in a family context largely provided by their parents. This family context not only influences how children use the medium and messages they get from it but also how literate children become as television viewers.

But there is a bigger aspect related to a commercial television matrix. Advertisers essentially ride on 'program content' that is indeed a 'cultural product'. The consequent marketing experts for the goods and services also control cultural products. Many of these are conceptually imported from the west and they come with the accompanying beliefs, values, and ideologies. This programming has been influencing our lifestyles and this could be a form of cultural imperialism of the west.

One sees its manifestation even in a 'closed' and guarded country like China. Dominant nations have clear strategies concerning export of cultural products. We in India are adopting media foreign technology as reflected in corresponding software or programming. One can see that most of these policies primarily benefit the elite. As a result we have been hypothesized to absorb values, working styles, consumption patterns, and so on, from the US. What is most insidious about this process is that it tends to be unilateral. So far there is very little two way flow.

We can see that, with a few exceptions like Zee, the ownership of major local media organizations are, directly or indirectly, in the hands of, or operating in the interest of, multinational corporations. Even when media organizations are locally or nationally owned, formal managerial control is by national elites with strong foreign interests.

In India we have a substantial media production infrastructure but a lot of program content is based on imported ideas. One can just look at conceptual models such as in media scheduling (24-hour), formatting (news-entertainment-information), genre (sit-com, drama, etc.), and production techniques (slick and high-budget production values). Not surprisingly, professional ideologies also accompany programming and technology. Look at the indirect impact of this as reflected in cultural enterprises such as theme parks, shopping malls, fast food dining, and professional sports.

## Negative Impact of Television

### Impact on Children – Concerns of Parents the World Over

The past two decades have witnessed a virtual explosion in television media and internet eagerly embraced by adolescents. The convergence of communication and computer technologies has many social and educational benefits, but research studies have established that it has disturbed the cultural continuity of a society or a nation. The cultural and behavioural make-up of a child has traditionally been the exclusive prerogative of parents. That is when cultural preservation is set in motion. Television in living rooms and bedrooms has disturbed this route for cultural continuity. Any number of research studies has established this over the last three decades. Everyone believed that public broadcasting will supplement and augment this role of parents and teachers to assure cultural homogeneity in the community. But culturally neutral commercialisation of television has threatened this. The upper- most concern relates to growingly violent behaviour of children. A panel of experts came together to discuss the latest information on how technology is used by young people to behave aggressively. The panel affirmed the need for a

purposeful approach to preventing youth violence and aggression perpetrated through the use of electronic media.

### Growth of Violence

One of the biggest concerns of many people is violence. For years people have spoken about the relationship between violence on television and aggressive behaviour in children. Researchers in the US and UK have also found that not only violent television that has a negative impact on children, but on all media viewing. There is empirical evidence that today urban cities all over the world are very unsafe as compared to what it was 40 years ago. The homicide rate, when corrected for population growth, has increased manifold during these 40 years.

A US study reveals that in Detroit, the homicide rate in 1953 was 130, and in 1992 it was 726. In LA County, the number of homicides grew from 82 in 1953 to 2,512 in 1992, yet the population just doubled in size.

In India we don't bother to study anything. The I & B ministry has over a billion rupee budget but it can't find a few million rupees to engage qualified social scientists to study impact of television and other electronic media like the internet or cellular phones on Indian masses. The results will help planners know and draw up relevant strategies. One could write books on all factors contributing to such a growth of violence, for there is never a single cause of such a tremendous social change.

There can be no doubt that vast changes in home life and the greater prevalence of consumerism are significant factors. Surely there are many other factors, such as a national failure in reducing illiteracy, education becoming a business, lack of values presented in schools and elsewhere, and much more.

Viewing television violence is indeed not the only factor contributing to violence in society, there are other social ills like joblessness and behaviour of the neo-rich and corrupt politicians as portrayed in Bollywood creations.

### Television's Impact on Women in India

A recent study from the University of Chicago has shown that simply turning on television can greatly influence a woman's social standing in rural India. The authors' analysis is based on a survey of 2,500 women in 180 villages in India; they were interviewed once a year for three years in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

These years represent a time of rapid growth in rural cable access. During the three years of the study, cable television was newly introduced in 21 of the 180 participating villages. The analysis in the paper relies on comparing changes in gender attitudes and behaviours between years across villages based on whether (and when) they added cable television. The authors used several measures of the status of women.

They began with two measures of attitudes: attitudes toward beating and son preference. Attitudes toward spousal abuse were measured by asking women whether beating is acceptable in six possible situations (if a woman neglects children, is unfaithful, etc.), and counting the total number of situations in which she reports beating is acceptable.

The preference for a son was measured by asking women who want more children whether they want their next child to be a boy. The researchers, Jensen and Oster, found large effects of cable on both these variables.

Women who live in villages that introduce cable see a large decline in both the number of acceptable beating situations and son preference; villages that do not introduce cable see no change. This change happens between 2001 and 2002 for villages introducing cable in 2002, and between 2002 and 2003 for villages yet to introduce cable in 2003. In other words, the timing of change in attitudes lines up with the timing of change in cable access.

### How Cable Television Affects Status ?

Soap operas are among the most popular shows on cable: the most popular show in both 2000 and 2007 (based on Indian Nielsen ratings) is "Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi ," a show based

around the life of a wealthy industrial family in the large city of Mumbai.

Many characters on popular soap operas have more education, marry later, and have smaller families – all things rarely found in rural areas; and many female characters work outside the home, sometimes as professionals, running businesses, or in other positions of authority.

By exposing rural households to urban attitudes and values, cable and satellite television may lead to drastic improvements in status for rural women. It is this possibility that Jensen and Oster explore in their paper.

In particular, they evaluate the effect of introduction of cable and satellite television on a variety of measures of women's status: autonomy, attitudes toward spousal abuse, son preference, and fertility.

In addition, they explore the effects on education for children, which some authors argue will increase when the status of women is higher.

"That simply turning on the television can improve a woman's life as well as that of her children is particularly intriguing in light of the traditional and somewhat more complex approaches to promoting education and enhancing women's standing in society," said Oster.

"For instance, calls to "empower women" are often vague. Reducing poverty, building schools, and improving teacher quality in order to boost enrolment may be as difficult to accomplish as the problems they are attempting to solve."

# Chapter 6

## A Way to Avoid Harmful Impact of Electronic Media

**- Preparing the society for the Knowledge Age by promoting Media Literacy.**

### What is Media Literacy?

Media literacy is defined as the ability to sift through and analyse the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day. It's the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media - from music videos and Web environments to product placement in films and virtual displays of sports. It's about asking pertinent questions about what's there, and noticing what's not there.

And it's the instinct to question that lies behind media productions - motives, money, values and ownership - and to be aware of how these factors influence content.

Media education encourages a probing approach to the world of media: Who is this message intended for? Who wants to reach the audience, and why? From whose perspective is this story told? Whose voices are heard, and whose are absent? What strategies does the message use to get my attention and make me feel included? In our world of multi-tasking, commercialism, globalisation and interactivity, media education isn't about having the right answers - it's about asking the right questions.

The result is lifelong empowerment of the learner and citizen. The media Culture of the 21st century is the result of industrialisation of information and culture. Images, sounds and spectacles help produce the fabric of life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behaviour, and providing materials out of which people often forge their identities.

Our young people need to be educated to the highest standard in this new information age, and surely it includes a clear awareness of how the media influences, shapes, and defines their lives. Media literacy is not just important, it's absolutely critical. It's going to make a difference between whether our youngsters are a tool of mass media or whether mass media is a tool for kids to use.

Television is indeed an important innovation in communication since the printing press. It however communicates far more

effectively using visuals of crafted images as well as naturally using professionally written words. To understand this new powerful communication medium one has to learn a new kind of vocabulary of the media arts. It is an essential tool for understanding, and perhaps one day communicating, in the new digital medium.  Remember 3G mobile will be in the hands of the Indians in just a few weeks. After that even personal communication will not be just voice and text messages!

Media literacy is a basic tool for citizenship in an Information Society. Our education system is however not thinking about it. Why simply complain that television hurts our children? Are we equipping them to use this new information age communication?

Media literacy is an essentially expanded notion of literacy. It has to be learnt in the current Digital Media world of Internet, television, mobile phones etc that dominate our informational landscape. It helps people understand, produce, and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words, and sounds.

A media-literate person - and everyone should have the opportunity to become one - can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training vary widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence.

Currently parents and elders complain that the professional persuaders of electronic media have the upper hand: money, media access, sophisticated personnel utilizing scientific techniques, aided and abetted by psychologists and sociologists skilled in analyzing human behaviour. All of that is just one side. On the other side, those who are persuaded, the average citizen and consumers, are media illiterate. Who is training the citizen to be media literate? There is no coherent, systematic effort in the schools today to prepare our future citizens for a new sophisticated literacy.

Huge and powerful industries - alcohol, tobacco, junk food, drugs, diet - count on our media-illiterate population.

Indeed they depend upon a population disempowered and easy prey to gett addicted. These industries will and do fight for their business interest with all their mighty resources. And we have no option but fight back, using media education which enables us to understand, analyze, interpret, to expose hidden agendas and manipulation, bring about constructive change, and to further positive aspects of the media.

Dalai Lama has observed that film and television, newspapers, books and radio together have an influence over individuals unimagined a hundred years ago. But, saintly as he is, he expects that people who work in media have a great responsibility to use it with caution.

He however adds, "it is not the case that we have no power over what we take from the media. When the media focuses too closely on the negative aspects of human nature, there is a danger that we become persuaded that violence and aggression are its principle characteristics...good news is not remarked on precisely because there is so much of it."

Media literacy has parallels with traditional literacy; the ability to read and write text. Media literacy is ability to 'read' and 'write' audiovisual information rather than text. At its simplest level media literacy is an ability to use a range of media and be able to understand information received.

Actually text literacy is never about reading; it is also about writing. Just as campaigns for universal print literacy were concerned with democratising the tools of public expression - the written word, in today's knowledge society one must strive to empower people with contemporary implements of public discourse: video, graphic arts, photography, interactive digital media. More customary mainstays of public expression - expository writing and public speaking - must be resuscitated as well.

Media literacy cannot simply be seen as a vaccination against advertising, public relations and other familiar strains of

institutionalised guile. It must be understood as an education in techniques that can democratise the realm of public expression and will magnify the possibility of meaningful public interactions. Distinctions between publicist and citizen, author and audience, need to be broken down. Education can facilitate this process. Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skilful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages. As communication technologies transform society, they impact our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and diverse cultures, making media literacy an essential life skill for the 21st century.

In Germany, media literacy or "media competency," as it is termed, is a voluntary program in the schools, mostly for grades 5-10. It has a broad mandate, with the following specific goals: to compensate for negative media effects, to lead students to reflective reception, to educate students to an authoritative use of all media and to encourage students to create media themselves! We have there a model to work from.

Media competency classes extend today to all information technologies, from books to computers. Also relevant is a mandatory curriculum in computer-information technology, exemplary in its integrative approach joining technological with socio-political concerns.

Media literate people should be able to use the internet to find information and accept that sometimes what they find may represent a particular view rather than a statement of objective fact. They will be able to control what they and their children see to avoid being offended. They may also be confident enough to be able to order and pay for goods and services online and to create their own website and contribute to a chat room discussion.

A media literate person is defined as one who can access, analyse, evaluate, and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training

range widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, selfesteem, and consumer competence. A range of emphases will expand with the growth of media literacy.

Media Literacy helps one to produce a radio or television documentary or an interactive display for analysing creation and reception of a television program and significance for our multicultural but caste divided society. Some may use media literacy as a vehicle to understand economic infrastructure of mass media, as a key element in the social construction of public knowledge. Others may use it primarily as a method to study and express unique aesthetic properties of a particular medium. Media knowledge helps one to understand some basic precepts such as media are constructed, and construct reality, that they have commercial implications and they also can have ideological and political implications.

# Using Commercial Television for "Innovative Education" without Hurting Channel Profits

The broadcast radio and television scene has undergone a dramatic change since the media monopoly has ended. The available airtime has increased enormously and since there is more supply than demand, its cost has dropped to a fraction. That's why there are hundreds of television channels beamed in India. Satellite and related technologies like data compression has helped reduce costs further. This has made it possible to cost effectively manage Television Channels catering to special interest groups.

This offers some interesting possibilities. Let me list them.

### One - Selling Shapes of sounds - Akshar Parichaya

Entire knowledge one needs to conduct oneself efficiently and safely in the world is all stored in written text. Any form of formal or self-learning therefore needs reading and writing skills. Lack of it hurts learning capability and therefore progress, productivity, efficiency and self-care of an individual. Literacy is a vital skill for personal advances in life. However, every adult, including those without literacy skill, understands one's mother tongue as a spoken language. So reading written text involves knowing symbols constituting the alphabets - the shapes of the sounds!

Commercial Television is an ideal medium for anchoring Devnagari alphabets, aksharas, into viewer's memory. Devanagari is the script of phonetic languages like Marathi & Hindi. In short, the spoken and written word in these languages is exactly alike. Devanagari Script has 40 main alphabets of which 28 are consonants and 12 are vowels. Each consonant is indeed a picture of a specific sound and so is every vowel. Therefore once a non-literate person learns and memorizes pictures of these 28 consonants, he will take the first step toward literacy; akshar parichay. Add to every consonant a vowel and one write any sound!

One can deploy media artists to use their creative talents to produce 10 or 20-Second Spots, one for each alphabet, to 'sell' these. These should be like advertisement spots shown during popular programs on various Television Channels to sell merchandise. Creative media brains can create such 'Akshara Spots', like those used to effectively sell soaps, and help the task of imbibing in the minds of the viewers shapes of characters representing sounds of these 28 consonants and 12 vowels that constitute Marathi and Hindi written text. These 'AKSHARA' spots should be regularly and repeatedly telecast, strategically intermingled with popular television programs on television channels, especially religious discourses, mythological serials and other programs that attract illiterate viewers. This would be their first step towards functional literacy. Then using their combination with the twelve vowels, he or she can read elementary words. All this will happen without hurting the commercial revenue of the channel.

The next step could be to string words and sentences. These literacy programs could be gainfully conducted by the screen magnets like Amitabh Bacchan or any of the Khans or popular Bollywood female actor. They would join in and sponsors will tag along. Since this will attract a large number of illiterate adults to the television screen, channel can have advertisers and a commercially viable serial for literacy. The entire nation could turn this into a movement by encouraging local literacy clubs to be formed at rural and urban level by local volunteers. They would use these telecasts to gather the local population to watch and offer local help and guidance.

### Two - Television Diploma in Office Work

One important reason why our institutional service quality hurts our productivity, our reputation and our image is the lack of formal training of workforce in offices. There are no courses to formally train even the graduates in office work. Everyone ends up learning the desired skills by the trial and error. Isn't it possible for a television channel to start a diploma course in Office Work? May be a two hundred episode audio-visual training package that

prepares the viewer to learn the essential skills to become an efficient and well behaved office assistant? One needs to learn the skills like receiving or making phone calls, learn about operation and maintenance of office appliances like the fax machines, paper copiers, calculators, familiarize with office procedures like filing systems, cultivate the right ways to deal with visitors, colleagues, superiors. One also needs to learn about proper attire on the job, dressing for an occasion, write appropriate letters, memos etc. A TV Channel Diploma in Office Work will be a winner since it has a value. If one is seeking a job, won't prospective employers recognize such a TV Diploma even if it's from a TV Broadcaster? Besides developing our human resources, such course will put a feather in the cap of the channel that does it. It is a social service. The interesting part is that this exercise will be commercially very rewarding. It could be more profitable than many worthless serials that do more harm than good.

The orientation course, on a similar line, could be developed for young girls in their teens and prepare them to conduct their lives safely and productively. Our womenfolk have to be prepared to ensure that they are not exploited and ill treated like they are today. Such program will equip them with right information to turn even the illiterate amongst them into bold and efficient family managers. It would be a sort of a finishing course but without foolishly and blindly pushing them to take to western culture. Do we not have enough 'phoney pretenders' in south Mumbai, south Delhi and south Kolkata?

## Three - Development of Occupational Skills

The advertisers today support programs that attract the target viewership they are interested in. For instance, businesses making products for household interiors will want to advertise programs created to impart related skills since its viewers are their potential customers. Every craftsman and tradesman uses commercial products and tools such as paints, wood, laminates, glues, hardware, fasteners, electrical and plumbing accessories etc. So someone was to start a specialty channel called 'Skills', it can be a commercially viable preposition. Such a channel will help us as a

country in developing good work culture and improve quality of workmanship of our craftsmen while channels make their profits and product suppliers enhance their sales. It would be the most effective way to educate even the semiliterate artisans, upgrading their skills, improving work culture and attitudes. It would add to their self-esteem. Interestingly, for this to be achieved, lack of literacy is indeed no barrier to their learning.

Look at industries making products used by plumbers, carpenters, electricians, painters, auto mechanics, technicians repairing home appliances, tailors or those employed in service industries like salesmen, waiters in restaurants, clerks, telephone operators and even construction workers or street-side vendors. Such industries would want to sponsor and even give expert inputs to train actual users of their products. Sponsoring such programs promises them better utilization of their products, better end user service and brand building amongst their 'real' clients.

We often wonder why Indians are such poor performers in competitive sports and rarely involved in pursuing participative adventures one encounters even in China. Our interest in sports or fine arts ends up in us being ringside viewers. Won't art material manufacturers benefit if they teach using watercolours, oil paints or textile paints through an audio-visual guidance on a television channel? As a manufacturer of mountain climbing accessories wouldn't one be interested not in just sponsoring but also help developing such skills?

### Ideas that would work
## District Satellite Channel - HAMARA Channel

Television addiction has grown into a wild fire and has engulfed Indian households. Can we use this more beneficially since we have a remotely programmable guest in every home? Everyone, from a grandpa to a two year old tiny tot, is almost addicted to it. The rapid and inevitable growth of cable and satellite television has aided this further.

Cable operators today deliver not only satellite channels but also add their own to that cocktail. DTH delivery is getting common place and getting growingly popular. In a strange way television has added comforts into our living rooms and bedrooms. The family arguments have died. Dads don't fight Moms any more, nor do Granddads argue with dads about family decisions. The colourful range of entertainment and infotainment has done it. Cable television has captivated our society. This glamorous visitor in our homes has now become a permanent paying guest, whom the host pays, but indeed very little in India.

Comfortable and effortless access to TV has already changed the pattern of our life at home. Many students watch television for longer hours than what they spend in their class rooms. This has been worrying some parents. In fact, there are more reasons for one to worry about. It is not the medium but powerful messages television delivers that matter. Many of the 300 channels are purely commercial with no social responsibility. As the new channels grow, parental concern is about social and cultural impact keeps on rising. With government doing nothing, the poor citizen can do little besides worrying.

**Why a private TV channel for a District?**

After extensive research spread over 20 years it is proven that its enormously powerful and hypnotic entertainment and aggregate flow of reiterative formulae `cultivates' the social environment almost as farming cultivates the natural environment. It fertilises and nurtures minds. Since it is so, can this be used as our own tool to closely knit people within a district? Will it not help to develop better understanding amongst the local community which will lead to better knowledge and harmony amongst the residents?

**Logic for a local TV Station:**

1.  Local media has its own merits since today people want to be a part of media. There are innumerable social, cultural, political and commercial aspects in a local community. Look at the success of reality shows. Viewers now want to participate and share. It is much easier to get an opportunity to be on a local district channel.

2.  In the U.S., where media is free and privatised, there are innumerable private local television stations. They are commercial and quite often very popular and well patronized. A study has shown that local Television in the US is often more popular and enjoys considerable more viewers than even their national channels like ABC, CBS, NBC etc.

3.  The district channel would be in a local language, spoken by the majority and all natives of the district. It will carry local images, debate local issues and will provide local information that matters in our daily lives. If these programmes are well produced, local viewers would flock around it. With a large viewer patronage, such a channel will become an attractive low cost medium for prospective local businesses.

4.  There is a wrong belief that informative and educational programs have to be boring. 24 hour News channels were considered impractical till CNN showed the way. On Indian TV we have over 35 of these and some enjoy very good viewership. Why wouldn't locals want to know the news makers in their own district? Why they won't come forward to participate in talent contests and be rated the best in their district?

5.  The same is true of educational TV that got a bad name due to the hopeless unimaginative approach of the government in Delhi to educational TV. Television is a medium for a communicator and not a teacher, unless he is also one. To entice viewers and keep attention is a skill and if those who

possess it are enthused to produce such programs, they will be educating viewers as attractively as they would entertain.

6. I believe that, if managed imaginatively and sensitively, local Television will also succeed in India. Today a channel on a satellite cost a fraction of what it did in the early 90s. This can be done without any investment by the Government and thus save the channel from bureaucrats. One can find money from local people and local businesses.

7. Television is called by some social scientists as a cultural melting pot. Districts like Thane next to Mumbai, in a sense, mirrors India. It not only has its share of urban elite and the middle class but it also has a blue collar working class and equally large population of rural community that includes adivasis. Half of Thane district lacks functional literacy. TV medium needs no skill or literacy to learn form. This media should therefore be communicator's delight. It's mass communication in a true sense.

8. While we think of impact of television programmes on the society, we should remember that basically, it is the message that matters. It all depends on the interest and the attitude of the media owner and the advertiser who funds programmes. Should we not act than merely watch helplessly as the newer channels keep hitting our homes offering tantalising but trivial images created by experts in manufacturing spectacular fantasies and violence?

The district Channel, when and if it becomes a reality, will be the first private television channel in the country be owned and managed by the people of the region.

**Programming of a District Channel:**

1. There is a wrong belief that making programmes for television is expensive. This is not strictly true. It is true that more money can embellish the visual better but the core is not always expensive. An exciting talk show will cost very little as compared to a costume drama shot outdoors. A programme that captures city visuals and highlights its paradoxes, tragedies and comedies may not cost very much but it can be as

captivating as a good TV drama. All such programs will certainly attract adverts.

2. Tenth standard tuitions in mathematics, if conducted by an expert teacher communicator, will achieve extensive but a select set of viewers. There would be enough advertisers who have a message for these youthful 10th standard clients.

3. If the Police Commissioner, the Municipal Commissioner, or the District Collector is interviewed on local channel by a witty interviewer comparable to Rajat Sharma, it can inform, educate and entertain. All such programs, indeed, require more imagination and intensity of purpose than money.

4. There is a scope even to conduct commercially viable courses to develop personality and equip young men and women to be winners. For instance, a diploma course could be started for young women in home science. It can not only educate and inform them on a wide variety of subjects from home management, childcare, and self-care, art of communication etc. but also inform about social psychology and the art of defending themselves from dangers in public life. Put a few simple questions at the end of program and those who send in answers on postcards for, say, 80% of the episodes be given a glossy diploma.

5. Another one could be for young men, to turn them into efficient office workers. They could be coached on how to talk on the telephone, receive and take messages, how to deal with bosses, communicate with visitors and so on. They could also be educated on filing systems, information storage and methods to have quick access to it, etc. They could be demonstrated use and maintenance of copiers, fax machines, personal Computers and could even be guided to be proficient in spoken English. A diploma at the end can get them a job.

6. The district Channel can promote and groom local talents. It will enable budding artists in fine arts to take the first step towards popularity and public acceptance. It can teach youngsters how to draw, how to paint, how to dance. It can inform and educate senior adults on how to live safely with

blood pressure, diabetes and a host of other degenerative diseases and ailments.

Teachers teach; a communicator shares. Leo Buscaglia, in his book `Living, Loving and Learning', says "I don't teach in this class, I learn in it. We get together on a great big rug and sit down and rap for two hours".

7. District channel certainly would attract local businesses to finance it. The power of television will strengthen the hands of socially inclined local NGOs. It can help people come together. It can be effectively used to knit society and make it well informed.

# Chapter 9

## Reality Television - Bane or Boon?

One cannot complete a book like this without devoting a full chapter on reality television; a new genre of programming fast capturing over 60% of prime time air space but something that barely existed on Indian TV in 1991.

No one can deny the importance of reality TV in content development today. A majority of the television channels reaching Indian homes have found Reality TV shows as an attractive option. The sheer number of reality shows on Indian TV channels show that people like these programs. Very often television content planners are not bright or original. It is no wonder, therefore, that they all follow the trend set by the winners.

If one succeeds every other channel rushes to join the bandwagon with a version of it. Most entertainment television channels today have game shows, dance competitions, singing competitions, and reality shows like 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', 'Nach Baliye', 'Bigg Boss' etc. Such programs comprise over thirty percent of the program content on most of the TV channels. Even news channels regularly carry its variations that can be classified as reality TV looking to viewers participation that drives them.

According to a FICCI-Price Waterhouse Cooper's 2007 report on the Indian entertainment and media industry, the television industry revenue was Rs 226 billion. Even in 2007, reality TV accounted for a substantial part it. Looking at the proliferation of this segment, the 2009 percentage of earnings of the television industry on account of reality TV could be much larger.

### Origin of Reality Television

The genre of reality television came into its own during the last couple of decades but it existed from the late 1940s in America. Allen Funt's "Candid Camera" is often described as the granddaddy of reality television. Shows like "Beat the Clock", "Truth or Consequences", Ted Mack's "Original Amateur Hour", Arthur Godfrey's "Talent Scouts", "You Asked For It" showed contests, practical jokes, stunts, amateur competition, audience voting and selections dictating the shows' trajectory.

Beauty pageants, another reality television show, gained light after the "Miss America" beauty pageant attained heady success since its broadcast in 1954. The winners often got instant celebrity status. This laid the ground for international beauty pageants like the "Miss Universe" and the "Miss World", both of which began very successful journeys in the 1950s and continue till date with record participation and audience viewership from across the globe.

Modern reality television featuring participants who were more than raring to let go off both confidentiality and decorum to attain their very precious yet fleeting five minutes of fame began in the 70s. "Chuck Barris: The Dating Game", "The Newlywed Game" and "The Gong Show" brought out the early version of the brazenness that we see today in reality shows across the world. It was "Cops", which began airing in 1989 that brought out the hidden video camera filming style to reality television.

The concept of heavy soundtracks being used for confessional room videos were pioneered by the series "Nummer 28" which was a Dutch production. "Survivor" has its basis on the Swedish show "Expedition Robinson", created by TV producer Charlie Parsons, and began airing in 1997.

The 21st century brought with it multiple reality shows that hit the bull's eye with precision. "American Idol" is one such show which has been reproduced in possibly every part of the globe. Other shows like "Survivor", "Top Model", "Dancing With The Stars", "The Apprentice", "Fear Factor" and "Big Brother" have all also had a global impact, each been successfully syndicated in dozens of countries.

"Project Runway", "America's Next Top Model" and "The Simple Life" have all racked audience appreciation. So much is the effect of such shows that in April 2008, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences announced it will give its very first Primetime Emmy Award for 'Outstanding Host for a Reality Show or Reality Competition'.

Another type of reality show involves celebrities. Very often, these show a star going about their everyday life: examples

include "The Anna Nicole Show", "The Osbournes", "Newlyweds: Nick and Jessica", "Hey Paula!" and "Hogan Knows Best". VH1 has created an entire chunk of shows devoted to celebrity reality, known as "Celebreality".

In India, reality television came with the advent of "Sa-Re-Ga-Ma". Consequently, flood gates opened and reality television swamped our television screens and lives alike.

**Reality Television in India**

The explosion of reality television in today's media space has attracted not only Bollywood big names like Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan but also common people like wannabe singers from small towns from remote areas all over the country.

Big names probably join in since channels can now pay well or allow film promos to be dovetailed in the show but for all common people reality television has become the launch pad for their careers.

It is an opportunity for a million ambitions. The lure is not just the desire to get into the front row but also the billions of rupees riding on it.

Just consider the case of the shy grandmother, Rita Chakraborty of Naihati. She and her family participated in the Rock-n-Roll Family show on Zee TV that had three generations of families dancing together; give encouraging parents and elders a chance to graduate from being cheerleaders to participants. Rita had never danced all her life but agreed to take part in Rock-n-Roll Family to bail her daughter and dancer son-in-law's family out of a financial crisis. Amazingly she won the show and took home the prize money of Rs. 50 lakhs. Summing up, Rita said "If I can hop, skip and jump, I can shake a hip too"!

Most participants and their parents in singing and dancing reality shows like Sa-Re-Ga-Ma-Pa consider reality TV to be a boon. Unlike former times careers in dancing and acting are now less fraught with risks. Parents don't mind pushing their wards to TV as a personality development avenue even if there is no tangible financial gain.

Looking at the participation from youngsters in the hinterland, it is clear they consider reality television a new found short-cut to urban acceptance. Indeed for the most there's nothing comparable to being seen on television and who doesn't want to be famous? But things often go out of hand. Pushy parents make life miserable for their sons and daughters. Those dreamers coming from rural India often end up getting cheated and exploited.

It is interesting that so called Reality Television has little to do with real life. With very few creative exceptions, it is indeed glamour lined filmy masala, complete with song, dance and judges bent on melodrama. Television is recognised as a cultural melting pot and reality television is the new spice that is transforming the country today with the common man as its focus. Most reality television shows on small screens today are dedicated to commonman aspirants. Though these shows make for interesting viewing, they are indeed not spontaneous reality because these shows are often scripted, even if loosely. Often viewers are just hyperventilating over nothing. If the entire show was scripted to be in a certain way and in turn get racing TRPs then aren't we cheated?

Well this will still remain a mystery unless the real truth is unveiled. When we watch shows where inmates are 'supposedly' in the house for months, we would wonder how real are these people or the show itself. How much editing would have gone in before the viewer sees the final version? And we assume it is for real.

And what do the participants gain from all this? This depends on who is watching and what are you really looking for. For some it could be a giant leap to success and publicity. For others it could be the best platform to showcase your talent and get the leverage needed for success. Students who cry and fret for standing in queues in the outside world wouldn't mind spending overnight waiting for a small chance of getting into a show. I don't blame them. Who wouldn't want their piece of fame? From toddlers to the senile everyone has something to offer.

Some people believe that reality TV and sensationalism of news on TV is mirroring an emerging disturbing preference in our society. They consider it as a kind of voyeurism where watching people suffer in pain makes one feel good.

You like the tears, the sobbing, the drama of elimination, the spectacle of accusations of favouritism, the tragedy (or comedy) of perfectly sensible-looking individuals fingerpointing. Some others say that viewers derive a certain kind of pleasure in watching human frailties at a show. They like watching real-life conflicts - between contestants, participants, their relatives, celebrity judges, hosts, and journalists and sometimes participants and the parents. Today theatre actors, and even some dumb pretty faces, act as the anchors of shows on news channels playing the role of a journalist!

Now, what does a viewer gain from this show? What starts as curiosity about the reality TV show often turns into a complete addiction?

From shows like Roadies, where participants are screaming at each other in a high pitched voice to shows like Bigg Boss where there is nothing but tears and more tears. These shows are on air because people like us watch it. We detest them yet we watch each episode without a blink.

Who does not face these emotions these days? These shows succeed because they are cashing on our emotions, desperation and weaknesses. When we see a participant going through difficult times, we relate to it.

We relate to their worries, their pressure to succeed and perform. Are we actually sadistic to enjoy seeing someone else's pain? Or is it just an escape route to forget our own problems? Or does it make it more enjoyable to be able to see another soul whose pain you can relate to? An answer to these depends on what kind of viewers we are and how vulnerable we are.

However the magic of reality television seems to have brought Indians from everywhere together. Reality Television is today accessible to Indians even in the hinterlands. Contestant profiles show that they come from all over. In case one reality show there

was just one entry from metropolitan India and the balance eleven of the dozen participating teams were from suburban towns and mini-metros.

Mr. Ajay Balwankar, programming head, Zee TV sums it well. He observes that it is not just reality shows, even our national cricket team, which once had five players from Mumbai alone, looks like a microcosm of the Indian interiors today. He calls it the Dhoni effect, a sweep that defines the aspirations and spirit of young India, and irrespective of their location, that there is a hunger in every child."

Gajendra Singh, the brain behind over ten reality shows on several channels adds that the urge for fame was always there. Now because of many platforms, channels and the desire of programmers to audition in the interiors, opportunities have increased for the common man beyond powerful cliques in the film and music industry.

With new idols, come new aspirations. Vipul D Shah, Head of Optimystix observes that it is high time our reality shows got real. He observes that eighty per cent of Indian reality shows today are scripted, celebrity-based studio shows. Real reality shows are unscripted ones like Bigg Boss wherein lies the future of this genre. Others in media business like Balwankar agrees and adds that as an audience, we still haven't become as voyeuristic as the West, but we are definitely heading there. Reality TV is here to stay and grow, with more innovative formats.

Today, in 2010, the competition has become so fierce that every channel boasts of at least two to three reality shows. Reality TV is the new mantra of television producers and channel executives. It is the means to increase TRP ratings and the end is always to outdo other channels and the 'similar-but-tweaked-here-and-there' shows churned out by the competition.

Some of them are inherited legally from the USA, the Godmother of reality television or some are cheap copies of the shows abroad. If one channel boasts of "Jhalak Diklaja", a take on the American dance reality show "Dancing with the Stars", then another one has "Nach Baliye" to offset its audience value. Both the shows boast

of television heavyweights, but at times, the soup served by these shows becomes a concoction of soap operas, bad production values and precarious mud-slinging. Unlike its foreign contemporaries where contestants' master classic dance styles like the jive, rumba-samba, ballroom etc, these shows make the contestants dance on ordinary Hindi songs that makes the show quite mundane.

Then there are the glitzy talent shows, mostly singing or dancing, that make most of us feel that any other talent is worthless unless it can be taken to the stage. The worst and the most disturbing seems to be making children participating in these dance shows with crude choices of songs and impolite costumes for children aged between 5 and 10.

## Socio-cultural Impact of Reality TV

Reality television has become a standard genre of programming in the twenty-first century. These unscripted programs are getting extremely popular and therefore offered in many new innovative formats. In reality, these reality shows are significant cultural objects whose production and consumption reflect and reveal norms and ideologies of contemporary culture.

It is clear that the objective of reality television show is not meant to inform or educate like news. They are not produced in order to persuade or influence like political debates and commercial advertisements.

They also do not necessarily or instinctively evoke negative feelings in subjects like media violence or pornography etc. Because reality television is generally seen as lowbrow but innocuous, the question of what types of perceptual gaps it produces may be difficult to be ascertained. However despite the popularity of reality television scientific sociological analysis of these programs is very limited in India. What are sociologists to make of the current wave of reality television? What do these shows and their popularity tell us about society? Television media and research that it has engendered abroad has provided unique insights into the media's role in the creation and maintenance of an alternative public sphere. Although many of the articles and books

about reality television investigate themes with which sociologists are quite familiar, sociology could contribute a great deal to the study of reality television especially in India with a huge illiterate audience. Additionally, sociologists could provide important perspective regarding how reality programming reflects, challenges, and perpetuates existing inequalities, particularly with respect to race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Sociology has been used to make critical contributions to the study of television. Despite changing technologies and the threat of Internet and other media as means of disseminating information and entertainment, television is still the primary source of mass culture. Reality television can be conceived as both innovation and replication, with at least a foundational relationship to the traditions of documentary filmmaking. The popularity of reality television and its ability to draw record numbers of viewers merits exploration as media event.

**Reality Television in the US and Glimpses of its Impact Analysis**

Reality programming has single-handedly resuscitated broadcast television in the US during the last decade. It is interesting to notice that this has inspired professionals to compare by using metaphors of addiction. "It's gone from filler to heroin to now being just as important as comedy and drama" says one. "This reality craze can be like crack for network executives" says another. The popularity of the genre is welcome news to networks and producers because reality television is so much less inexpensive to make. For instance, the FOX Network's hit 'Simple Life' had cost only $600,000 per episode; in comparison, production costs for each episode of a similar length sitcom would run over $1 million.

The cost-savings for hour-long reality shows, which replace expensive dramas, are exponentially greater. It is no surprise, then, that as of February 2004, there were 20 primetime reality programs on the air, with literally dozens of others filling slots in syndication and cable networks.

If the networks are addicted to profits of reality television, audiences are likewise hooked on the product. These shows are among the most popular on the schedule. It is reported that in March reality programming filled 4 of the top 10 slots of most watched shows. In 2004, reality shows on FOX, CBS, ABC, and the WB easily beat each network's average ratings in the 18 to 34 year old viewer segment. In 2003 the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences gave its first award in the category "Outstanding Reality/Competition Program" to 'The Amazing Race'.

There are three major subgenres of reality television; the docu-soap (The Real World), the contest (Fear Factor), and the dating show (Joe Millionaire). In choosing to focus on 'The Real World', 'Fear Factor', and 'Joe Millionaire', examples are selected since they were successes in 2005. They were especially popular with college-age audiences, and lacked clear consensus about their impact on social values. Although the reality television is popular, it is a regular subject of criticism. 'The Real World' was criticised for its simplistic portrayals of social problems, 'Joe Millionaire' for retrograde portrayals of gender roles, and 'Fear Factor' for its freak-show theatrics.

NBC's 'Fear Factor' was the most popular of the three shows. Home Design Shows were however considered having an educational or beneficial effect.

Respondents for some studies supported restriction of television violence, televised trials, and negative political advertising, with perceived "immorality effects" predicting support for restriction of televised violence. Normatively, reality television would fall somewhere between media content with clearer moral dimensions and something like televised trials. Interestingly researchers found that although people believed others were more affected by negative material than themselves, there was no difference in terms of the positive material.

Researchers attributed this to people's desire to reinforce their own self-esteem by viewing themselves as smarter or somehow superior to others, especially with messages perceived as

negative. Attribution theory refers to the human desire to find causal explanations for behaviour.

Unfortunately however it was found that these explanations are often oversimplified. It was found that adult respondents perceived various social groups more susceptible to the effects of television violence than others: children more than adults, members of lower socioeconomic classes more than members of higher classes, minorities more than Whites. Surveys found men as more negatively influenced by Internet pornography than women. Respondents will perceive greater negative effects of reality television programs on others than on themselves. For instance it was noted that as one becomes more immune to media violence, that person also grows less concerned about its potentially harmful impact and is less likely to support censorship of it.

It is possible that the more authentic the violence seems to be, the greater is the pride enjoyed by those viewers who see themselves as being uniquely invulnerable to its effects. Their assessment of themselves as smarter, more astute, or simply more "hard core," able to face the harshest versions of reality that cause lesser viewers to cringe, enhances the perceptual gap between themselves and others.

There is also strong evidence that what is at stake in reality programming is production of a "reality effect," rather than realism itself. Producers have a number of techniques available to heighten or efface the presence of an editorial hand, presenting to viewers a full spectrum of reality effects.

### Impact of Reality Television in India

The effects of reality TV are quite diverse. Reality television has an impact on the viewers in many ways. There are various reasons why reality television has such effects on viewers. Besides, the effects of reality television are not limited to viewers; participants also can be affected in many ways through this medium. Unfortunately there is very little by way of academic sociological studies on the impact of reality television on rural and urban India, especially rural masses and children.

There are many shows on air of 'reality dance and music' for kids and adults alike. When a child is getting 'eliminated' from the show, the child cries, the mother cries, the judges cry. Why? What are we teaching our children? Is it not basic education to teach children to accept failure? And first of all why call it a failure? We are encouraging very unhealthy competition.

We should instead teach our children to learn to enjoy and to enrich than bother about winning. Winners are chosen by judges and judgements are subjective and never absolute. Parents need to build the spirit of sportsmanship in children. Winning and losing is a part of the game. Accept it gracefully. The message should be to compete with oneself and learn more to progress. One also should be weary of instant celebrity status. It more often leads to shaky ground for a winner. Most people, especially the young, are not well equipped to handle fame. If the fact that a billion people are watching you and are fond of you sinks in, it is hard to live away from it. It is probably a deeply grounded yearning to be ever famous.

In recent times there is a show on air that deals with infidelity. What kind of thrill is this when one lets the whole nation witness one's own private adulterous life? Does the money received compensate shameful exposure?

It indeed mirrors changing morals in today's money-centric society. One might understand better if those relations and near ones who sit and watch the sordid drama unfolding. One wonders where the age-old trust-your-partner theory has gone.

Are love, self respect and relationships a thing of the past? We also have music competitions more sensitively and professionally handled like Sa-Re-Ga-Ma in Marathi. It has become a model for reality television that lets all of Maharashtra share it with joy and amazement. It has an earthy flavour of real singing. The tear-shedding on these shows may be disturbing but the shows are entertaining with healthy competition and participants grooving to nice music. Similarly shows like 'Kaun Banega Croropati' were something that made everybody glued to television and improving their knowledge too. Finally one must realise that Reality shows

often have a positive impact on mind of viewers if such shows motivate them. A well groomed viewer has always consciously ignored those with a negative message.

Many viewers who are addicted to these daily programs often get deeply involved in any situation. Often, certain reality television shows are based on topics that have no other objective than entertain and attract maximum viewers. The content has indeed no concept except highlighting constant fights or disagreements between a group and in the process often telecast situations not suitable for viewing for a family audience. It is also true that some shows are more focussed and well conceptualised. They have positive messages which viewers often learn and apply in their daily life. For example, a person can learn about teamwork or be motivated in life to achieve goals or even chase a dream. Reality television can be addictive even for participants or contestants; especially those who finally get their 'lucky break'.

The positive thing about such shows is that contestants get a chance to voice their views or showcase their talent depending upon the theme of the show. These otherwise unknown people suddenly find themselves watched by people around the world. Especially in shows like Bigg Boss, the participants soon stop living their normal real life and start acting; wearing a mask that they feel will appeal to those watching. Even the celebrities are no exception. This indeed is often stressful. While some enjoy celebrity status, others fade into oblivion.

There is no doubt that instant success upon winning a reality television show gives talented people a much-needed break. But instant success is a thing, not everybody can deal with. While some cash on to this success others allow success to inflate their egos. Participants that only bask in the glory of their success and allow it to impact them negatively often indulge in outrageous behaviour in public and even break laws.

Sometimes, certain participants who do not achieve success even tend to go towards depression. Actually the reality about reality television is something far different as compared to what may be

seen on TV. Green room scenes often are more revealing reality than the show itself.

In any case, television is a commercial marketing vehicle and therefore a medium of makebelieve. Commercial television has no morals and will often go to permissible extremes in vulgarity or cruelty if such things attract eyeballs. No gimmick is unacceptable if it can capture maximum viewers. Therefore it is no wonder that many shows are scripted and rehearsed and then presented as a 'reality' for the viewers. So, what is the reality behind these shows? This is a question which still remains unanswered.

# Chapter 10

## Emergence of Social Media

This book, 'The Third Parent revisited', is about the mass media. If I have to make one comment about the most significant feature in current trends in Mass Media, I would say that the world is slowing moving away from institutional ownership of media as in the case of radio or television to participant owned media. To an extent reality television reflects that trend when viewers are growingly becoming prime movers but the access is owner guarded and enabled. It does not give participant the freedom he or she is seeking. This is more akin to an Orwellian scenario as imagined in his verbal tour-de-force, '1984'.

That is hardly good enough for the young in the 21st century. Tomorrow's competitor to the globalised broadcast television is indeed social Media enabled by that great revolutionary happening in communication space; the people owned 'Internet'.

### What is Social Media?

Social Media is a powerful communication channel just like person-to-person, telephone, direct mail, email, web, and text messaging but it has several unique features. It is indeed different from traditional broadcast media, like newspapers, television, and film, because it allows user-generated dialogue. Social Media is a new development and is closely associated with Web 2.0. It emphasises multi-way communication and interaction instead of earlier one-way Web tools. It uses highly accessible and scalable forms of web-based technologies to allow people to create, publish, reach, and interact.

Social Media has many forms. It can be about voicing social content where weblogs allow individuals and groups to publish content s open for comment or it can use video networks like YouTube, photo sharing like Flickr, and distribute content using Really Simple Syndication (RSS). It is today facilitating collaborative content publishing like Wikipedia, social news sites like Digg, and virtual worlds like Second Life.

Social Media however has its largest presence on popular social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn where people connect online. Services such as Twitter where your messages are only 140 characters long are getting very popular in urban India but it is just a variation of a blog post.

### Grateful Thanks:

I, as the Author or Editor, of this book gratefully acknowledge the fact that we have extensively used useful data on Social networking expertly put together by Mr. Antony Mayfield, Vice president and the Head of Content & Media at iCrossing.

For more details please contact:
(http://www.iCrossing.com/ebooks)

### Key Features of Social Media

- *Participation:* Social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between the media and the audience.

- *Openness:* Most social media services are open to feedback and participation. It encourages voting, comments and sharing of information. Here there rarely are any barriers to accessing and making use of content password-protected content is frowned on.

- *Content Sharing:* Traditional media is about "content broadcast" (content transmitted or distributed to an audience) but social media is better seen as group information sharing in a Community. It allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively. Communities share common interests, such as a love of photography, a political issue or even a favourite TV show.

- *Connectedness:* Most kinds of social media thrive on their connectedness, freely making use of links to other sites and unhindered sharing of resources and people.

- *Non-profit Participation:* It allows free use of a mix of these tools to help create and build relationships with new and existing constituents online. It allows one to engage in active listening, creative experimentation, and metrics measurement to find what's working.

- *Free Sharing:* It makes some people nervous because it requires them to give up some control over how their messages are spread and shared. It has a lot of so-called experts and gurus, but the best way to really understand and grasp it is to start using it yourself.

Indeed Social Media is no substitute for having a good Internet strategy, integrated website, effective email marketing program, and solid metrics. The general consensus however is that social computing is here to stay and will have an impact on every role, in every kind of company and all parts of the world.

### How big is Social Media today? (2008)

- There are more than 110 Million blogs tracked by 'Technorati' as of May 2008, a specialist blog search engine, up from 63 million at the beginning of the previous year.
- An estimated 100 Million videos a day are being watched on a video sharing website, YouTube and more than 300 million users and pet bytes of user data on social network Facebook.

### Basic Forms of Social Media

- *Social Networks:* These sites allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. With a glut of these sites in the recent past there has been a constant tug-of-war in the popularity charts. Research indicates that the biggest social networks are Facebook, Myspace and Bebo. With a consistent churn in this space, the rankings will not remain stable.
- *Blogs:* Perhaps the best known form of social media, blogs is online journals, with entries appearing with the most recent first. From network correspondents to actor's research analysts or just your average Joe, the blog phenomenon has permeated the digital world.
- *Wikis:* These websites allow people to add content to or edit information on them, acting as a communal document or database. The best-known wiki is Wikipedia, the online

encyclopaedia that has over 2 million English language articles.

- *Podcasts:* Audio and video files available by subscription, through services like apple I-tunes. There are podcasts also available on the sites of major news organisations like the BBC.
- *Forums:* Avenues for online discussion, often around specific topics and interests. Forums came about before the term "social media" and are a powerful and popular element of Online Communities. Older forums date back to around 1996, following newsgroups and bulletin board systems which were widespread in the 1980s and 1990s.
- *Content Communities:* Communities which organise and share particular kinds of content, the most popular content communities tend to form around photos (flickr), bookmarked links (del.icio.us) and videos (Youtube).
- *Micro-blogging:* Social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content ('updates') are distributed online and through the mobile phone network. Twitter is the clear leader in this field.

If you think that there's something oddly familiar about descriptions of social media, it may be good to recall discussions in the 1990s about what the web would become and many of its emerging manifestations are close to idealistic imaginings from that time.

### Social Media - A real life and natural manifestation of human interactivity:

A good way to think about social media is that all of this is actually just about being human beings. Sharing ideas, cooperating and collaborating to create art, thinking and commerce, vigorous debate and discourse, finding people who might be good friends, allies and lovers - is what our species has built several civilisations on.

That's why it is spreading so quickly, not because it's great shiny, whizzy new technology, but because it lets us be ourselves - only

more so. And it is in the "more so" that the power of this revolution lies. People can find information, inspiration, like-minded people, communities and collaborators faster than ever before. New ideas, services, business models and technologies emerge and evolve at dizzying speed in social media.

### 'Production' in Social Media

Rather than asking, "are blogs a fad?" it's more useful to look at fundamentals behind the phenomenal growth of social media. It used to be that the ability to create content and distribute it to an audience was limited to individuals and organisations that owned the production facilities and infrastructure to do so. In other words: 'the media'.

If you were in the video creation and distribution business you were called a TV station and employed thousands of highly skilled individuals to write, film, edit and broadcast your content through a relatively small number of channels to the public. Similarly, if you were a newspaper, you hired a team of reporters and editors, designers, typesetters, printers and delivery men, and had deals with a network of newsagents for them to sell your product to your audience.

With the advent of digital technology and the internet it became a lot easier for people to create their own content, be it images, words, video or audio. But even five years ago, it was still beyond most people's technical skills to create and maintain their own website. Today, the ever-lower costs of computers, digital cameras and high-speed internet access, combined with free or low-cost, easy-to-use editing software means that anyone can have a live blog website up and running within minutes of deciding to do so. With a little reading and fiddling they can upload video or sound too. Personal memories are now increasingly available on the web as a means of self-gratification and soliciting fifteen nano-seconds of internet fame.

### Distribution in Social Media

Production, obviously, is only half of the story. What good is great content unless you can get it to people? Take blogs for instance. People have a limited amount of time to check websites regularly - few people are going to be bothered to check more than a couple of blogs every day.

Now they don't need to. The innovation that has increased the reach of blogs and podcasts and has given terrific impetus to social media's evolution is a technology called RSS (Really Simple Syndication) which allows people to subscribe to a blog or website RSS notifies a 'newsreader' or your personal homepage (on, say, Google or windows live) that there is new content available and sends it the text and images. You can then read these in your newsreader without having to visit the website itself the importance of RSS, therefore, is that it makes it much easier for blogs and other social media to build or become part of communities. A large number of blog feed readers like RSS Bandit, Google Reader, Internet Explorer (Feed Reader), Bloglines Sage-Too, NewsAlloy, NewsGator Online, FeedGator are available since the Web became more mainstream. They may often be small communities, but to their users they may be highly relevant and valuable.

The other method of distribution that is sometimes neglected in any discussion of social media is search engines. Because blogs are highly connected, in the eyes of Google the more established ones can become an authority on a niche topic.

If, say, you have been blogging about cats for a good few months, and your posts have attracted links from other blogs, then a story about new government legislation on pet ownership on your blog may earn similar ranking for searches on that subject as the local newspaper or even national media.

### Second Life

One of the biggest online marvels to capture the imagination of the traditional media is Second life. It's an online computer game, but is perhaps better understood as an online virtual world. By

registering and downloading the software, you can enter the game world and create an 'avatar' - an in-game representation of yourself.

Since Second life encourages community and social interaction, some consider it to be a form of social media, although like so much in the new forms of online media it could very well be considered as a category of its own. More than 10 million Second life user accounts have been created, and around 1.5 million residents log in to the virtual world every month.

Over 1 million US dollars are spent in Second life each day. That last figure, perhaps the most surprising to those unfamiliar with Second life, is down to the functioning economy that exists in the virtual world. This has been made possible by the ability of one to own private property within the game and by setting an exchange rate between the game's currency and the US dollar (this keeps changing but is generally between 270 to 300 "linden dollars" to the U.S. dollar).

In fact, Second life created its first millionaire in November 2006, when Anshe Chung amassed virtual assets worth one million US dollars. Anshe Chung is the Second Life identity of Ailen Graef who has set up offices in Wuhan, China to make the entry of real world corporations in Second Life as frictionless as possible.

Marketing companies are beginning to experiment with the game world too. Toyota has launched in-game models to promote its 'Scion' range, while Peugeot has invited gamers to try a recent model on a virtual racetrack, built to coincide with the Frankfurt motor Show during its 2006 big Weekend festival, BBC radio 1 had a stage in Second life with avatars of presenters and bands performing - anyone visiting the concert received a virtual digital radio that they could listen to radio 1 on in the virtual world. Doubtless a large part of the marketing benefit from these in-game presences really comes from the publicity in the non-virtual world that these generate, but these are intriguing precedents for marketers.

## Ethical Debase around Second Life

Like most other aspects of life, the seedier elements of life have first-mover advantage. Apart from pornography, there are issues related to taxation, interpersonal/social wellbeing and the spectre of internet addiction.

According to a study on Internet addiction performed by Chin-Sheng Wan and Wen-Bin Chiou, PHD in Taiwan, "excessive use of online games can result in a number of negative outcomes, such as a negative impact on academic performance, increased anxiety, deterioration of interpersonal relationship, escape from reality, and youth violence and crimes".

Disregard of real-world problems is a charge often levelled against social media at large. Loss of productive time, addiction to an online community has led to a change in social dynamics. Many people contend that there is no substitute for personal interaction however addictive the online medium may be.

Theft of user's intellectual property in Second Life is only one of the issues in a serious debate around the virtual entity. Lax etiquette, violation of rules of conduct and abuse or griefing targeted at individuals or groups are some of the litany of other complaints.

## Future

Whether we are still using MySpace or second life in two, five or ten year's time is anyone's guess. The unique way that the internet continually improves in response to user experience is driving innovation on an unprecedented scale. A sea-change in the architecture of the Internet and access methods is taking place continuously. There will no doubt be exciting new variants on current formats and perhaps innovations that come to be thought of as new forms of social media. They will develop in response to our appetite for new ways to communicate and to the increasingly flexible ways that we can go online. That's the detail - impossible to predict. What is beyond doubt is that social media - however it may be referred to in the future - be a genie that will not be disappearing back into its bottle.

Technology geeks do paint rosy pictures of the future of social media with technologies like Natural Language processing, RFID tags and transponders, geomagnetic sensors in mobile devices, optical pattern recognition and augmented reality, a Babel fish - universal translator from Douglas Adams "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" to even mind reading set to impact the future of this field. The future however is anybody's guess.

Antony Mayfield of iCrossing rightly sums up all above by saying, "It is difficult, indeed dangerous, to underestimate the huge changes this revolution will bring or the power of developing technologies to build and destroy not just companies but whole countries".



**Figure 2** More Than Four In Five US Online Adults Now Participate Socially

Base: US online adults
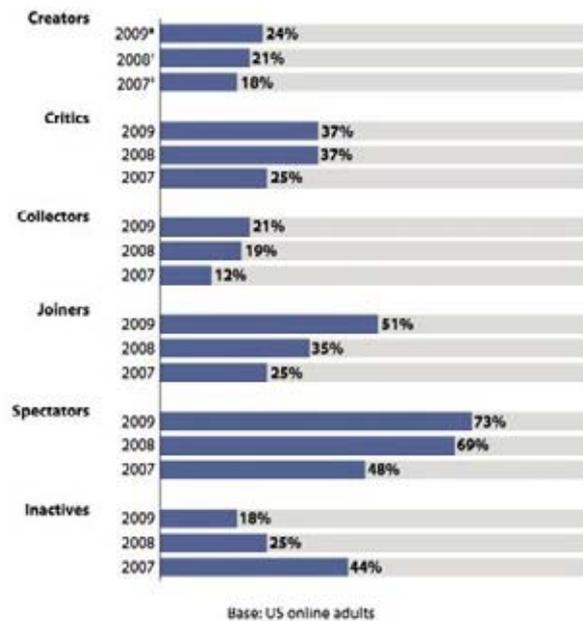
*Source: North American Technographics® Interactive Marketing Online Survey, Q2 2009 (US)
†Source: North American Technographics Media And Marketing Online Survey, Q2 2008
‡Source: North American Social Technographics Online Survey, Q2 2007

55132                                                                 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

# Chapter 11

# Shape of 21st Century Education and Electronic Media

When it comes to youth education, fast changing media technologies in general and electronic media in particular will wield the greatest influence. However, a large number of educationists in the world believe that the need for education and the type of skills needed in the current century are not likely to be very different than today, at least for a decade.

Most formal studies too seem to agree with this observation. Broadly speaking, they say, five major types of knowledge and skills will have the greatest impact on the students of tomorrow.

1. Students who obtain more education will be at a great advantage. Some postsecondary education or technical training would become essential for an opportunity to comfortably raise a family with at least a higher middle-class lifestyle.

2. The need for traditional knowledge and skills in school subjects like math, language arts, and science is not going to be displaced by a new set of skills. In fact, students who take, say, more advanced math courses and master higher math skills or pursue traditional post graduate training etc will have a distinct advantage over their classmates.

3. At the same time, for success both on the job and in their personal lives, students will have to seek opportunities to know how to apply what they learn in those subjects to deal with real world challenges, rather than simply "reproduce" information on tests. It is here that educational supported social media networks will help the most.

4. Students who develop an even broader set of in-demand competencies - the ability to think critically about information, solve novel problems, communicate and collaborate, think of creating new products and processes, and adapt to change - will be at an even greater advantage in work and life.

5. Applied skills and competencies can best be taught in the context of an academic curriculum, not as a replacement for it

or "add on" to it; in fact, cognitive research suggests that some competencies like critical thinking and problem solving are highly dependent on deep content knowledge and cannot be taught in isolation.

## What is influencing the need for changes in education?

### Information Technology

Because computers are good at following rules and recognizing simple patterns, they are increasingly being used to substitute for human labour in "routine" white collar jobs. Therefore, any job that mostly entails following directions is vulnerable to automation, including so-called "white collar" jobs like accounting. As a result, there will be fewer jobs that call for routine thinking work and routine manual work. At the same time, there is an increasing demand for skills that computers cannot mimic, such as the ability to solve unpredictable problems and the ability to engage in "complex communications" with other humans, along with foundational skills in math, reading, and writing.

### Internet and Social Networking

Kaiser Family Foundation has been studying media use in the lives of young students in the US. However in India the use of media is increasing rapidly in cities. And this will grow exponentially every year. The use of this media has an enormous impact on our children. They are spending more time watching TV, playing video games, listening to music, and are increasingly involved in social networking using computers and cell phones. It is proving to be the most important factor driving the growth of the internet. A survey by 'JuxtConsult' found that nearly 50% of traffic in India is connected with social networking. More and more children will be online longer than with their parents or teachers. Under this situation, whose messages about life would they be imbibing; the elders around them or the media's?

As the social networking juggernaut rolls on, students will transform more into creatures of media and technology. Parents must realise that media profoundly impacts emotional, social, and physical development of children and that parenting must extend

to the media and technology worlds. It's critical that parents teach young ones to understand messages they get from popular entertainment. The Report by the Kaiser Foundation too points out that emotionally, adolescent children are beginning to become independent from their parents, and they look to their peers for what's socially acceptable.

Modern Media will growingly act as a super peer -- thus, even the early teens won't be simply enjoying mindless entertainment, they will be absorbing messages about life that may not be the ones that one, as a parent, wants to hear. Teens in the United States spend more time with media than they do with their parents or in school. We are fast catching up in urban India. They also aren't just watching TV or playing video games -- they're doing many things at once. This brings up issues of attention and the retention of information. An increasingly global and competitive setup also brings up thorny items for debate like the right to information, pornographic content and unregulated access to hate material and inflammatory propagandas.

### Global Integration

Advances in digital technology and telecommunications now enable companies to outsource work and send tasks to be done wherever they can be completed best and cheapest. Outsourcing has become so ingrained in the global polemic that it sounds like an anachronism. Political and economic changes in places like Eastern Europe, China, and India have freed up many more workers who can potentially perform such jobs. As a result, many more jobs can move to these countries offering desired skills. Highly skilled workers in these countries will increasingly compete for more intellectually demanding and higher paying jobs but new jobs will demand not only strong traditional skills but also high levels of creativity and innovation in order to stay competitive.

In a global knowledge economy, economic growth depends on human capital. Today high school students in the United States perform worse on a number of international assessments than those from India and China. This is what has made the present

incumbent Ivy-league educated US President Barack Obama to warn America's young to gear up and asked their schools to improve and expand educational opportunities.

### Business Demand

Because of technology, globalisation, and other competitive forces, companies have radically restructured how work gets done. Workers will have much lighter supervision and they will experience greater autonomy and personal responsibility for the work they do. Work also has become much more collaborative, with self-managing work teams increasingly responsible for tackling major projects. Increasingly, such work teams are global in nature, with much of the interaction taking place electronically. Jobs have become less predictable and stable. From project to project and from year to year, employees must adapt to new challenges and demands.

### Demographics Aspect

The population in the western world is rapidly becoming both older and more diverse. The 65 and older population is expected to more than double between 2008 and 2050 while the 85 and older population is expected to more than triple. That will throw open many more jobs for us in India so long as our education gears up to prepare students to collaborate in diverse job settings and function in diverse societies like acquiring language skills in European languages, Japanese and even Chinese.

### Traditional Academic Knowledge and Skills

The belief that students will no longer need to learn academic content traditionally taught in the school curriculum is false. For instance, in times to come, students will need stronger math and English skills to succeed in work and life. A strong academic foundation is also essential for success in post-secondary education and training, which in itself is increasingly necessary for anyone who wants to earn a middle class wage.

### Broader Competencies

Students who develop an even broader set of competencies will be at an increasing advantage in work and life. Based on employer surveys and other evidence, the most important seem to be:

* The ability solve new problems and think critically;
* Strong interpersonal skills necessary for communication and collaboration;
* Creativity and intellectual flexibility; and
* Self sufficiency, including the ability to learn new things when necessary.

## How should school education prepare students to meet these challenges?

### Indian Situation in School Education

In India, we actually have two nations divided due skewed economic development, laxity and neglect in removal of illiteracy and widespread poverty. That makes this task extremely daunting. In urban literate India, obviously, new skills will have to be best taught in the context of the academic curriculum. However there is a need that even school education should consider broader competencies like critical thinking improved core curriculum rather than as a substitute for it or an "add on" to it. After decades of research, cognitive scientists have concluded that "how to think" competencies like problem-solving and critical thinking are not generic skills that can be taught directly and applied to any situation later in life. Rather, they depend on deep knowledge of the subject area in question - facts as well as an understanding of how those facts fit together, which provides a sense of how and why "things work" in a particular field, whether it be history, science, medicine, or auto mechanics.

In rural under-developed India, often called 'Bharat', one can actually do wonders using media technologies and there one has a chance to avoid current deficiencies and inadequacies in current primary education in urban area.

### Preparing the Young for the Networked World

Focus on education indeed needs to change. Developing Interpersonal skills will be become necessary in the networked world of the future. It will become necessary that the young develop the power to interact effectively with others. That includes the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, to relate well to others and cooperate with them, to negotiate and manage conflicts, and to lead through persuasion. Research shows that athletics and other student activities like debates can help students develop skills related to leadership and teamwork and have a positive impact on later earnings.

### Creativity and Innovation

Experts predict that creativity and innovation will become more important given economic trends, in almost all institutional jobs and more specifically for self-employment. Conventionally creativity is considered as an ability to solve problems whereas in real life creativity is an ability to identify problems. Real life demands one to be trained for comfortably facing a problem that has "no right answer". For this new education we must find more ways to give students more complex and unstructured problems and fewer multiple choice questions.

### Parental Involvement is the Key

One of the things the study makes clear is that parental involvement can make a huge difference in the amount of media that a child uses. Children whose parents make an effort to curb media use either through setting up time limits or by limiting access itself – are found to be spending less time with media. Kids with no TV in their bedrooms watch less.

Parents who impose media-related rules of time limits or content limits also have kids who are less media saturated. Unfortunately there are no formal studies about the impact of media on children so one has to depend on studies in the western world. One such study's most sobering findings was that US kids who spent more time with media reported lower grades and lower levels of personal contentment. Nearly half of all heavy media users

surveyed in US Study said that their grades were most Cs or lower, compared to fewer than 25 percent of lighter media users. Similarly kids who reported the heaviest media use also reported that they were more likely to get into trouble frequently and that they were often sadder or more bored than those who were less immersed in media. The study goes to pains to point out that it couldn't establish whether or not there was a cause-and-effect relationship between media use and grades and personal contentment, but statistics clearly showed a pattern. Indian statistics is not to be found but is to an extent relevant since young urban India is fast getting westernised.

### The Bottom Line - Parental Intervention

The involvement of parents can actually have a very profound and positive effect as is seen in Indian middle class households where often parents impose rules and limit media access - at all ages. The above mentioned US Study further reveals that such rules enable children have better grades, feel more personal contentment, and have better powers of concentration. Parents need to limit multitasking; that is doing many things together like play favourite music and study or interrupt often to use cell phone etc. Parents should ensure that young get sleep and lead a balanced life, and be sure to spend time talking with them about messages that they're surrounded by. Parenting in the 21st century means paying attention to everything our children are doing online, on their phones, and with their entertainment and all this without being over-indulgent and thoughtlessly strict. The study also clearly shows that parents who skilfully limit media and not be harsh and unreasonably strict, succeed the best. Standing firm against the media tide and managing your family's media use rather than only that of the children is essential. Clever and thoughtful parents even in India do so. Study shows that it's not always easy to come up with ways to insert yourself into your child's life, but they provide five tips to parents.

**Five Tips to Get More Involved**

1. Start good habits early. Establish boundaries. Start when children are young by restricting access to media: Turn the phone off during homework. The secret to healthy media use is to establish time limits and stick to them.

2. Use media together. For older kids, talk about what you see, hear and read. Whenever you can, watch, play, listen, and surf with your kids. Talk about the content, and stay engaged with what your kids are doing online -- and on the go. Share your values, and help kids connect what they learn in the media to events and other activities in which they're involved, in order to broaden their understanding of the world.

3. Keep distractions to a minimum. Try to help kids do one thing at a time. For older kids, make sure that social networking and chatting happen after homework is over -- or at timed intervals.

4. Be a role model. When kids are around, set an example by using media the way you want them to use it. Keep mobile devices away from the dinner table, turn the TV off when it's not actively being watched, and use a DVR to record shows that may be inappropriate for your kids (even the news) and watch them at a later time when kids aren't around.

5. Seek balance. If our kids are going to thrive with digital media, balance is key. They'll be exposed to the good, bad, and ugly. Help kids develop responsible media habits and good digital citizenship so they can pursue their interests with media savvy.

**Social Media Strategies for Educators**

When we get to using social Media and networking for education, both in the US and India, students are far ahead of the teachers and educational institutions. While US Universities have no coherent strategy to use social media, Indian Universities have none. They are unaware of the benefits that a university-wide, coherent social media strategy can bring.  In the US today some universities do use staff and funds to design online social networking platforms their current students and alumni are requesting.   If the universities in India don't construct something like social network

(however haphazardly), students will take it upon themselves to construct a Facebook group for their department.  No thought is yet applied even in the US to coherent design interdepartmentally or globally valid social network.

Recently Intel launched new education-focused online community called 'Inspire'. The site is now live at "Inspiredbyeducation.com". The goal of the new site and community is to highlight educational experiences that inspire people, allowing consumers and influencers alike to engage in improving the quality of education. The site invites visitors to submit a video or a story about what inspires you, learn about people and programs helping to improve the quality of education around the world and speak up about educational issues. Intel wants to generate a conversation, among folks from all walks of life, about innovation and inspiration - and about the crucial role these rather intangible qualities play in education. Intel's education initiative has a 40-year history and $100 million annual investment. The hope is that the Inspire community extends and broadens that commitment, and is designed to grow organically based on exchange of stories, resources and opinion - with the goal of being a catalyst for action and voice for a change in education.

**US University Initiatives on Internet**

Albert Einstein is on YouTube. Plato is on iTunes. And professors at Harvard and Stanford have begun freely sharing their work on the Web with anyone who is interested. We may just be entering a new era in the public right to knowledge. This is not yet happening in India. Universities in India can gear up for global challenges by embracing the best of what the world has to offer. We are also lagging behind other countries in original ground-breaking research.

In February, Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences voted to create an "open access" copies of all their scholarly articles. In May, Harvard Law School followed suit. Then in June, Stanford University School of Education faculty unanimously voted for a similar motion.

By endorsing this open-access policy, Stanford teachers have agreed that publishing an article in a respectable journal is no longer the end of it. They will also post a copy of their work online, where educators and the public can freely read what they have learned about learning.

Yale University is making some of its most popular undergraduate courses freely available to anyone in the world with access to the Internet. The project, called "Open Yale Courses," presents unique access to the full content of a selection of college-level courses and makes them available in various formats, including downloadable and streaming video, audio only and searchable transcripts of each lecture.

Syllabi, reading assignments, problem sets and other materials accompany the courses.  The seven courses in  sciences, arts and humanities - which were recorded live as they were presented in the classroom to Yale students - will be augmented with approximately 30 additional Yale courses over the next several years.

We wanted everyone to be able to see and hear each lecture as if they were sitting in the classroom," said Diana E. E. Kleiner, Dunham Professor of the History of Art and Classics and the director of the project. "We hope this ongoing project will benefit countless people around the world."

As newer buzzwords like cloud computing, autonomic systems and Artificial Intelligence move out of the realm of research papers and become more mainstream i.e. part and parcel of the global lexicon, the world has to gear up for a sea-change in the way media impacts the individual and the collective.

The socio-economic divide also translates into a challenge for decision-makers and media planners. The rise of China and other players like India, Brazil and South Africa presents a unique challenge. Distributed computing initiatives like the Search for Extra Terrestrial "Intelligence@Home" are examples of how unresolved research queries can be tackled by concerted and intelligent effort.

In India, cultivating centres of excellence in every town, city and village is essential. While a national grid for information on individuals is being planned, an effective network for academics, researchers or simply to facilitate the sharing of ideas between different Indian universities is lacking.

The stated goal of the National Knowledge Commission is to transform the country into a knowledge society. However there is no fine balance between spending on primary and higher education. When a state like Kerala high on the human development index and gender equality ratios suffers the pinch of an economic recession, it points to a serious lack of planning by the Indian nation-state. The real test of 21st century education and effective use of electronic media also lies in effective governance.

From Brazil to China, community initiatives are and can be effectively driven using the inherent power of the electronic media. The flip side of the coin is the lacunae in the system which are exploited by some anti-social elements. Even if we have a Frankenstein on our hands, the scope for good is far greater than the proclivity for evil. The decision lies within our grasp, if we let it slip, the consequences could prove to be fatal.

THE THIRD PARENT

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ELECTRONICS MEDIA
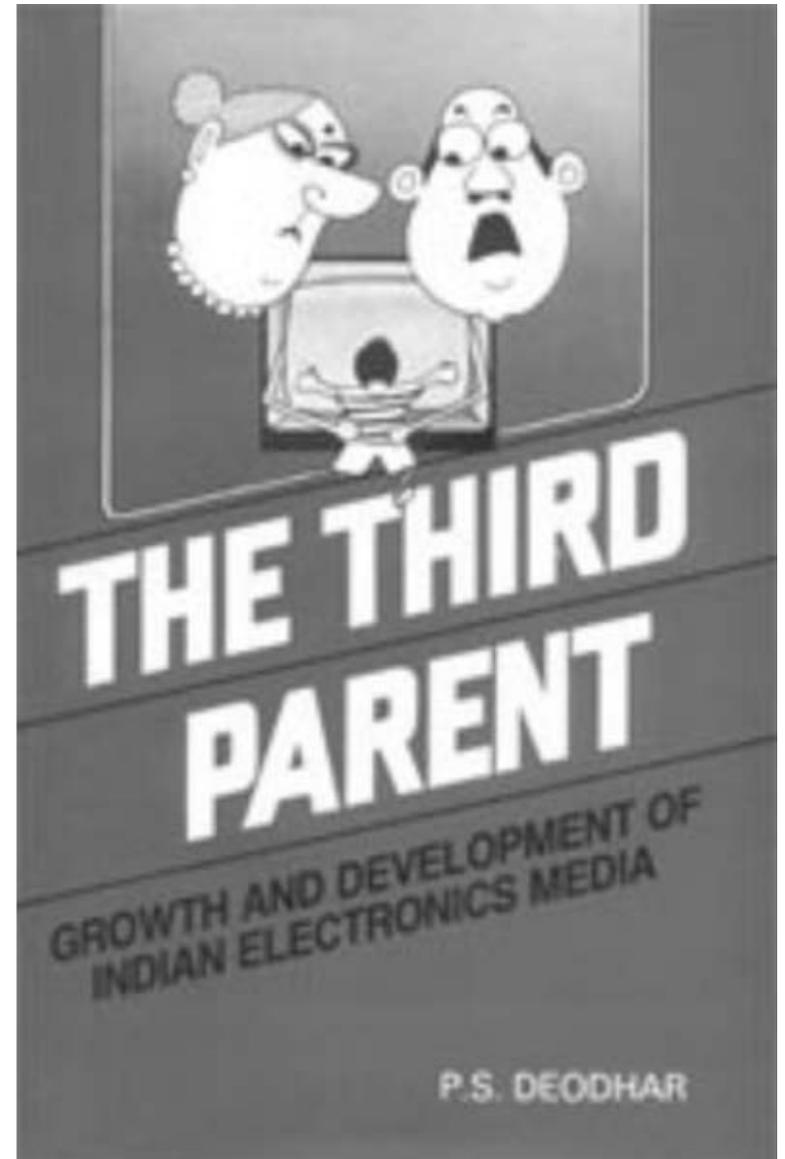
P.S. DEODHAR

# THE THIRD PARENT

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ELECTRONICS MEDIA

### P. S. DEODHAR

**VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT. LTD.**

**To Rajiv Gandhi**

# PREFACE

It is as much a matter of surprise to me, as to many of my friends, that I actually wrote this book. But for the profound change that took place since 1984 in my working life, I could as well have been pursuing my first love-Engineering Management; visualising and designing state-of-the-art electronic products and concurrently honing my skill in structuring an organisation to efficiently produce and market them. The thrust of an ideal corporate philosophy in my opinion, is to have 'sound' products at its core and a motivated organisation of creative work force to design, manufacture and sell them.

All began with my decision to relocate myself in Delhi on a full time basis and assist our former Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, in developmental and policy making activities in areas relating to Electronics and Informatics. This new responsibility took me away from Industry shop floor for five long years till I returned back, rather happily, to my old desk at the end of 1989.

My job in Delhi involved working on a very large canvas with a nationwide perspective. Scope of my work was national planning for electronics and related modem technologies. It was a challenge to create framework of policies based on defined objectives. It involved steering our national efforts in the use of modem technologies in a direction that would enable us as a nation, to speed up development and extend the benefits of faster growth to every section of our society. It meant harnessing the new knowledge for aiding efficiency in industries and on farms; reducing hardships adding to the comforts for all the people through appropriate use of Information Technology in planning, in administration, in communications, in health care etc.

This was a challenge and I had to spend all my time in studying the problems at every level and seeking lasting solutions to them. What helped immensely was my conviction that one should not get lost in. absorbing pastime of criticising others. That would then have left me with no time to work creatively to find solutions. The key phrase was 'In search of solutions'. I shelved away all my personal interests and decided to put my best foot forward for the job on hand.

One amongst this wide spectrum was the use of mass media for national development-for wholesome entertainment, for removal of adult illiteracy, for introducing radical improvements in primary school education, etc. Mass Media like Television should be used for giving wide exposure to creative people, to people with a message, to great teachers, to our skilled artisans etc. allowing the people at large-literate and illiterate alike-to have easy access to television. Very large sums of money had been spent and are being spent with almost total lack of objective based planning. Thoughts and actions within the Government are generally far apart. Doordarshan's plans related to just the hardware expansion, both for a wide coverage of geographical areas and for better equipped studios. This by itself, also lacked imagination. Plans are basically financial and administrative in nature. Technological innovativeness and engineering cost effectiveness had no place. But even more disastrous was total lack of software plan. No one was answering one fundamental question, "who says what, how, to whom, with what effect and for what purpose". The Doordarshan totally lacked and perhaps still lacks in fundamental concepts like sequencing, visual planning, code of conduct and ethical standards. It continues to treat its creative people non-creatively. This state of affairs is due to total lack of software planning.

Doordarshan is widely accused of favouring those in power. That criticism primarily originated from those who were not in power but wanted to be. History has shown that after tables were reversed, Doordarshan's operations underwent no change¬ certainly not in a positive direction. Education is still incipiently and carelessly managed. News are still uninspiring and straight-jacketed. No worthwhile policy framework, for software, is at any discussion stage, even today.

During the last six months I always feared that The Third Parent might become stale by the time it is published. But the country is today at a standstill. Certainly it is in that state for the last two years. That gives me a hope that my primary purpose in writing this volume could still be served. It could provide anchor points to planners and administrators. Concern about mass media is widely

felt but much of it is out of the lack of a clear vision and comprehension. I sincerely hope The Third Parent will fill the void and enable one to see light within its covers.

It is because of Sri Rajiv Gandhi who got me involved in matters relating to media, that I could venture to undertake the study leading me to write this book. Primarily, therefore, I thank him for being instrumental in arousing my curiosity to take up the study.

While this book is in the final stage of printing, I am deeply grieved by the untimely demise of my dear friend Rajiv Gandhi in the hands of some cruel assassins. This book was to have been released personally by Rajiv as its very publication was due to the treasure of inspiration provided to me by Rajiv himself. I therefore dedicate this book to his memory in respectful homage to the departed soul.

The Third Parent would not have been possible without Mr. Ramnarayan Patro. Without his parental criticism, encouragement and guidance, I would have never put sustained effort to pen this down. Many more friends and well wishers have helped to brush up the contents and the text. Amongst them I should express my grateful thanks to Mr. Shrikant Potnis, Ms. Nitya Rao and Dr. O. P. Kulshreshtha.

# CONTENTS

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This study constitutes analysis and available options for growth and development of Indian Electronics Media. The work aims at optimum utilisation of global technological advances in electronic audio-visual programme generation and distribution to gain maximum socio-economic benefits to the society.

In a large, populous and predominantly illiterate country like ours, electronics media provides tremendous reach for disseminating audio-visual information which is universally understandable even by those who are illiterate or located in remote areas. Success of satellite based broadcasting of television programmes is already well known. Other media options like cable TV and video also offer newer avenues and advantages for wider viewership and local language programming.

In a secular multilingual country with diverse cultures, different religions and traditions and varying lifestyles, role of nationwide television is vitally important-it can help in bringing the country together giving closer understanding amongst its people. Television has had a great impact on homogenisation of a heterogeneous society in the United States of America. Television played an important role in providing a common denominator to multi-lingual, multi-racial American society which led to certain uniformity in societal reaction to situations or events, in developing common responses in personal and social communication, in better appreciation of people with diverse beliefs and lifestyles. Nationwide television could serve like a cultural melting pot.

In spite of the fact that there would be uncertainties about the nature and the pace of change, advances in production and distribution of audio-visual programmes through Electronics Media are distinctly moving towards continuously improved performance and progressively falling prices. Broadcasting and telecommunication technologies are covering and making it feasible and economical to offer additional services in new ways. Several technical limitations of the past like spectrum scarcity have been overcome. This would initially lead to demand for new

services such as additional channels, cable TV, better quality picture and stereo sound, low cost DRS sets etc.

With improved and lower cost satellite delivery systems becoming available, international programmes telecast via satellites have brought India under their footprint. In such cases, even if Government were to take action, it would be impossible to stop members of the public from receiving them. One cannot stop a radio-receiver owner from tuning into international programmes. Same will be true of satellite telecasts beamed to India. It will be impossible to implement a law which might expect a dish antenna to be beamed towards anything other than INSAT. Equivalent of boot-legging would then start in Television entertainment.

Direct payment-subscribed-television programme services are also now feasible, opening a new vista for programme delivery. The proliferation of video tape rentals through subscribed video libraries is the evidence of the demand and such technology now exists. Subscribed Entertainment TV channels can fully support and pay for additional channels exclusively used for education, with no burden on public funds.

The Government had invested in Satellite delivery system for television with a specific understanding to use it mainly for education. Commercial entertainment however prevailed over the original promise. Opportunity now exists to have a dedicated satellite for Educational Television. It can also have several channels to fulfill every linguistic need. Further, tremendous cost saving is possible due to very low cost DRS sets with small size inexpensive antennas. Each of the million schools (today's count 6,00,000) could be covered through large number of channels dedicated to educational programmes in local language, both for formal and non-formal education.

With increasing economic development, growing family income and with lowering electronics prices, audio-visual for information and entertainment through Electronic Media will become an important commercial activity. This industry will create large revenues and larger still if tax policy is structured to stimulate market.

Use of video for stored audio-visual information for education and entertainment is growing continuously. Formal and non-formal education will be growingly dependent on video for classroom aid, supplementing and aiding teachers and helping them to take into their classrooms, factories and farms, expertise to give insights into varied aspects from anatomy to atomic physics and to enrich education by embellishing it with right kind of visuals.

Low noise transmission of high quality visual and stereo sound will be possible with cable delivery system. Cable TV will be having growing demand to meet the curiosity and range of tastes of Indian audiences and demand for such delivery systems will influence the shape of the services in future.

There is some international evidence to suggest that even in developed countries which offer a large number of channels and variety of services, a few services are considerably more popular than the rest and attract very wide viewership. Thus even in a very open environment, there exists a chance that those with massive resources, not only in monetary terms but also in terms of selective access to high cost productions, would enjoy the widest viewership. Thus there is a need to have regulatory safeguards, such as on media ownership to ensure that opportunities are released to provide the viewers with a broader and more varied choice. This is specifically valid if for any reason one opts to privatise this sector, where mere monetary expectations may prevail with no qualms about public accountability.

Bearing in mind related aspects which would influence our policies, the study suggests various options open before us. The most important reason why India has broadly failed to benefit from or to take a leadership position in electronics-related technologies is the delay, indecisiveness, fear, ignorance and resultant procrastination of the planners in particular and the Government in general.

# Chapter 2

## Tele-Video and Community

When one considers in the context of the contributions of electronics technology to the lives of common people in India, the benefits outstrip the handicaps. People are happier and better off because of electronics. Fact that electronics is a glamorous, magical and modern technology should be less important to us than to answering in affirmative the question, 'Is it good for us?' It is less important if it merely makes some Indians wealthier, but the importance is underscored when it should also be making our people's lives fuller and happier. Radio, recorded music, stereo systems, Television, Video recorders and even telephones have all made life less stressful and more rewarding, adding to comforts and bringing entertainment of outstanding technical quality into the privacy of our homes which was earlier available only in public halls.

Electronics has democratised entertainment. What was earlier available only to the rich and the privileged is now accessible to the common people with modest means. Any Indian with a radio or a music system can today command a range of musical repertoire and a level of performance quality that even Akbar the great would have envied in his time. Colour TV and now Video, not only brought colour into the lives of millions in India but it also brought to them entertainment and information like nothing else could. One of the greatest historical events that will eventually prove to be a turning point in the lives of people of India is the launch of the 'Insat' satellite and resultant nationwide TV coverage which we could otherwise not afford and certainly not so soon. It is interesting to note that all developments in this technology have been progressively making the products better in performance, higher in efficiency, smaller in size, compact and portable and, best of all, cheaper in price.

Traditional media people consistently underestimate television's culture-changing effects, mainly because they overlook certain characteristics that are so obvious that one takes them for granted. The most important feature of television is its ability to deliver simultaneously into the intimate environment of millions of homes, touching lives of the entire household, ideas mingled with powerful drama. Dr. George Gerbner, Dean at the Annenberg School of Communications of University of Pennsylvania in the USA has established through extensive research that the aggregate flow of reiterated formulae, formats and ritualisations "cultivates" the social environment almost as farming cultivates the natural environment. He further states that due to the pervasiveness of television, characteristic images of the world become the most familiar aspects of the shared cultural environment within which minds are fertilised and nurtured.

Sociologist Daniel Bell of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, found that the way people decode television's images, sounds and symbols has changed fundamental modes of processing images and ideas, "axial principles", that shape the entire social system. Even more important and profound impact is on the behaviours of children. Child development specialist, Dorothy E Cohen at the Bank Street College of Education, New York city has documented the extent to which TV characters and scripts dominate childhood imagery. The US Surgeon General's Office has affirmed this evidence, showing that what children see and hear on TV is easily incorporated into their attitudinal and behavioural repertory. Even year old children are commonly watching TV screen for as long as an hour and show preferences for some images over others. Before toddlers can string a sentence together they can sing commercial jingles, recite the slogans and even the background sounds. Such is the power of this new media.

Because of all such reports, the entry into the Indian households of Television and Video, the two enormously powerful and hypnotic gadgets for audio-visual entertainment, has become a matter of concern to many thoughtful citizens. Careful study of the reports from the Western world, and specially the United States, as stated above, regarding the deep influence of the TV and video programmes on their young generation would indeed make one to introspect. It is no wonder that Indian parents are worried about the effects of Television and Video on their own children. This is true specially because they have little chance of controlling the child's exposure to various vulgar and trivial images produced by professionals who are experts at spectacle creation and who

'manufacture' tantalising fantasies sometimes with a total disregard to the social consequences of their experiments in visual arts. In USA and Europe, colour TV and videos have been extensively used over the last 30 years and more. Their effects on the young as well as the old have also been studied in great detail. It is, therefore, worthwhile for us to look at some more reports rather closely in order to estimate, what is in store for our society and what preventive measures we ought to take.

John Goodlad, in his book entitled 'A place Called School' points out that TV, over a period between 1960 and 1980, moved from the 8th place to the 3rd place out of 10 in terms of influencing the youths aged 13 to 19. He says, average American child spends 10% of his or her time watching TV.

Marie Winn in her thought-provoking, 1983 book 'Children without Childhood' acknowledges that TV is enormously powerful, hypnotic form of entertainment and further states that parents have little chance of controlling their child's exposure to every variety of human brutality and violence, aberrant models of adult indulging in wisecracks, and array of other larger-than-life, and phoney characters and various other socially undesirable. programmes.

It is interesting to note that in many serials on the U.S. and the British TV, adults are shown not taking their work seriously. These superfluous images of adult men indulging in childish buffoonery as also other forms of violence, delinquency and permissiveness are known to become permissible models for adult behaviours in the eves of adolescents.

In his book The Effects of Television, the English researcher J. Halloran summarises experimental evidence on the effects of the community of 'Violence on Television'. It is interesting to note that, in majority, it supports the view that observing violence on the mass media is a contributing factor to subsequent aggressive behaviour, though it is not a determining factor. Other evidence suggests that violence on TV has both provocative and cathartic effects.' The book distinguishes between different forms of violence, different levels of its portrayal and various groups of

viewers. It also separately records immediate and long term effects.

Raymond Williams in his highly rational style has differentiated between 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' violence. He observes that the law may punish you if you refuse to kill the enemy in war and the same law will punish you if you kill or assault someone out of a domestic rivalry or internal political struggle. He, too, however, agrees that the society should discourage violent behaviour.

Jay G. Blumler in his study on Television in Politics published in 1968 outlines the effects of Television watching on political behaviour. It showed that, in Britain as well as in the U.S., TV has little discernible influence either on voting or on the rating of political leaders. Newer studies have found some measurable influence on information about party policies and on the pursuance of those with initially low party political attachments. The most interesting and significant observation, however, brings out a striking fact that Television has created personalities of TV interviewers who have, in a sense, become political figures' having developed measurable influence on viewers. The study further reveals that many political leaders do depend and believe that it is important to have Television coverage.

Television, in any case, has always been put to manipulative use everywhere, sometimes politically, but many more times commercially and socially. Historical study of broadcasting reveals that it has been a new and powerful media for social integration and control. Probably that is why the word "Mass Communication". But still Radio, Television and now, Video have all been designed to be used in individual homes. Concept of community TV or Video in our own country could be the first to make it a shared media for mass communication in a more appropriate sense.

Radio, Television and Video are, primarily, media for information dissemination which also have been used for home entertainment. Occasionally entertainment is 'used' to lure people to accept information, through either the news or a commercial advertisement. There is also a belief amongst some media-men

that TV entertainment can also be used for education and training. This myth has been finally shattered by a study sponsored by the US Government. It clearly brings out that this often attempted cocktail of amusement and social education has rarely, if at all, worked on viewing population. Entertainer or actor or a fiction writer is too theatrical to be accepted by the society as a preacher, even if the message is camouflaged. One can conclude that even the illiterate masses in India will accept advice and guidance only from the people who are known to practice what they preach and whom they perceive as being transparently sincere. In fact with respect to adult illiterates, who are fully functional citizens like anyone else who is educated, we cannot talk of 'teaching'. We can only 'share' with them what we know, like we would with an ignorant literate. Concept of 'teaching' smacks of a sense of superiority which, I wonder, how many of us, literates, could really claim, given the fact that many distinguished illiterates are today community representatives in Legislative Assemblies and in the Parliament or are successful businessmen and social leaders. How can we forget that even in Vedic times, the very first prayer that a Guru and his Sishyas together chanted was that they all would together learn in co-operation? "OM, SAHANA VAVATU, SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU SAHAVEERYAM KARAVAVAHAI TEJASWI-NAVADHITAMASTU MAVIDWISHAVAHAI". Here is the most classic example where the teacher desists from dominating over the pupils. We should not forget this truth. Leo Buscaglia, the great American thinker and a delightful communicator in his book 'Living, Loving and Learning' says, "I don't teach in this class, I learn in it, we get together on a great big rug and sit down and rap for two hours". The key is to 'share'.

Ineffectiveness of mixing 'entertainment' on TV with teaching of morals and other social values, is pointed out in a few studies reported the worldover. For example, National Committee on Reforms of Secondary education appointed by the US Government in 1973 made the following observations:

1. Commercial TV leads children to synthetic as opposed to analytic modes of learning.

2. When knowledge is obtained from commercial TV, the line between reality and fantasy is unclear.

3. Any education through TV that clashes with the expectation of the children is rejected and is therefore, ineffective.

Commercially motivated programmes demand that they hold the attention of the viewer and, therefore, provide novelty that invades private and adult worlds. These ultimately result in diminishing respect for adults. Marie Winn says that through TV, children gain entry into a confusing adult world that cannot help but shake their confidence and trust in those elders who once seemed good and powerful. Children always grow up expecting their parents to be perfect and later become very disappointed, disillusioned and upset when they find out that these poor human beings are not so in reality. Gilbert Sewell in his 'Necessary Lessons' published in 1983 agrees that TV cuts at the margin between childhood and adulthood by revealing secrets, mysteries: contradictions and tragedies once considered unsuitable for children. It, therefore, hastens the end of childhood. When children start imitating sophisticated behaviour and language which they hear and see on TV, they give an impression that they are more matured than they really are and, therefore, expect to get treated as such. Adolescent children many times believe and assume that society condones the behaviour of people as seen on TV since they are permitted to see such programmes.

Against all this background, one also has to bear in mind the fact that any attempt to conceal information from the children or the budding adults, arouses more curiosity in them and they will at any cost, try to unravel the mystery and try to deduce from incomplete pieces of scattered information gathered from here and there. That too carries the risk of imparting wrong knowledge and even makes them suspicious, with equally disastrous results.

Therefore, one has to find a line between the two extremes. Experiments have shown that it is certainly possible to do so. The golden rule is -

- There should be no secret between the grown-ups and their juniors. There MUST be openness to an extent that the juniors

do not perceive that anything is being hidden from them.

- Normally fantasies which are smaller or larger than the real life, should be avoided. However, if it becomes unavoidable, the fact of its being so should be clearly made known to the viewer.

We often talk of words being weapons and advise them to be used with care. We compare words with arrows and point out that just as an arrow leaves no mark on the bow, words are rarely remembered by the one who spoke them. Arrows or the words hurt the target. This universally accepted wisdom is often preached but rarely practiced.

If we recognise the power of spoken words or warn everyone to be careful with them, what should be our attitude towards audio-visual media and specially its use in mass communication like the Doordarshan or the Video? If we call words, 'the weapons', we should consider television an atomic weapon. "Inflammable, not to be loosely shunted", it is inscribed on Petrol Wagons. Caution is necessary because Doordarshan has entered living rooms and bedrooms, has invaded school rooms and the rural homes and watching it has become almost addictive pastime for young children and the old alike.

TV is often condemned as an Idiot Box. But this is no Idiot Box. It is a double edged weapon. It can be the healing knife of a surgeon or a stabbing weapon of a killer. It can be a tool for building a vibrant nation or it can turn out to be destroyer of family ties and of relationships between the young and the old. It can become a reason for 'cultural degradation' or a catalyst for uniting the nation through bonds of understanding and appreciation amongst the people of various regions created by audio-visual communication. The important advantage of television is that anyone can watch and listen to television without any training. Doordarshan, today, gives unmediated access to information to anyone who has an access to the medium. Power of media and its manipulative nature or its inexhaustible appeal to children is so unique that some studies have indignantly labelled it as a 'third parent'. Formerly priests, teachers or gurus were regarded as a third parent' but in the Western world, TV seems to displace them as the most influencing factor in shaping the young lives. In fact today efficacy of

conventional teaching itself is being questioned. A teacher is now really a facilitator, a person who puts things down and shows students how exciting and wonderful they are. Anyone who wants to learn will learn. Enforcement or compulsion won't work. TV thus, appears to be an insidious teacher.

When we are discussing effects of Television or Video programmes, we have to direct our attention to the interests and attitudes of the controllers of the medium. We need to pose a question "who says what, how, to whom, with what effect and for what purpose?" Television, today, is a major factor in socialisation. Its controllers are exercising a particular social function. In this process, concepts like stimulating understanding, value-judgement and involvement of the programme developer have to be carefully understood. Effects, after all, can only be examined in relation to real intentions and these will often have to be sharply distinguished from declared intentions as also from assumed and indifferent general actuality. When intentions get diffused and approach becomes officious wherein creative forces get neglected, procedures override objectives and speed of action gets arrested due to bureaucratic lethargy, the results are seen to be disastrous. In a country like India, where broadcasting has to remain a public service or a nationalised body with state ownership, making Doordarshan a dynamic resilient and innovative organisation becomes a Herculean task. When the Government strikes a bargain between public good and commercial interests of advertisers, it tends to lose on both the counts. One way or the other, Television objectives and management has been a matter of dispute, debate and dissatisfaction the world over. In West European countries like Germany, France, Italy etc., there has been direct state regulation of broadcasting since the beginning. Even in Britain, TV has been considered a 'public service' and 'public interest' has always been the theme. But it must be remembered that 'public interest' and 'state interest' are not always the same. Finally it should depend on a consensus version of 'public' or 'national interest', a consensus which is openly arrived at and made subject to regular open review rather than consensus that is assumed and then rigidly practiced.

The Television in the United States which has predominance of commercial channels is often quoted as an example of free television. Federal control like F.C.C. was established only due to lack of technical standardisation and monitoring with the resultant chaotic situation. There is no state control on programming except for a broad ethical code. But do the U.S. TV broadcasts constitute 'Free Television'? Facts pointed out in many US studies reveal that independent TV is not all that free. Programme content that depends purely on commercial viability is always totally populist and in turn promotes cultural degradation. State ownership is merely replaced with far less desirable market-regulatory control by private ownership with no public responsibility. Even on Doordarshan, commercial compromises that it has to make while choosing vehicles like sponsored programmes, have given to us a mixed fare of occasional good programmes supported by some socially conscious sponsors and few mediocre ones, which in some ways, are socially harmful and show scant respect for viewer intelligence and social consequences.

Video proliferation is even more dreadful for the parents to worry about. Besides the fear of continuous exposure of adolescents to unreal and provocative life in movies, Indian and specially the uncensored western, the uncontrolled availability of 'blue' movies has made many of them quite nervous. Even 'free trade' city states like Hongkong or Singapore have strict control on blue video. We in India, however, are more tolerant of free expression but mostly by default. Like one liberated Indian said to me the other day, "we have 'digested' Kamasutra since centuries, what can the blue video do to us"?

What should, then, be our own approach to Video and Television? Is there a way by which these two uniquely powerful and intimately personal communication media, which have entered our homes, which have invaded our privacy, which have charmed the very young and the very old alike and which have resultantly become a matter of concern to many of us, could be harnessed to achieve larger objectives such as social transformation? Television and Video have one unique characteristic in common. It is a remotely and repeatedly reproducible audio-visual medium

which demands no skills from its viewers-listeners except an understanding of the spoken language. It gives information directly almost without any cerebral processing. To learn from written words not only demands knowledge of written script, but it also necessitates comprehension and cerebral coordination. Written words like Jet Aircraft or tornado or dinosaur have no relevance to any uninformed, but an audio-visual depicting any of these provides almost totally complete communication with anyone who can see and speak the language. It is here that these media score over the written word. And it is this uniqueness that can make Doordarshan and video the most important tools for us to build a harmonious and progressive nation of well-informed people. SITE experiment conducted around Ahmedabad for use of Television via satellite for Information and Training has established two indisputable facts. Firstly our rural illiterate poor are not merely financially poor, they also are information poor and their economic position can vastly improve with their easy access to appropriate information. Secondly, it is known that these adult illiterates are intelligent and are receptive to acquiring information through TV. The experiment, in fact, proved that they are information hungry.

As we have seen so far history of broadcast and telecast programming and its effects on Western society has given us a number of pointers on what could be our own approach on programming. Unfortunately, besides the SITE and some valuable work in a couple of South American countries comparable research studies have not yet been undertaken, either in magnitude or in depth, in our own country or by other nations with large scale poverty, illiteracy and inadequate development. In our own country, for centuries, the communities have been propagating information and knowledge in 'Guru-Sishya Parampara' through formal and informal learning methods like apprenticeship or discourses by social and religious leaders. In the last couple of centuries, with the advent of print media, formal education through schools and colleges has offered a more organised educational pattern on a mass scale.

For the first time in India, we have a centralised access to a communication medium, that is, entering into the privacy of millions of Indian homes. The novelty, the glamour and the power of this media is such that even the literates are preferring it over the books, much to the dismay of intellectuals. The media is luring viewers and families who often escape or delay a meal just to watch an interesting programme. Growing number of children who have access to TV are preferring TV-watching to home-work adding to parental worries. Even the offices often wear a deserted look whenever TV is showing a cricket match. During the SITE experiment, one saw as many as 200 villagers flocking around and getting glued to a small TV screen, night after night. In private homes, TV has become almost an escapist media being used to avoid arguments within the family. Communication amongst family members is also eroding. Indians are already known to be passive by nature. Doordarshan is adding today to non-participatory passive viewing of discussions and debates on TV. Exciting sports are just being watched. In a sense the community is taking in whatever is being dished out, good or bad.

What could then be our strategy? Televisions and Videos have come to stay. Ingress of these technologies into our lives in future is a foregone conclusion. We do, however, have a choice to use this tremendous tool given to us by the Electronics technology for more imaginative applications. This tool can help us to attract our children into their class rooms. Glamour of television and appropriate use of audio-visual images can add colour in teaching and aid the teacher in innumerable ways. Certain subjects like History, Geography, Science and even Mathematics could be made far more effective through pictorial linkages to aid memorising and understanding. It is said that one picture tells more than a thousand words and one moving audio visual is several times more effective than a picture. Television and Video will also add to quality and authenticity of information transfer and will become less dependent on the knowledge of the teacher. The role of the teacher, therefore, will become more important as a communicator or as a facilitator than as a subject expert helping to provide the essential element of interactivity which makes any

education more effective. It must, however, be clearly understood that traditionally pre-university education including the primary education has never been interactive. We have to merely think of our own school days and recount how many questions were posed by the students to our teachers, many of whom have generally terrorised us creating in our minds more fear than respect for them. In a country like India, to get large number of experienced teachers that we would need to tackle illiteracy even amongst the young children is very difficult. Once the need for the subject expertise is reduced by using video or TV as an aid, the availability of teachers would greatly improve. In any case, the media itself will further help to improve the teaching skills of the teacher year after year. The strength of the media lies in its ability like never before to unravel the mystery of the universe to our young men and women and we must use this strength up to the hilt.

In the area of College and University education, television, video and computers offer exciting and unmatched facilities. These media will enable to take the country's best teachers to every university and every college. Concept like supplementary video faculty could even extend beyond the frontiers of the country. Large numbers of Indian experts working the world-over would be too keen and glad to share their knowledge with the student community in India through demonstration lectures. Training in professional subjects like Engineering, Architecture, Medicine and Surgery will be greatly improved through interactive audio visual training. Continuing education of professionals can now get into the privacy of their own homes and thereby provide the society with the state of the art services from these professionals who can update their knowledge by using the electronic media.

One of the greatest handicaps of our country today is adult illiteracy. 80% of Indian population does not possess functional literacy. Over 90% of the adult women lack information on almost every aspect of human development. Whatever these literally handicapped people have managed to learn, is through experience and observation. Many of the illiterates are intelligent and are as capable as literates. In fact, the handicap of their inability to read and write a language has given them a sharply tuned ability to

learn through experience, probably better than the literates. These people need information and knowledge. The TV or Video media enables us to free the knowledge and information from the shackles of the written words and present it to them in their own mother tongue. Illiteracy today, specially in our villages, is a major contributing factor to the exploitation of our illiterate countrymen by vested interests often backed by corrupt officials. Knowledge and information provided through video and television would improve the quality of life of these people and also simultaneously help them to an extent to fight the exploitation or at least understand that they are being exploited.

What television and video can do in rural India is to impart to the illiterate masses, information that will improve their understanding of the world around them; answer many a question that keep on haunting them, help them to appreciate the modem technology and its relevance to their lives as well 'as lives of their children. The women folk could understand facts of life that they should have learnt in school and therefore, it would be possible for a good communicator to share with a large number of intelligent people. This would add great comfort to their lives and reduce tension in society. Young mothers would learn how to bring up their babies to be bright, healthy, and well-developed young children while becoming aware of the importance of the family education and need to send their young ones to school. We can use video effectively by creating community video centres which could operate from a village school to provide to our streetwise but ill-informed and ill-trained artisans and tradesmen, occupational and vocational tips which will improve their skills, reduce their risks and occupational hazards and help them to add to their income through better efficiency and better knowledge of trade.

Finally, there remains a very major segment of education that has escaped attention of the educational bodies not only in our country but almost everywhere in the world. In our formal education, we impart knowledge on wide variety of subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Accountancy, History, Geography and Social Sciences. What we do not do is educating ourselves about life. Except for some rare, vague and broad nebulous guidelines,

none of us is often taught how to live. We are not told the value of life nor what it means to be fully alive. We need to learn how the human spirit has the power to rise above all odds and how to derive courage in facing our own obstacles through this knowledge. I would like to quote from Leo Buscaglia's lovely book on "How to become a fully functioning person". I cannot find better words than give them to you as he wrote them.

"We have no idea of the wonders we can take from life or of responsibility we have, to give it something in return. We are born into this world, educated to adjust to it according to the dominant and accepted mores and then pretty much left to sink or swim." He further states, "there is no school for living and there is a dearth of teachers of life. If we look to formal education for answers we are most often giving knowledge without judgment and facts without meaning. If we expect answers from religion, we are often persuaded to make the leap into faith, for which many of us are sourly unprepared. When we are incapable and complying we are often made to feel incompetent and dependent. If we try to learn from life itself through experience, we find that often it seems full of unforeseen dirty tricks for which we are not ready and from which we seem to glean little. If we attempt to learn from examples, we find it too few models."

We must face the reality that if we wish to live fully and in harmony with life, we will have to be self-motivated. This will involve training. We really cannot teach or pose to teach. The best way to help anyone is to share with one what all of us know and leave the choice to that person. In a sense everyone of us has to be one's own mentor. Since all of us are different, there can be no one way. We are all unique and we need not try to become someone else. All such ideas can be shared using television and video. In life we all have to learn what is the role of death, the role of self-determination, purpose, connectivities and linkages, communication, doubts and uncertainty in life, spirituality, frustration and pain and, most important of all, intimacy and love. This entire gamut of education has long been missing from our lives. The present tension in our country, the present lack of motivation and rampant negative feeling are results of the

continued neglect of sharing this vital knowledge within the community. We must realise that the human spirit, dedicated to life, beauty and good is not dead, even if we are told differently.

During my own lifetime I have seen many imaginative and impressive illiterates whose 'education' has taught me a lesson or two. I am, therefore, certain that years of formal schooling may make us informed people but it does not give us survival techniques, a sense of human dignity and worth, an appreciation of life, the ability to give and receive love, the knowledge of how to use our limited time wisely and determination to leave the world a better place of our having been in it. Such an education I believe can be passed on through television and video and could be shared by those who are enlightened.

Doordarshan programmes are bound to have far-reaching effects on our society-both the rural as well as the urban. It is not merely a question of fast changing social values or a generation gap which society has been facing decade after decade. Such changes, people accept in their stride. TV will bring far more profound changes. Some of these, which relate to invading the household and giving equal access to a child, an adolescent and an adult alike to every kind of programmes, are very basic, deep and technology related. We cannot avoid them. But if the programming is structured bearing this deeply invasive nature of media in our mind, many ill-effects and undesirable influences could be avoided. There are many thoughtful and capable communicators in this country.  We have exceptionally competent directors and performers who know the pulse of the community. We have authors who are masters of the written words and we have engineers and technicians who are second to none. We must harness all these talents and show the world how the Television or the Video could be used as an instrument of enriching life of the individuals as well as evolving a homogeneous and progressive society of knowledgeable people.

# Chapter 3

## Role of the Government

With changing technologies and a growing need for variety of electronic media services to meet our needs for formal and non-formal education, training and awareness building as well as for entertainment programmes with wider choice, broadcasting structuring multilingual programmes for disseminating developmental information, for aiding education and for entertainment and current affairs programmes with regional bias will also require some urgent changes in our Information and Broadcasting policies. These changes may have to be rather profound.

The principles underlying the Government's approach could be as follows:

a. Broadcasting services must remain independent of the Government editorially, and to a great extent, as far as possible, in economic and regulatory terms. Government could remain the owner but must turn it over to professionals for management.

b. Due to tremendous power of the Electronics media in influencing the society, both in broadcast and non-broadcast modes, there must be continuous provisions, through both legal and regulatory controls, to ensure imposition of programme standards, including the portrayal of violence and sex, racial jokes etc. and handling of politics, religion and matters of controversy. Special care on exposure of adult programmes to child audience is essential.

c. Radio broadcasting and television telecasting have their own distinguishing features. The regulatory and promotional measures for these two media need to be different.

d. While there is a need to create national standards in every aspect of video programme generation and delivery, Government has to ensure that such a need does not stop the country from exploiting new knowledge leading into offering new types of services.

e. There should be selective thrust to use electronic media for formal and non-formal educative information dissemination

and training. Such use of media must be given priority for resource allocation in planned sector. Both generation of such programmes and their distribution, in broadcast as well as non-broadcast modes, must enjoy tax concessions at least to the extent print media enjoys. For a predominantly illiterate nation, disseminating information through television and providing vocational and other forms of non-formal education must be given a very high priority.

f. Resource for expansion of broadcast services for entertainment, current affairs, news, interviews, comments, discussions, etc. could preferably be raised from non-governmental sources. There will soon be a possibility to have direct payment television programme services through subscription, either on pay-per-channel or on even pay-per-programme pasis. These services must also get covered by prescribed norms and standards.

g. If or when the electronics media is privatised or made autonomous, there should be vigilance against monopolistic practices and market distortions. Partly for this reason and partly to put limiting barriers to the entry of private operators, there should be a greater separation between various functions which made up broadcasting. Thus programme production, channel packaging and sequencing and programme delivery through telecasting which are all today carried out by Doordarshan alone, could be separated while granting private licenses.

h. All informative and educational software, where the information content is not protected under intellectual property rights or Copyright act, must be considered as Public domain software and all such programmes should be eligible for tax and duty concessions. It should also be free from copy-right restrictions available for free usage or duplication.

i. In the absence of any easily imposable rules and bearing in mind the fact that such restrictions have not been found feasible for the Radio and the print media, direct reception of satellite programmes from non-Indian sources may be allowed for restricted reception. It must be also kept in view that most of the high quality services are by subscription and need descrambles to recieve them. Thus external programmes may not pose any serious threat. In case of subscribed programme services, selective licensing should be granted to support tourism, needs of visiting foreigners continued education, needs of professionals etc. Subscription to such programmes could also be allowed to private citizens, so long as the Foreign exchange for subscription are sent by NRI relatives etc.

j. All video programmes, irrespective of whether they are for broadcast or otherwise, must be permitted for distribution only if they meet prescribed guidelines on norms and ethics for programming as well as advertising.

k. Government has to ensure that various organisations, private or publicly owned, must run efficiently, giving good value for money to the viewers and listeners and must work under broad social objectives and awareness necessary for anyone keeping in view cultural minority, religious freedom, economic backwardness, literacy status and pace of economic development of the country.

Level of Doordarshan's Advertising revenues-and the fact that people today rent recorded video cassettes from video libraries, offers us enough evidence to establish that investment in Entertainment Telecasting can be met from private resources. Both the programme content as well as advertising messages could still be controlled through appropriately enacted codes and ethical standards to ensure that social and personal development of children, women and weaker sections of the society are not harmed in any way. This will enable the Government to direct the public funds for educational telecasts.

# Chapter 4
## Technical Options

There have been continuous Technical Developments in audio and video signal processing, its storage, reproduction and advances in telecommunications in relation to broadcast media including VHF and UHF telecasting, direct satellite reception in S, C and Ku band, fibre optic and co-axial cables for multichannel programme distribution and finally interactive, bidirectional, composite analog and digital communication etc. These developments have made it necessary for us to chart out country's future plans in broadcasting consistent with the technological potential in addition to social, political and fiscal considerations. The available technologies offer us prospect to introduce wider choice of programmes for the viewer, specially in formal and non-formal education and also wholesome entertainment in languages of the region. Television advertising and possibility of subscribed programme delivery via Satellite and Cable offer business opportunities, without causing strain on public money. At the present moment, the Government has very admirably utilised satellite technology to nationally distribute television programmes reaching the remotest part of the country. Concept of using a mixed approach of using satellite to feed local VHFIUHF Broadcast transmitters for programme distribution via low cost normal TV sets instead of expensive Direct Satellite Reception sets has worked admirably efficiently. Doordarshan's success is now well-known. In the meantime, however, technological developments in the world and lowering of costs shall enable the country to think of other alternatives for expansion of services.

### Direct Broadcasting by Satellite (DBS)

The latest development of satellite technology has opened up new ways of delivering television and radio services to private homes. Lower cost of direct reception, today, made possible due to small dish antenna sizes and mass produced down-converter costs using higher frequency band, shall enable the country to use a single frequency via satellite to deliver directly a TV programme without incurring extra cost of redistribution via VHF/UHF transmitters. This will enable us to get over the problems of spectral scarcity.

### Satellite Television - Non Technical Brief

Satellites used for television are really speaking Television Transmitters in space. Because it is easy in any location to point a receiving dish antenna directly at a satellite without anything being in the way, these satellites can use transmitting frequencies which are of little use from land based transmitters, because these signals travel only in straight lines and depend on line of sight between transmitter and receiver. Thus a single frequency could be used to feed Televisions spread over a large country like India. (The land area over which these signals could be received well is called 'Foot print' of the Satellite).

To keep these satellites in the same spot in the sky so that a fixed dish can stay aligned and tuned to them, these are all placed in orbit above the Equator at a height where they will travel at exactly the same speed as the rotation of earth. Such an orbit is called Geostationary Orbit.

Satellite TV is not new to India. India launched its own Geostationary multi tasking satellites, Insat series, which carry TV transmitters. Because of the fact that the receivers needed for direct reception of Satellite frequencies are expensive and because these have been low power satellites, India has set up hundreds of medium and low power transmitters in VHF and UHF bank in almost every town to relay and transmit these Satellite delivered national programmes, so that they could be received by standard VHF/UHF TV receivers. Each satellite can carry several programmes provided that they are so designed.

Till 1989, almost all Television transmitters on Satellite in the world were low power and at lower microwave band of frequencies. They require large dish antennas of at least 16 ft. in diameter and are thus expensive. Larger dish size also provides high quality TV signal.

Now the new technologies permit use of higher power and higher frequency, meaning that satellite television will be easier to receive on small dishes costing very much lesser, bringing Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) reception within affordable costs.

## Satellite Television - Technology Scope

Television services in Europe and the U.S. have been earlier based on terrestrial transmission of TV signals in VHF and UHF band. Limited range coverage of terrestrial TV transmission demands large and expensive TV transmitter network to cover a large country. But to keep the quality of TV reception above a minimum standard, service area of each transmitter is very limited. This needs very large number of TV transmitters to cover a vast country like India. For this, the frequency spectrum in VHF and UHF bands would therefore pose problems in India both technically and financially.

India however has been producing its own Low cost TV transmitters in VHF and UHF bands and this TV transmission of localised interest could still be done through terrestrial transmission in UHF/VHF band.

Development of Satellite technology has opened up new ways of delivering TV and radio services to the home. For a large country like India, Satellite enables to use a single frequency to deliver national programmes to the entire country. Thus Satellite technology can offer its own distinctive and attractive way to get around the spectrum scarcity by enabling the spectrum to be used efficiently and economically.

In 1977, the World Administrative Radio Conference had allocated frequencies for Direct Broadcasting by Satellite (DBS). India, along with various other countries, was allocated orbital positions for its own satellites.

It is possible to offer via DBS, programmes to be telecast to select customers who subscribe for such programmes. In such cases programmes are suitably encrypted so that one those who have subscribed to such services could receive them by using special de-encryption units or decoders supplied to them by the service provider. With higher power Satellites and by the, use of higher frequency band it is possible to create such subscribed TV channel which is self financing and where the Direct reception down converters and associated small dishes could be produced at affordable prices (less than Rs. 6,000/-).

Unlike our approach to deliver National telecasts by using terrestrial VHF and UHF TV transmitters, elsewhere in the world, it is the cable services which redistribute such programmes to individual subscribers. This approach proves to be better and economical when several channels are to be offered. Cable service can carry a large number of channels, programmes for which are delivered to them via satellites on a single cable. The multichannel TV sets could receive several channels via a single cable. Cable distribution is becoming growingly popular in every part of the world.

Terrestrial distribution of many channels will make it necessary to use one Terrestrial TV Transmitter for each channel which will not be possible due to limited Frequency Spectrum available in TV broadcast bands. Cable penetration in Canada is 57% followed by Scandinavian countries, where it is 38% and in USA it is 24%. The percentage relates to total TV households in respective countries.

In the U.S., cable services are available in limited regions and the percentage of TV households who subscribe for cable is over 60% wherever cable services are existing.

Universally however it is the Satellites which are used as means of distributing a large choice of programmes to cable operators.

There are two kinds of Satellites. Those already in use in India are low powered satellites designed primarily for telecommunications use. Insat IB and lC as well as Intelsat and Arabsat in our region are satellites of this kind. We use Insat today to transmit our single National Channel to hundreds of Medium and low power VHF and UHF terrestrial TV transmitters via TVRO dishes. These transmitters feed individual home TVs through roof-top antennas.

The second kind of satellites, designed specifically for direct broadcasting to the public who could receive them with a small dish and low cost converter are not yet widely available. Such high powered broadcasting satellites will enable high quality direct reception with a small I-foot diameter dish. But here again only a single channel could be received by each TV owner.

## Cable TV - Non Technical Brief

### *What is Cable TV and what can it do?*

A modern Cable system is a broadband Communication network. This means that is is capable of carrying a large number of television channels, two way traffic including both video and voice (telephone) and high speed data (computerised data) transmission as well. The first important aspect of cable service is that it integrates a range of services otherwise available only separately. (as it is today in India).

So far as Television is concerned, cable can provide the following:

1. Carry almost unlimited number of programme channels.
2. Provide very high quality of programme reception compared to what individual roof top aerials or even Video tapes could give.
3. It will have capability to deliver High Definition TV whenever it becomes available.
4. It can feed local (even small town) TV channel to the entire locality without TV transmitters.
5. It provides a reliable, very economical and straight forward service with no hassles to the viewers.
6. It will keep cleaner surroundings without ugly roof-top aerials or unwieldly satellite dishes.
7. It can provide interactive Television enabling the viewer to participate in programmes by recording his vote on issues or participate in competitions or home instructional or educational TV.
8. It can deliver selectively, programs to certain group of people such as special informative programmes for continued education etc. of Medical doctors, architects, computer programmers etc.

In principle, cable can also make possible transactional services which are far superior to telephone or other interactive bi-directional services due to the fact that it can carry high quality pictures in addition to voice. In practice it would mean;

a. Horne shopping from a Video catalogue.
b. Holiday Booking after visually experiencing what is being offered.
c. Information in Video form could be reached remotely from a video encyclopedia or remote controlled video library.

Key point, however, is that Cable is a medium that can be cost effective even if fraction of the services it is capable of offering, is made possible.

### *Does Satellite Television Supersede Cable?*

On the contrary, Satellites serve as an efficient nationwide TV programme bulk distributor to various cable networks. Cable network in turn can carry, amongst other things, programmes from several satellites together into private home TV sets without deteriorating the quality of programmes. Thus their respective roles are mutually complementary, not contradictory.

Cables are efficient conduits to deliver into private homes, wide variety of services described above.

## Cable TV - Technical Background

There are two types of cables available today. One is a high bandwidth co-axial cable and other, a fibre optic cable with even wider bandwidth & higher transmission quality. The latter is however today much more expensive than the former.

The key to the performance of Cable TV lies in the concept of 'bandwidth'. Greater the bandwidth, more the information it can transmit at a given moment. Bandwidth is the measure both of the frequency range over which the system can operate and of its information carrying capacity. TV picture contains a lot of information and in India it is effectively renewed 25 times each second and each 625 line TV channel requires about 8MHz of bandwidth. By contrast voice communication of telephone quality needs only 4 KHz of bandwidth.

Cable bandwidth is about 350 MHz, this permits realistically about 15 to 25 TV channels including associated sound transmission. Teletext channel which carries steady visual needs

much lower bandwidth. So, in addition to TV channels, cable can carry several other services.

Indian population today receives indifferent quality of programme reception. Besides this, single channel offered today is totally inadequate if we wish to exploit this communication media and extend it to local language entertainment and formal and non-formal education. Programmes providing city level information are also vital to handle local community issues and add to local administrative and societal efficiency and convenience.

Experience the world over, wherever the organised cable services are available, is that the VCR owners soon become cable subscribers. In fact one organised study undertaken in November '86 in U.K. showed that VCR owners were the first to subscribe to cable network whenever it became available and that over 50% of TV households who subscribed to cable had VCRs considerably more than the U.K. national average.

Wide choice offered by cable, coupled with Limited life and extra care that VCR needs as well as non-availability of high quality cassettes in libraries encourages the VCR owners and others to subscribe to cable.

It is also found that people belonging to lower socio-economic groups in a society tend to subscribe to cable as it is efficient, of high quality and economical.

Informal study of cable users in Indian cities and industrial colonies indicates that these people welcome cable as it offers increased choice. They utilise and appreciate it wholeheartedly.

Cable is an ideal medium to disburse non-entertainment services-like continued education or primary and secondary school tutions or tele-courses offered by open universities etc. Further, cable can offer interactive services including security and alarm services etc.

List of Services potentially available via Cable System :

a. Doordarshan's National and regional channels.

b. Several All India Radio programmes.

c. Any other satellite broadcast TV channels of Indian or Foreign origin.

d. Subscribed (Encrypted) TV channels carrying films, sports or arts.

e. Special subject TV / Radio channels-for News, religion, health.

f. Specialised audience channels - e.g. women, children elderly, deaf etc.

g. Local Channel : Municipal and Police Information, Consumer guidance, social engagements and entertainment guide, programmes by local budding artists, local festival reports etc.

h. Other Services : Fire and Burglar alarms, remote meter reading, banking from home, travel services like reservation from home, opinion polling electronic mail, messaging Interactive learning Business communication.

## Scope for VCR / VCP

Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) and Video Cassette Players, (VCPs) have an important role to play in communication and in education. Both the products are now common place, in India with over 2.5 million VCRs in private homes and video parlors entertaining people with legal, and pirated films available from over 80,000 video libraries. People rent the cassettes for as little as Rs. 5/- per day. One often hears complaints about this and the first thing that comes to mind is to control it as an undesirable menace. If people today see movies, it is because very little educational and informative material is available on video and even fewer educational programmes are produced on video to give to the people what they would want. This point is proven well by the fact that high quality informative cassettes available as pirated copies of those produced by National Geographic Magazine or the BBC are in high demand.

Electronic Trade and Technology Development Corporation Ltd., a Government of India undertaking is offering 'Margadarshan' video cassettes for education, information and training. Over 1500 titles are made available each at price of Rs. 75/- for 17-75 minutes

programme. Compare this price with prices of educational cassettes in UK and. U.S.A. where typical cassette costs from Rs. 400 to Rs. 5000/- per copy !

Broadcast Television and Video have certain distinctive features unique to themselves. For instance, one would need an expensive VCR or a VCP to see a video cassette and for using a Television, one needs to be within the service area of a TV transmitter. What matters in education more than in other areas, is that a Video programme can be seen at one's will. Teacher can start it and stop it as desired to interject and make a comment and he could conduct his class to suit his time. Any institute could create video library, in the same way as a book library and allow teachers and students to draw on these resources for self-learning or group-learning.

With facilities like convenience of viewing time, user-ability to start, stop or skip a portion of it or review it makes Video a better technological tool for teaching than use of Television in educational broadcast mode.

## Multichannel Microwave Distribution System (MMDS)

The latest alternative to programme distribution over a defined area as is possible with cable is Microwave Multichannel television Broadcasting. Started in USA a few years back to distribute a single movie channel in uncabled area, it was called MDS-Multipoint Distribution Service. Later technological development allowed Multichannel programme dispersal on Microwave. This service is now known as MMDS. This is, in a sense, a 'wireless cable' system.

As MMDS uses microwave, it can only provide line of sight service. Even the trees can block this service. Range is limited to about 30 KM. They operate from 2 GHz to 30 GHz (Giga Hertz) band. The practical system uses curved mesh dishes of about 500 mm dia. Costs and technology will put this option beyond Indian resources for some time to come.

## Distribution of Educational and Other Programmes to Specific Interest Groups via Satellite Transponders during idle hours

This is a low cost solution to the creation of a separate National Channel for Education. It will help to avoid expensive network of second channel TV relay transmitters to fulfill educational needs. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has estimated that the total outlay for a separate education channel will cost over Rs. 2000 crore just for Information and Broadcasting's investment. The proposed scheme will achieve same result with negligible investment in I & B infrastructure. It can serve 300,000 schools, colleges, community centers and other institutions with 15 hours of educational programmes on a daily basis. The cost for all institutions put together will be no more than Rs. 200 crore, almost 50% of which will be corning from the community. Investment per school or per installation is just Rs. 6000/-.

In addition to full exploitation of the Doordarshan infrastructure and very low cost method of operating Educational TV, it will also provide convenience to the users to watch the programme at different times and offer repeated viewing facility not available in present form of Transmitted ETV.

*Techno-economics*

a. Today's technology, already being used in Europe, enables digitally encoded signals transmitted as a part of the telecast TV signal at the beginning of each programme to automatically start unmanned VCR and transfer the telecast programme on to a video cassette. A similar signal at the end of the programme automatically turns the VCR off. Thus it is possible to automatically transfer TV programmes into a VCR which is operated remotely by the Coded Digital Signal forming part of telecast-material.

b. This extra facility on a VCR costs not more than Rs.300/- per VCR. It is possible that the owner of the VCR could select in advance any five or more of ninety nine different varieties of programmes by a simple procedure so that his VCR will record only those programmes which he has selected and he can then

watch them whenever it is convenient to him. Activation and deactivation of VCR recording is automatic without human intervention.

c. Future INSAT Satellite could be provided with extra power to enable use of TV transponders during nights also. This will need only slightly extra investment but it will fulfill, to a very large extent, the need of Educational TV telecasting which gives best of both the technologies - satellite TV and Video.

d. The option is to telecast during idle period throughout the day and night, educational programmes which precede and end with predetermined digital codes.

e. 300,000 schools, colleges, community centers etc. could acquire such VCRs at about Rs. 6000/- or so if they are given excise concession. The telecast programmes will be automatically off-loaded into blank Video Cassettes left inside the VCR which will automatically turn on and record the programme at any time of the day or night, if preselected by the institution.

f. This will need totally about Rs. 180 crore for 300,000 institutions. This investment can come from several sources including central and state Govts., private institutions, industries and public and private trusts.

Students and other interested groups could be shown these programmes whenever it is convenient.

There is at present a shared transponder on INSAT that relays regional language programmes in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Other regional language programmes are also being similarly facilitated on the new Satellites. Thus various educational programmes in regional languages could also be similarly distributed state-wide through a similar technique.

In certain cases, this facility will earn good revenue. For example, to provide continued educational support to professionals like medical doctors, lawyers etc., encrypted programmes offered by experts could be telecast which could be received only by those who rent decoding interface. For example, a medical practitioner can pay Rs. 200/- P.M. and get four demonstration lectures by

eminent experts which he can then see at any convenient time and in privacy without exposing his ignorance as in the case of a group training workshop. If 10,000 doctors subscribe, there will be a revenue of Rs. 2 million which is more than adequate to provide four first class programmes a month. Doordarshan can charge Rs. 200,000 per hour for such telecasting service.

## Multi User Terrestrial Communication Grid (Terragrid)

Creating exclusive and non-sharing communication network by various Government agencies has been causing a lot of concern to us because this network multiplicity is resulting in wasteful expenditure, under-utilisation of facilities and poor return on investments.

If the Satellite Communication links can be shared by governmental agencies & ministries without any administrative or technical problems, it should be equally possible to adopt a similar approach to share the terrestrial communication facilities. Such a shared facility, both in case of wired as well as wireless ground communication links would offer overwhelming advantages.

The multi-user, multi-tasking approach under the 'Terragrid' has immense developmental potentialities which will keep continuously growing as we keep gaining confidence and experience. To begin with, however, we could concentrate in two areas which are not only capital intensive but also are presently causing inordinate delays in establishing communication links by any agency:

a) Multi-user 'Radio Tower' in each town to mount Aerials and Microwave dishes to broadcast TV, Radio, Voice and Data Communication links, etc., and

b) National Cable grid for fibre optic and co-axial cables.

## Structural Tower-High Platforms - For Communication Broadcasting Services Aerials

Communication and broadcasting services in VHFIUHF/ Microwave require a high platform for locating the aerials so as to obtain good service areas. It is especially true in major cities where

high rise buildings do form shadow areas. The aerial platforms are required on high tower, height. of which can vary between 100 to 300 meters, depending on the city's topography and area coverage requirements.

A number of diverse services require such a high platform for locating the aerials. The services which require these facilities are:

a)  T.V. Transmitting aerials for different channels;

b)  F.M. broadcasting aerials for different channels;

c)  Department of Telecommunication, Microwave communication dishes;

d)  Railways microwave communication dishes;

e)  Police and Security Departments VHF/UHF system;

f)  Common users services such as radio paging, mobile radio;

g)  Specialised users of VHF/UHF frequencies, such as, fire brigade, electricity supply undertakings, public transport services, taxis, ambulance services, gas distributors etc.

h)  Pollution monitoring and sampling instrumentation.

A high tower is a costly proposition. Individual users erect their own towers within their financial limits. It severely restricts making available to them an aerial which can cover the required services areas. To give an example, during ASIAD, the organisers had to locate the VHF aerials on top of DDA building, Indraprastha, which was the tallest building (height 250 ft.). The installations were most unsatisfactory as there was no adequate supporting structures on the terrace for aerials, and inadequate accommodation availability to locate the required equipment. This was because the building was never meant for such an application.

The solution to this is to have a common radio tower, as is the practice in almost all advanced countries. Depending on the topography and availability of funds, there can be one or two such towers covering a major city. The towers would be of a required height. With proper planning and space, structure facilities could be provided for different aerials for services mentioned above so as to cause minimum mutual interference. Just below or near the

space for aerials, adequate accommodation is provided to house the transmitting / receiving equipment and associated equipment. All the users can be fed from a common stand-by/UPS power supply system. From such a central location hardened cable, (microwave), multi-pair cable or glass fibre can be provided to different users to meet their baseband transmission requirements. In certain cases provision could be made to link the radio tower to the Headquarters of the services through a high UHF or high microwave (10 to 40 GHz links).

So far, we have failed to build such towers in any city because of lack of co-ordination between the various user agencies. No single Department can afford to build such a tower which can house several aerials along with required infrastructure. There has been no co-ordination between the various departments to come together and build such a tower. It may be possible to compel either one of the major users like Doordarshan or Department of Telecommunications to build such a tower and rent out to or share the accomodation with other users. They may be given financial assistance directly by the concerned likely user or through a central grant. Another way could be to set up a separate organisation like 'Terragrid' to undertake such task.

Considering the money each user is spending on different small towers, building a major high tower will prove very economical by pooling of users. Besides, improvement in coverage and services would be very considerable.

There is no point in tying up such a venture with small commercial proposition like having a restaurant nearer to the top. They may not earn adequate revenue and could also form a security risk to the important services located on the tower. At best, a viewing gallery may be provided.

There could be an argument that it will not be wise to concentrate all vital aerial systems in one structure, damage to which can paralyse a number of services in that city. Such towers are usually massive structures and damaging them is not easy. Because of the nature of the structure, providing physical security is not very difficult. Some vital services like Railways or P&T could have a

very small alternative stand-by arrangement, in case of the failure of tower services.

## National Grid for Fibre Optic and Co-Axial Cables

Fibre optic communication is superior terrestrial communication alternative to satellites. It scores over the latter for voice and data communication due to shorter propagation delay and systematic reliability.

Trafic density and speed for fibre optic cables is also comparable to what satellites can offer in addition to features like longer life and ease of maintenance and repairs.

More important of all, however, is that Fibre Optic communication offers strategic 'terra firma' alternative to vulnerable space satellites. Today, we depend on satellites to an extent that the country can become communication blind overnight, if for any reason the satellite is dislocated.

Today, several user ministries are in various stages of planned induction of fibre optic alternative.

Highest cost in creating fibre-optic cable network is the cost of laying of underground conduits or protective pipes.

Multi-user conduits with built-in fibre-optic cables could achieve cost and time savings for every user agency. Station to station multi-user fibre-optic communication grid needs, therefore, to be planned.

Fibre optic cables, and also co-axial cable, could be laid along the Railways line grid throughout the country without having problems of land acquisition etc. involving associated litigations and delays. Repeaters and such other intermediate gear can also be located on the Railway property as is found necessary.

In many other countries today, fibre-optic cables are cored into the ground conductor which is always provided with the overhead high tension lines. We have extensive HT overhead transmission network created for nation-wide electrification and this option also could be considered as the costs could be even lower as no underground work is involved.

# Chapter 5

## Media Choices and Their Relative Importance

Potentially, there are two broad forms of communication media available: non-interactive or interactive.

**A. Non-interactive :**
(No dialogue, just simplex transfer)

| *Media* | *Salient Features* |
|---|---|
| Broadcast Radio | Multiple usage-entertainment |
| Broadcast Television | Cheaper - lower cost per viewer |
| Recorded Audio | Already existing |
| Recorded Audio Visual | Completely suitable for illiterates |
| (VCR & TV) | Wider community usage per system |

**B. Interactive :**
(Simulated duplex or through data-base query)

| *Media* | *Salient Features* |
|---|---|
| Personal computers and 'Work Stations' | Ideal for self-learning or tutorless education. |
| Computer Controlled Video discs utility to (CDROM) | Generally suitable for continued education of professionals. |
|  | High investment cost limits its essential area. |
|  | Generally can cater to one user at a time. |

**Non-Interactive**

| a) Broadcast Radio | 1. The lowest cost per listener. 2. The widest, coverage of the country. | Audio only-communication limitation. Limited by language knowledge. Unsuitable for vocational training. Lack of user's control like repeat facility. |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| b) Broadcast Television | 1. Lower cost per viewer.<br><br>2. Uniformity of information dissemination.<br><br>3. Most powerful audio-visual media because of being controlled by relatively small number of institutions and disseminating to large masses of people lending itself to creation of uniformity of thought and belief. | Generally unsuitable for vocational training due to:<br>i) Viewing time inconvenience.<br>ii) Lack of repeat facility.<br>iii) Subjects have limited interested audience.<br>Available time is limited and thus can cater to broad interest areas only.<br>Doesn't Cover the entire country as yet. |
| c) Recorded Audio | 1. Listening Convenience<br>2. Listening Possibility | Audio only. Communicative limitation.<br>Limited by language knowledge.<br>Unsuitable for vocational training.<br>Lack of user's control like repeat facility. |
| d) Recorded Audio-Visual (VCR+lV) | 1. Has characteristics of Broadcast TV.<br>2. Viewing convenience.<br>3. 'Repeat' facility for enhanced learning.<br>4. Suitable for vocational & curricular training.<br>5. Erasability and re-recording of software lending itself to low cost of revised editions.<br>6. Possibility of multiple usage of hardware system. | Need for special equipment- VCR/VCP. |

## Interactive :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a) Personal Computers (Computer Aided Learning) | 1. Tutorless learning in privacy makes it an ideal choice for continued education of professionals, notably medical doctors and modem technologists.<br>2. Multiple use of hardware for education as well as for business management and data logging. | 1. Open to literates only.<br>2. Spl. training.<br>3. Extra investment in equipment. |
| b) Computer linked video (CDROM) | 1. More attractive than mere Computer-Aided-Learning (CAL).<br>2. Non-erasable and rugged and longlife software storage. | Captive and expensive technology.<br>Very long time for video software development due to inter-active nature.<br>Non-erasable storage leads to higher cost and investment. |

# Chapter 6

## Electronics Media for Education, Information and Training

### Formal Education

Pluto, in his 'Republic', has emphatically underscored the concept of Education being considered as a process of "inserting into the mind, knowledge that was not there before-as if putting sight into blindman's eyes". He preferred to define it as the process of "helping each citizen to develop innate powers of vision by turning in right direction towards the light". Even after several centuries since Pluto, and inspite of similar views expressed by eminent thinkers, philosophers and sages, our primary education has remained regimental. We still keep talking of education to be concerned with exploration, understanding and delight but, in the meantime, quality of education progressively deteriorates because of unmanageable and growing demand for education, lack of good teachers and lack of facilities.

It is here that Electronics Media offers to a country like India, a unique cost-effective solution. Both Video and TV could be outstanding instruments to train and assist teachers enabling them to take to students. What a good teacher would always desire is an ability to bring the world into his classroom giving his students direct audio-visual exposure to what he wants them to learn. Teacher and his human interface shall always remain an essential content of education and of learning. Written word is formal and needs one to learn the meaning of symbols that constitutes written text. The spoken word and the expression, passion and conviction of a good teacher who delivers it, packs more learning into the words that is ever possible with a mere written sentence. Written text is convenient in terms of storing and transport of information but it is essentially an inferior form of communication. Lecturing will thus always remain a chosen method of education in schools, colleges and universities. What Electronics Media does is to strengthen the hands of the teachers. It enriches them with extraordinary means and aids to communicate effectively and quickly and relieve them from the agony of searching for illusive words by enabling them to use moving pictures on TV screen from selectively stored sights and sounds and to embellish their lecture, making it absorbing, engaging and satisfying. Electronics Media has, therefore, become the most essential component of Education technology. Luckily for us Electronics and Communications technologies have brought electronics gadgets like video and TV within affordable price limit, made them sufficiently reliable, rugged and simple to use in a classroom.

### Non-formal Education

Electronics Media like TV has now entered several million homes in India. Entertainment, news and views have attracted millions to invest in a TV. Because TV and video prices in India have a large tax and duty content, it is possible for the Government to make them considerably cheaper so that they become easily affordable to communities and even for homes of poorer sections of the society. But inspite of high price, it is estimated that there are 35 million TV and 2.5 million VCR owners in the country, with a prime-time viewership over 200 million. These figures are ever increasing. There are almost 150,000 community TV sets with a prime-time audience of hundreds of people glued to pictures on a 20" screen. A Sitarist, the other day, was explaining, in a very engaging fashion, the history of sitar and elementary insight into its musical range. Over 100 million Indians learnt firsthand, from an eminent teacher and exponent, about Sitar. Which other communication media and at what cost could achieve this miracle in informal education of delivering such information into private homes in which everyone from 85 years old great grandfather, 60 years old retired grandfather, 35 years old father, their wives and young children from the age of 4 were able to learn? That is what TV and video can do to a Society - i.e. deliver simultaneously and efficiently essential information into every private home.

Informal education ranges from learning about behaviour, managing personal and societal relationships in everyday life, about management of accidents and disasters, about nursing, medicare, hygiene, about managing chronic diseases like diabetes, arthritis and other disabilities, about handicrafts, learning arts and crafts, about appreciation of culture etc. The limit on how much and in what ways a matured society could use the TV

set, is our imagination and creative ability. What should be dramatised or not will be an important but a secondary question. But use of Electronics Media in imparting non-formal education could be unmatched. Government can use it to take authentic information to people on its policies adopted for the benefit of the people and explain to them how to get that benefit, what are their rights & responsibilities. Industry can educate them on correct usage of their products for correct, efficient and safe utilisation by the users. Consumers could be protected through consumer education.

## Literacy Skills to Adults

The problem of illiteracy amongst Adults and its continued spread, as uneducated children turn into young adults, is mind boggling. So-called Literacy Mission has fallen short of the expectations rather severely. Functional literacy has remained a dream. Adults refuse to come to literacy classes. Efforts to educate people through unmotivated and unexciting Government paid teachers have generally added to the failure of the programme. The way literates behave and manage their own lives also does not enthuse the street-smart and otherwise matured adult to respect literacy as a tool for self-development. His ignorance of written words does not allow him to understand the value of the reservoir of information stored in print. There are over 300 million functionally illiterate adults in our country, most of them in rural India, spread out in 700,000 villages. Even if we target to teach 10% of them and if we plan to have one teacher for 30 adults, we need one million teachers. These teachers must be trained to teach adults, which also demands different skills than teaching young children to read and write. More importantly these teachers need to be motivators and therefore expert communicators. The illiterate adult will need 600 hours of training to provide him functional literacy to read without help a public notice or to enter information into a form. This task can never be performed without the help of Electronics Media, and that too video media, for the teachers. Anything else is waste of money which could be better utilised by transferring these funds to child education and on not creating new edifices and add to the tribes of illiterate adults.

A detailed analysis of the issues involved and the role that Electronics Media could play in tackling some of the major ones is discussed separately elsewhere in this book.

## Vocational Education and Skills Training

Adult illiterates predominate amongst artisans, tradesmen, farmers, housewives and those involved in basic blue collared services and jobs. They have no formal training in their vocations and they learn through apprenticeship with other uneducated but experienced street-smart gurus and later by trial and error. All these are at the cost of the society which he serves through his services. End-result is his inability to deliver quality work, to adopt correctly to new technological advances, to work safely and work-aids to gain confidence and improve his earnings.

We find that inspite of recognised inadequacies in the quality and range of services available to the community and inspite of a broad awareness about the need for training, no organised plans have been implemented in any recognisable scale either by the Government or by the industry to remove such shortcomings. For instance, most of the artisans and tradesmen lack information and training in utilising industrial products which they are expected to install, operate or maintain as a part of their work. Hence it is the industry that should get involved in such training of illiterate or semiliterate artisans and service personnel. Paint companies must assume responsibility to educate painters audio-visually or construction companies and producers of construction material should tell about how and why of brick laying, tile fixing, wall plastering, installation of shuttering and pouring of concrete slabs. It is the producers of electrical wires and switches and appliances etc. who should teach through video, the do's and don'ts about work practice consistant with shock & fire safety. But protected industry operating in seller's market does not seem to find it necessary.

In all such areas, when one has to share information and knowledge with experienced but uninformed workmen who cannot learn through written text, the golden opportunity offered by Electronics Media to perform this function, even more

effectively through Audio-visual means has to be fully exploited. Since last three years, ET &T, a public sector undertaking under the Department of Electronics has set up 'Margdarshan' programme to make available Video software for such training. Inspite of not having concessions, ET&T offers 40 minutes training cassette just at Rs. 75/-. Further to enable poorer communities to see these tapes, a Community Video System called 'Sanghamitra' was launched which consists of 20 inch Colour TV set and a Video Cassette Player, together at Rs. 16,000/-. Here again Government has given no tax concessions and yet it was possible to offer affordable price for a functionally sound and reliable Community Video to the People of India. Such Projects are viable and socio-economically vital. May be Government would take suitable steps to supplement and augment such projects.

### Distance Learning

Government has created Open Universities as institutions for distant or open learning in few locations throughout the country. The most prominent amongst them being Indira Gandhi National Open University-IGNOU in Delhi. Broadly, they offer courses for private learning or for continued education leading to graduation or a diploma. Vehicle for their programmes is Doordarshan and also the video cassettes. Similarly Government has created through the National Council for Education Research and Training--NCERT, Central Institute of Educational Technology-CIET to support school level education. They also created on similar lines, several State Institutes for Educational Technology-SIETs.

In addition to IGNOU, Government also has funded University Grants Commission (UGC) to establish several production centres for Video programmes to support University level education and training. Five IITs and TTTIs are also involved in video production.

Some of these institutions are well equipped, in fact better equipped than some production units of Doordarshan, but have not been able to attract, capable programme producers in adequate

members. The study shows that these institutions are generally bureaucratised, inefficient and ineffective. Creative people working in these institutions have little support. It is clearly seen that malaise in these projects lies in fragmentation and duplication and thereby making it ineffective in its impact on any scale. Inspite of many of these institutions being under the same Ministry, there is no strength-sharing, either in software generation or in production facilities. All important inter-personal channels are either unavailable for face to face contact or made ineffective due to procedural wrangies.

Another major lacuna is the delivery system for the programmes generated by them. Doordarshan offers a few hours of telecast time but it is done with a certain apathy and neglect. Education lacks glamour of prime-time entertainment and money involved is relatively unattractive. Programme production comes from predominently Government institutions which are known to be giving step-motherly treatment to educational programmes.

Really speaking, fixed time telecast of educational programmes is not the best way of their delivery. The teacher must have option to use these programmes to suit his time table and he must be able to start and stop the information delivery to intersperse supportive guidance and to ensure understanding. Video cassettes provide a better delivery system. May be one could use the telecast to enable schools and colleges to create library of such programmes in video cassettes by off-telecast recording on a VCR.

The levels in educational matrix at which video based support material is needed are too many to enable single TV channel to cater curricular support and hence the present programming is discontinuous and not interlinked with syllabus. This makes programme utility rather limited and today they seem to cater to home bound retired adults, adding to their awareness than that of students or teachers.

We need to change it to 'Tele-course' approach that supports segments of curricular syllabus and publish them on video cassettes with written text as support materials on the lines that IGNOU does.

There are other avenues for inter-institutional cooperation. They are, creation of shared stock-shot data bases, exchange of programmes, creation of video libraries to be used by producers by importing foreign educational programmes etc. They could be highly educative and would speed up programme production time as well as upgrade programme quality. It's a vital learning tool.

## Programme Effectiveness Research

Educational Video Programmes are meant to enhance quality of training and education by helping instructors to augment their teaching and communication skill. There is, therefore, a vital need to evaluate 'communication effectiveness' of such programmes. Just glossy production, expensive sets or directorial or editorial skills are of no consequence. One major lacuna that needs to be corrected forthwith is by initiating independent search on programme effectiveness.

The Department of Electronics, jointly with the Ministry of Human Resources Development has set up 'Vivekdarpan' project under which a set of 25 villages each in Rajasthan, Bihar and UP are provided with CIVs and VCPs to check and evaluate effectiveness of video based informative, educational and training programmes developed by various agencies for rural education, adult education, literacy training etc. A number of researchers in the field of communication skills are associated to perform these tasks. Similar groups are essential for formal educational programmes. It is the effect on Target audience and their acceptance that must decide the quality of programme and not perceptions of the script writers, directors, participating teachers or editors.

## Television and Video Players for Schools an Colleges

There is scope and an urgent need for our institutions of learning like secondary schools, colleges and at least private primary schools to have Colour Television Sets and VCPs, as vital components of Educational Technology in their class rooms and create the most essential infrastructure to use video cassettes and Educational TV in enriching the curricular and noncurricular

education. In this manner expert teachers of proven ability and merit can be brought within the reach of all students to supplement the existing educational infrastructure.

There is a way to achieve this by the institutions themselves on their own, without waiting for the Government to step in. Following are the parameters:

i) Normally secondary schools have about 60 students in a class. If the monthly fees for the students covered under this scheme is raised by a nominal amount of Rs. 5.50/- per student per month, it will provide the school, extra funds of approximately Rs. 4000/- per annum per class room.

ii) Considering a school with 10 classrooms, fees collected per annum will be Rs. 40,000/-. In a period of three years, the amount accrued will be Rs. 1,20,000/-.

iii) It is possible to provide the schools with CTV sets at Rs. 8,800/- and one portable VCP and one VCR at Rs. 8,000/ - and Rs. 13,000/- respectively. If the school procures ten 51 cm CTV sets, one VCR and one VCP, the cost of the package will be Rs. 109,000/-.

iv) At the end of three years, let the class teacher, or anyone who assumes the responsibility to look after the set, be allowed to purchase the CTV at Rs. 3,500/- per set. This will yield the school further Rs. 35,000/- for CTs. Similarly VCP and VCR also could be sold at discounted price of Rs. 3,200/- and Rs. 5,800/- respectively. Proceeds from such disposal of used product will total up to Rs. 44,000/-. Thus total income would be Rs. 1,64,000/- (Rs. 1,20,000/- + Rs. 44,000/-).

v) Nationalised banks can make available this amount as a loan to the schools joining the scheme. The loan could be returned in installments of Rs.3,050/- p.m. over a period of 36 months. At around 16.5% per annum on reducing balance the interest installment for this per month would be around Rs. 750 on the average. Thus in a period of 36 months the total out-go will work out to Rs. 1,36,800/- (3800 x 36).

vi) This will leave the school with a surplus of Rs. 27,200/-. Out of this Rs. 15,000/- will be good enough to meet annual maintenance and repair charges for a 3-year period.

vii) Video tapes for the scheme can be supplied through ET&T's Margadarshan series. The price of each video programme of 20 minutes duration will be Rs. 35/-. Two such programmes will be available on one cassette. This will enable schools to have their minimum library of 350 programmes or 175 cassettes at the cost of Rs. 12,200/-.

**Advantages**

a) Each class room will have its own 20" CTV.

b) As the class teacher or anyone responsible for maintenance is ultimately going to be its owner at the end of 36 months, he or she will ensure proper maintenance and usage. Incentive of having a chance to buy CTV at Rs. 3500/- a VCP at 3200/- and a VCR at Rs. 5,800/- is a attractive motivation.

c) The school will have the benefit of acquiring new sets of CTV-VCP at the end of every three years.

d) Educational programmes telecast by Doordarshan can be recorded directly on the VCRs and these recorded cassettes could be used along with other tapes.

e) In additon to receiving educational TV telecasts from Doordarshan during transmission, the teachers will have the freedom to utilise the material whenever they find it convenient and can even use them for repetitive viewing.

f) The school can thus build its own large video teaching cassette library over a period of time.

g) The same recorded programmes can be made use of with advantage for additional tutorial classes just before examinations.

h) At each district level, it is possible to implement a competitive scheme through which best teachers in each subject can be selected and their lectures can be video taped for use as an aid to the local teachers in the entire district through the educational Tele-Video programme. Once the experiment

succeeds it could be gradually extended to state level and later to the national level.

i) Corresponding financial relief accruing to the Government can be diverted to other priority areas.

j) Finally the students will derive a sense of pride for having stood on their feet instead of waiting for doles from the Government or from any charitable bodies.

**Education beyond Classroom into Houses and Workplace**

In the U.S. the learning channel, an educational satellite network was reaching more than three million houses in 1984 and offered a number of college courses daily. Formal learning extends beyond the classroom into the home and workplace. Frank B. Withrow of the U.S. department of Education in one of his thought-provoking articles on Institutional lV stated:

"Electronics can offer a wide range of services beyond the walls of the traditional college or university. High quality materials designed for broadcast to specific audiences can provide for a life long learning experience.Telecommunications systems offer access to data bases and allow opportunities for dialogue between the learner and instructor. It is obvious that technology can and should make up for a gap in highly qualified teachers and subject experts, making a significant contribution to the quality of education in the United States".

# Chapter 7

## NETSS - National Educational Television Satellite System

This study reveals that there exists a possibility of creating a financially self-supportive, affordable and technologically feasible Educational Programme generation and delivery system based on Satellite technology and aided by various cost effective ways of ground delivery.

It is possible to establish an exclusive satellite system to support Educational Television Services throughout India through fifteen dedicated regional Educational TV channels. The proposal offers an optimum solution for dissemination of Educational TV programmes to fifteen language groups. It offers a range of possibilities for distance education, both formal and non-formal. It also offers opportunity for inter-region sharing of education programmes.

The approach contemplates to establish a shared Satellite system tentatively termed NETSS-National Educational Television Satellite System. It will have 24 Television channels out of which 15 channels will be exclusively used for dissemination of educational programmes to 15 different regions of the country covering all language groups. Three channels will remain as spare channels on the satellite and six channels will be used as subscribed entertainment channels, the programmes from which will be encrypted and will be receivable only by those who subscribe a monthly fee against which subscribers will be given descramblers or decoders, enabling only subscribers to watch what is telecast. These six channels-which will be predominantly movie channels-will be beamed to six national regions.

As educational needs for adult literacy, primary education, non-formal education and vocational education will be in local languages, 15 channels will cater to almost every region's needs.

### System Choice

After giving due consideration to the recommendations of the International Administrative Radio Conference convened by International Telecommunication Union-ITU in 1977 and various technological options as per the present state-of-the-art, optimum satellite system for such an application, which also constitutes a cost effective solution, will be to have a satellite system operating in quasi DBS mode operating in a Ku Band. Such a satellite can accommodate 24 transponders employing frequency reuse technique. Such a choice will enable us to provide low cost direct reception sets with a small dish of about one meter diameter and inexpensive electronics, at an overall cost of Rs. 6000/- or less plus a normal CTV set.

### Optimum System

NETSS operating in Ku Band with its 24 transponders will offer 24 independent non-interfering channels with 24 different beams, each of which will be beamed to a different area. This will enable delivering up to 24 different area. This will enable delivering upto 24 different TV programmes. As the initial capacity requirement is of 21 channels, additional 3 channels will remain as on-orbit spares.

### Distribution Modes

NETSS distribution modes will primarily involve use of direct reception sets which could be made available at low cost. If produced in bulk and assuming minimal taxes, complete DRS set including 1M dish, down converter and 20" CTV set could be made available at less than Rs. 10,000/-. Please note that all prices indicated herein are as of early 1989 in India.

The other option is to pick up satellite signals with professional TVROs and rebroadcast them over terrestrial transmitters.

The third option is to use a standard DRS, boost the signals and feed through a cable network within a township or a community.

The NETSS could also be used as a delivery system to download educational programmes during non-working hours into digitally controlled VCRs, which are today, costing same as normal VCRs.

### Regulatory Issues

An ITU (International Telecommunications Union) allotment plan already exists for operation of the satellite in the FSS segment of the Ku Band. This plan provides an identified orbit slot for India for its domestic FSS services. Thus, such a proposal involving creation of a Satellite System fulfills the existing regulatory guidelines.

### Hardware Cost Implications

Cost of each Satellite      Rs. 130 Crore
Cost of each uplink        Rs. 3.5 Crore

Assuming twenty-one uplink earth stations, one satellite-in orbit, one satellite as ground spare & one satellite control center, the project cost for the telecasting system will be around Rs. 350 crore as per today's feasible cost.

Bulk manufacture of Direct Reception Sets with 1 M PDA in Ku Band will enable to make available such sets at less than Rs.10,000 including one 20" Colour TV set.

### Broad Specifications of NESS

| | |
|---|---|
| Band of Operation | Ku Band (FSS) |
| No. of Transponders | 24 |
| Channel width | 36MHz |
| Spacecraft Power Requirement | 1800 Watts |
| Spacecraft EIRP | 52dBW |
| C/N of Downlink | 12.2 dB |
| G/T of DRS | 12 dB/K |
| Rainfade Margin | 5 dB |
| Dish Antenna size of DRS | 1M |

#### *Operational Norms*

Idea is to generate revenue for education as well as create employment opportunities for creative people in the field of art, drama and cinema. The six hundred subscribed entertainment channels will achieve these objectives.

#### *Revenue*

A) Six Movie and Drama subscription channels will telecast entertainment for 8 hours a day each interspread with a total 40 minutes of advertisements on each channel. That will give daily advertising time of 240 minutes (6 x 40) or 1440 units of 10 sec. advertisements. Based on graded advertisement charges ranging from Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 5000 for each 10 sec. unit and assuming average revenue of Rs. 3000 per 10 sec. unit.

| | |
|---|---|
| Daily revenue will be | Rs. 43,20,000/- |
| or say | Rs. 4.30 million Say Rs. 1550 |
| Annual Revenue for the six | million-A |
| entertainment channels | |
| will yield (Rs. 4.3 x 365 or | |
| Rs. 1569.5 million) | |

B) There are 35 million TV and 2.5 million VCR owners. By international norms and on the basis of paying capacity as well as average monthly expenditure we assume eventually there would be 5 million subscribers and they would be willing to pay Rs. 30/- p.m. as subscription.

This will give a revenue of Rs. 1800 million-B
Total Revenue will be Rs. 3350 million.

#### *Expenditure*

| | (Rs. in million) |
|---|---|
| A) NETSS Cost | |
| Assume 5 years life. | 3500 |
| Based on 20% depreciation | |
| and project interest cost at 6% | |
| (assuming interest rate of 12% p.a.) | |
| Annual Cost | |
| Annual maintenance of Ground System | 910 |
| (10% of ground cost) | 90 |
| Total Annual infrastructural Exp. | 1000 |

B)  Entertainment software cost at Rs. channels and 8 hours/day
    48 x 350 = 16800 programme hours

    Programme cost per year           Rs. 2520 million
    Total broad expenditure           Rs. 3520 million

Thus infrastructural costs for educational channels including depreciation, interest, maintenance etc. will be broadly met by such cross financing.

Educational software needs will be huge to feed 15 channels for 8 hours a day, even after assuming two repeats of each program. Production of educational software needs not only help of the skilled teacher but also of the communication professionals, videographers and other experts in visual media management. Further one need to introduce a commitment and reward system to ensure that programmes or telecourses meet the objective of enriching education and effectiveness of teaching. There is need, therefore, to support efforts from every available agency interested in educational video. Huge funds exist with the Government in the shape of unspent budgetary plan resources as well as private trusts. Attractive funding and use of free-lancing professionals would fulfill the need with reasonable success. Merely depending on Government funded public institutions may create problems. This will also create tremendous opportunities for personnel in Educational Technology and will boost employment generation.

While such possibilities may seem distant, as far as India is concerned, it may be worthwhile to carefully observe the development of the media elsewhere in the world.

# Chapter 8

## Faster Way to Tackle Adult Illiteracy

This is one of the most misunderstood areas. The related points and solutions can be best clarified in a question-answer format.

**What is the Need for Literacy?**

Traditionally, everywhere in the world, the most convenient and durable way of preserving knowledge and information is to store the written words in print. Consequently, the best way to acquire knowledge and information, besides through direct experience, is to learn to read and write. Every child, must be sent to school to learn, to read and write his/her mother tongue or also the language in which maximum knowledge is stored. Compulsory school education for every male or female child is therefore a must. It is investment for the future.

Adult illiteracy is the problem created due to our inability in the past to provide education to every child. Unfortunately sending grown up illiterates to school is not as easy as compulsory school for every child.

**What are the Difficulties in the Way of Removing Adult Illiteracy?**

Magnitude of problem of adult illiteracy is too large to be tackled through development of reading and writing skills amongst them. Following are the difficulties:

A. *Difficulty in Motivation*
   Learning a language for an illiterate adult is not easy. We all, as literate adults, know how difficult it would be for us to learn a new language. Handicaps of illiterates in India are:
   a)  Lack of awareness and/or motivation;
   b)  Inability to concentrate due to other nagging problems of day-to-day life;
   c)  Lack of easily accessible facilities;
   d)  Lack of time. One is normally busy conducting one's own daily needs of life.

B. *Time Consuming*

Present studies show that the minimum time required will be 1,000 man-hours of learning. At the rate of two hours a day and six days a week work-schedule, one would need approximately two years continuous training to acquire the desired minimum literacy standard, which enables him/her to read and understand a public notice or a newspaper.

C. *Difficulty in Getting Teachers*

As per demographic estimates, today there are 300 million illiterate adults in India above the age of 25, when we apply the above norms to measure literacy rather than census criteria.

Assuming that each teacher/volunteer can help 30 adults a day, we shall need one million of them to teach 30 million adults over a period of two years. And this takes care of only 10% adult illiterates.

D. *High Cost*

At the cost of Rs. 1,000 per batch per month we shall need Rs. 1,200 crore per year. An equal amount would be needed to meet infrastructural and other costs, taking the total to Rs. 2400 crore per annum.

Thus for providing appropriate literacy to mere 10% adults will need Rs. 4800 crore in cost, two years in time and would need 1 million well-motivated and trained Teachers / Volunteers.

**Is There a Way-Out?**

Yes, A practical and less onerous way-out can be had by use of Electronics audio-visual Media, Radio, Television, audio and video tapes.

**How?**

Basic objective in adult literacy is to enable them to learn things, to have access to information and thereby to gain knowledge.

Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. The end is acquisition of knowledge.

Electronics Media allows to by-pass the written words and helps to free the information from its clutches. In fact, Electronics

audio-visual Media, though ideally a poor second to learn written language, are better than the written words in certain respects and in a sense can be more effective. As they say, one photograph is better than thousand words and a movie is better than a thousand photographs. It is so because the human mind is architectured that way. The human mind, as we all know, is a very vast library of information with profound capacity to receive, scan, reject, accept, assimilate, store, prioritise and utilise innumerable pieces of information continuously, day in and day out. All this is retained in the mind, not in any language but in pictorial form. The spoken word, the written word and the visible perception are all converted to pictures for storage in the library. Therefore, any pictorial or visual input to the mind is most easily acceptable. This is why even an illiterate adult can acquire enough knowledge through visuals to conduct himself reasonably successfully.

There is another very important fact which we all know and do not make use of. The average individual can speak 150 words in a minute but can accept and assimilate 600 words in a minute. This inherent difference in input-output speed creates problems like absent-mindedness etc. That's why TV teaches better than radio, giving the human mind faster information input pictorially.

**What Kind of Information and Knowledge does an Adult Illiterate Need?**

A large portion of information and knowledge needed by the illiterate rural population relates to physical activities, such as, in personal health, hygiene, improvement in agricultural production, protecting oneself against hazards, learning to interact with the development in the world, such as telecommunications and benefit from these modern technologies, knowledge on how the banks work and so on. All these can be done more effectively and much faster through audio-visual rather than through written communications.

In our country, it is too expensive for an individual to have audio visual aids like TV and a Video player. It is also less convenient today than the books and periodicals, in terms of care of usage.

### How would then TV-VCP help Rural and Urban Poor?

Use of video-TV are expensive but luckily they can be more easily shared than a book. It is, therefore, possible to turn it into a multi-user facility and, therefore, can ideally form a shared property of a community. It has been shown elsewhere in this study that the cost of disseminating information, even without subsidy of any kind, will be merely 10 paise/hour.

### Is not Radio or TV, as Communication Media, Non-Interactive?

Yes, it is. All the same, we may ask-"Are the books interactive?" And, talking about class room teaching, how many of us can claim to have learnt anything which was interactive?

Undoubtedly, interactivity is desirable and ideal but it is not 'a must' in basic education. It is more relevant in higher studies where the students can think independently and enhance the quality of learning through discussions and arguments.
TV - VCP, in fact, could simulate interactive situations.

### How is it Suited in Our Villages?

In more than one way, the Electronics Media is an ideal choice to reach and enrich our illiterate adults in villages.

Let us think of the target audience and its characteristics. Our literate adult compatriot in a village is very rich in experience in general. The adult illiterate can be as intelligent as anyone of us. His illiteracy is a handicap. But like any other handicapped person, his other faculties of acquiring information and knowledge such as observation and listening are more sharply developed than even a literate. SITE experiment has proven that his interest in Audio-visual training is better.

### Why is Video better than Radio, Audio or Even TV?

Audio-visual devices like Video and TV are essentially better than simple audio-devices like Radio and audio-tape.

Audio-visual through a video player and a colour television combination provides all the attraction and motivation that a target

audience would need. It is also amenable to be shared more easily and attentively than a mere audio-tape because both the human senses are kept engaged and therefore concentration is better. The programmes meant for illiterates are essentially to be given in their own mother-tongue and also at a time which is convenient to them. Further, the type of information that is ideally suited for them may not suit to be telecast specially when we have only one or two television channels. Therefore, 'Community Video' is the most ideal form for adult education.

### How much does the whole thing cost?

A Community Video set consisting of a video player and a colour television set can be available at Rs. 12,000 without any subsidy from any quarters. In this price of Rs. 12,000, Government's taxes and duties account for Rs. 6,000. Thus, if the Government can offer concessions under the governmental schemes for adult literacy the price for each set can be just Rs. 6,000 or at the most Rs. 7,000 and that includes both a 20" CTV set and a video cassettee player.

Even at a price of Rs. 12,000 per set, assuming the life of the set as just three years or 5,000 hours of usage, the cost of information dissemination per hour will be just Rs. 2. If 20 people are using the facility, the cost per person per hour is just 10 paise and with Government's concession on duties. It will be as low as 5 paise per hour.

### What about its misuse? How can we stop them from becoming Video parlours?

Electronics provides all the essential solutions. We merely need imagination. The, video players at the Community Centers will be designed that they will neither accept nor play a normal video cassette mechanically and electronically. The players have been designed to be non-compatible. The colour television set, however, will receive all normal Doordarshan programmes.

While this solution is available, one might ask-isn't such risk of misuse present in books and periodicals too? Undesirable information or pornography is the problem even in print media,

where only solution is legal machinery which is not always effective. Electronics offers solution here which is more basic and does not need legal machinery.

## What about maintenance?

Here again we have a solution that will work. The best maintenance of any product comes through proper knowledge, training and motivation of the persons whose job it is to keep the product in order. The community video being media for audio-visual education, knowledge and training could be given through video itself even as an illiterate can learn proper usage and maintenance of the product without any difficulty.

More important is the motivation. The used television set can be sold just for Rs.1,000 to one who accepts the responsibility of maintenance for three years or 5,000 hours of usage. Everyone knows that a colour television set can function properly for 10 years or more if handled and operated properly. Getting a set for which he is responsible for maintenance just at Rs.1,000 will provide an excellent motivation to ensure proper upkeep of the Community video system. As far as Community video is concerned, at the end of 5,000 hours, it will go back to the centralised reconditioning facility which will professionally recondition such sets, and make them as good as new at a negligible cost compared to a new Video player.

## What is the Capital Outlay needed for this Programme?

There are 650,000 villages in the country in addition to small towns and cities in which our target audience is spread out. About 0.7 million sets will be initially sufficient to cover 100% of the target audience. But for comparison purposes, to reach 10% of the target group of 300 million illiterates, we shall need 70,000 sets which in terms of capital investment would cost nearly Rs. 85 crore. Compare this figure to 4800 crores worked out for the present approach.

## What about the Teacher/Volunteer Problem?

We have seen that in the absence of audio-visual option, we will need one million teachers/volunteers to train 300 million over a period of three years. These people will be required to have sufficient expertise to train adult illiterates which will demand far more skill than training young children in schools. Course content will also have to be carefully designed.

The audio-visual option will enable us to take experts in communication skills in every regional language to impart information even in the remote part of every State. Hence, the quality of education will be excellent and can be well-designed. The local tutor therefore, would be someone who cares about development of his pupil but would need no skills in training or in communication or imparting education. Thus, the availability of volunteers would become easy.

## Who will Produce the Video programmes?

There are about 200 video recording and editing facilities available in the country which are created by the Government as well as private individuals to generate programmes for TV.

Fifty percent of them would be keenly interested to help in creating these programmes specially since they do not have adequate work due to the limited time-segment available on single channel TVs.

Further the scope to enlist motivated subject experts, who are willing to give their support and share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of their illiterate brethren, is found to be available for the asking.

A lot of information that our illiterate friends need is about the functioning of various Government Departments, and authorities and responsibilities of its various officials as well as of the citizen. They also have to know the procedures to approach the Government departments to get their rightful privileges as well as comply with the legal obligations. Therefore, Government itself can easily generate this portion of the software.

Next, the adult population in villages have to learn a lot about getting the best out of various appliances and materials that they have to use in their day-to-day life. AII these. are products of Indian industry Discussions with the Indian industry leaders show that they are quite willing to make audio-visual programmes to educate people for getting the best out of the products they make. Today the label on the paint container, which is used by an illiterate artisan, in most of the cases, is in English. He is unaware of the risk of the solvents and chemicals which are used in the paint and his education would not only benefit the recipient but also the Industry which has produced those products. Many of the children's toys are painted in lead-based paints, generally out of the manufacturer's ignorance. But a proper audio-visual information would stop such usage and would result in better care of our children. Besides these, there are a large number of socially conscious private citizens who have Trusts primarily created for the benefit of the Society and most of them will come forward to finance adult education related to Health, Family planning, Immunization, etc.

## What could be a Typical Management Mechanism for Community Video Centers?

Educating illiterate adults in the Community is not the monopoly or the responsibility of the Government alone. Every literate Indian somehow has to share a minor burden to contribute to the success of this programme. There is tremendous interest and enthusiasm. But everybody seems to be waiting for a suitable management mechanism. Government may share and contribute in creating the basic infrastructure and the balance may be left to non-government organisations which are interested in nation-building. A typical set-up could be somewhat as follows:

In a cluster of 25 villages, there will be in each village, two or three community video systems to cater to two or three interested groups such as, Adult women. Adult men and the aged. All these 50 to 75 systems could be looked after by one or two motivated unemployed educated youth who could be paid a good salary of Rs. 2,000 per month and a motorbike as well as necessary training

to look after these systems with speed and convenience. The same person would also be responsible to handle the software cassettes for circulating them amongst the villages. A library of 1,000 video cassettes in local language will cost only Rs. 75,000 without any Government concession. ET & T is already selling 45-minute recorded Video Cassettes at Rs. 75. A proper Excise and Import duty concession will enable us to offer these cassettes at half the price. Cost of running such a programme for 25 villages over a period of two years will not exceed Rs. 10 lakh. Out of this, 80% of the investment is the capital cost; therefore, the real cost including depreciation will be merely Rs. 5 lakh in two years or Rs. 2.5 lakh per year or Rs. 10,000/village/year. In this price each village will get 3 complete Community Video Systems, each consisting of 20" CIV and a Video player. This is a reality, not a dream!

## What are the further Advantages of creating Community Video Centers?

Community Video Centers will be normally utilised in the evenings when village adult population is available for learning or it may be used to a limited extent in the afternoons when women-folk will be available for learning. If the community centers are located in the village schools, an excellent curricular support could automatically be given, almost free of cost, not only to village school children but also it could be beneficially used to train teachers in village to improve their training skills as well as to give them extraordinary motivation by taking experts with finest human communication skills to be given in every nook and comer of the country.

## Why 20" CTV? Why not a Projection TV?

Projection 1V is not suitable for the Community Video Centers for four important reasons:

i)   The cost of Projection TV today is over a lakh of rupees and above. In the same price, each village can have as many as ten 20" Colour Television sets or as many as 5 VCP-CTV combinations at its Community Video Center. Amongst other things, it will ensure service reliability through redundancy.

ii) Whereas one Projection TV will allow only one programme to be seen at a time by a group of viewers, five VCP-TV combinations will enable five different programmes being seen by different viewer-groups at the same time. In a typical community video center, located in a village school, this will enable 5 interested groups, such as, women folk, young men, aged and young children to see different kinds of programmes with the same amount of investment without any need for building a special project theatre or auditorium.

iii) Normally, a Projection TV needs a darkened room which will require specially constructed viewing auditorium, whereas a 20" CTV can be placed anywhere.

iv) 20" CTV is a national standard and is produced in millions. Therefore, the price of spares as well as their availability is extremely easy even in a small town. The maintenance of 20" CTV is a routine affair and can be adequately undertaken in remote areas whereas the projection TV needs all imported parts, the availability of which is very poor and the prices will be extremely high.

**Many of the Villages don't have Electric Supply; What is the Solution?**

A very low cost DC battery-to-mains convertor will enable every village to run the VCP-CTV combination, without electricity. A community video set can be operated with a 12V car battery has been developed already. There are two methods of charging this battery. One system involves the use of idle manpower or farm animals to drive a D.C. motor generator like the one used in automobiles which in turn charges a car battery. Suitable geared drive mechanism such as a stationary bike for men or a modified bullock driven sugarcane crusher could be used which drives the dynamo charging the battery. The cost is not more than Rs. 2,000. The other solution which exists is charging through solar panels. Through this system, the battery can be charged throughout the year. Of course, the option to charge the batteries in a nearby place where Electric supply is available and carting them on a regular basis to remote places exists in any case.

# Chapter 9

# Regulation of Broadcast Services

In broad terms, cable and other broadcast services used to be regulated in two areas. One relates to regulations controlling cable operation i.e. the medium, the other concerns itself about the message. As a medium, cable system is one kind of Telecommunication system and its use has to be licensed by the Government of India and has to be a subject matter within the jurisdiction of the Central Government.

Regarding control over the medium, the issue largely relates to Government's attitude towards private franchise for cable operation. In many countries in the world, where till recently such services were not privatised, experience has shown that after enacting suitable laws relating to operation of cable services including cable laying and maintenance and after introducing procedures to cancel operating licenses in case of prescribed defaults, these Governments have adequate hold over the cable operator and experience in privatisation has been rewarding, both to the Government and cable subscribers. Further the investment in this sector has also not burdened the exchequers. It has served the basic hypothesis for privatisation of assuring better customer service through competition.

The major obstacle in uncontrolled media freedom is irresponsible and motivated spread of rum ours, disinformation and falsified reportage of news and current affairs. There is also a mix up of News and Views. One way to ensure editorial freedom and yet put in some acceptable methodology will be to permit only authorised news agencies like UNI, PTI, Reuter etc. and many more to be made sources of information to audio-visual media.

The objective of promoting competition in telecommunication is already on anvil in India and cable will be good avenue for a nationwide trial. With adequate freedom to say, to undertake street works, to lay cables under prescribed procedure but without undergoing hassles to deal with several authorities like State Government, municipality and local ward office etc. will

ultimately decide the success of such privatisation in terms of efficiency and better customer service.

Cable operators could provide later many other services and add other conveniences to the lives of cable subscribers, such as central alarm services etc. Once we have a high bandwidth communication link between a household and a central point, extensive advantage could be taken of this wire link-limited almost by the cable operators' imagination.

Telephone, Teletext, data communication, ISDN etc. could also be routed through these cables in association with Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) or the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Government of India.

To ensure competitive environment, such private cable operator licenses in every area will have to be more than one. This will stimulate better service due to competition and if, for a default, someone's licence is cancelled, subscribers need not get stranded. Other view could be that looking to the cost of laying cables, it may not be feasible to attract more than two cable operators to seek license to operate cable network in the same area. This would again lead to a monopoly and that too in the hands of a private enterprise which may not have public accountability and may therefore not discharge his responsibility towards the cable users. On the other hand encouraging multi-operator cables in the area would be too costly to the society. The solution could be to adopt the British pattern of granting a franchise. In UK franchise is granted by a specially Constituted Cable Authority which overviews all cable operators in U.K.

There the law requires that the Cable Authority for each franchise, shall invite application in respect of each specific area. The Cable Authority does the market research before inviting the application for franchise. A process of evaluation and consultations with representatives of local community follows. The Government also has to be consulted before granting the franchise. The British law does not permit companies with foreign share holding or such companies which could be controlled from outside of Britain. Also debarred are such applicants who wholly or partially own

newspapers or are linked in any way with' political or religious bodies or local authorities.

Once the franchise is granted, some obligations are assumed on the part of the licensee in return for the privilege. He must undertake to follow all laws, regulations and procedures prescribed by the Government in relation to operation, privileges of cable users, facilities of!ered to them and cost of service. The equipment has to meet prescribed technical and environmental standards. Licence is granted for a period of 5 years and financial penalties are prescribed for default. In extreme cases cancellation of franchise is also authorised.

The most desirable feature of the framework is that the onus is on the cable operator (licensee) to keep to the rules and the cable Authority does not breath down his neck all the time. The Authority does, however, monitor, dips in and takes samples. If cable operator abuses his freedom, there are wide enough powers to exercise over him.

The next control issue relates to programmes carried by the cable operator, the rules and regulations relating to such control over the programmes provided the cable operators would be other than those for Doordarshan or films. Cable operator essentially is a conduit manager to carry the audio-visual programmes available to him. For instance, he would carry programmes live from Doordarshan or any other subsequent licensor for broadcast Television or he may carry pre-recorded entertainment from producers belonging to private or the Government agencies. He may also carry pre-recorded programmes for formal or non-formal education, continued education, medicare, skill development, religious discourses, philosophical thoughts etc. In all such cases, the existing codes of ethics and programming norms would have been already enforced by the Government through its censorship procedures. In such an eventuality, cable operators' responsibility will merely relate to only carrying properly censored material and to ensure that the time at which he carries does not make transmission of such programmes undesirable. For example, programmes considered unsuitable for children should not be carried during day time. Also certain

recorded programmes may not suit the social environment or mood as in the case of politically disturbed or religiously sensitive times.

Recorded video cassette is a stored Audio visual programme one can see on a Television Set. It's publication, duplication and distribution, therefore, must involve safeguarding copyright protection and imposition of standard programming code of ethics. Ease of duplication has created severe problems to producers and would need a carefully worked strategy to deal with. Organised video duplicating agencies need to be made to guarantee the conformation to prescribed operational norms.

Telecast or cable programmes are always under the control of a few licensed agencies and therefore, fully controllable by typing them down to a set of rules and regulations. Video cassettes distribution is not easy to control. Video, therefore, becomes an attractive communication medium that is often misused. Proliferation of 'blue' video cassettes have created serious problems all over the world. So also its use for political propaganda has shown tremendous increase.

## Chapter 10

# Electronics Media-Ownership and Control - An Alternative Option

Control of Electronics Media is a subject of great debate all over the world. The issue is 'who says what, how, to whom, with what effect and for what purpose'. Television is a major factor in terms of societal influence. It's controllers are, therefore, exercising a specific social function. In such a process, concepts like stimulating understanding, value judgement and involvement and objectives of programme developer have to be carefully understood. In Western Europe, until recently the Governments kept the electronic media under the direct state regulation. They considered it as constituting "Public Service" for safeguarding 'Public interest' and therefore a state prerogative. On the other hand, in USA they have what is popularly called 'Free TV'. On close examination one realises that it is not all that free and is, in fact, controlled by Private commercial advertisers and profit-motivated groups with no public accountability. Sometimes, however, it becomes clear that 'Public Interest' is confused with 'Government Interest', which it is not. In recent times, in India too, ownership of the Media by a 'political' government has stimulated sharp and critical comments. There is, therefore, a need for an alternative form of control which may become broadly acceptable.

One often compares Electronics Media with the print media and wonders why total freedom of expression available to the print media cannot be extended to Electronics Media. First reason is that Electronics Media is a far more powerful communicator. Extensive research, the world over, has shown that TV and Video are enormously powerful and hypnotic gadgets capable of exerting a deep influence on minds of the people. It is manipulative in terms of influencing viewers and opinionating them. TV is proven to be capable of 'cultivating' the social environment almost like farming that cultivates natural environment. These potential culture-changing influences of Electronics Media require careful management. The question is; who should do it? Secondly, the Electronics Media unlike print media needs no skill except understanding language of broadcast.

Thus it is accessible to everyone irrespective of literacy skill, level of maturity and intelligence, age, sex and mental development. In fact there could be good justification to have a relook into control aspects of print media as well as to ensure not only its freedom but also its responsibility.

Our national character and, therefore, the national strengths could be derived out of homogenisation of cultural responses. It would be a solid foundation for tomorrow's Indian society by making it information-rich, thereby adding openness and resultant check on opportunities to exploiters-social, economic or political. Towards this end again media ownership-and right to its management-demands mature and democratic societal mechanisms.

The Government has not so far created a department or laid down policy guidelines to overview and plan utilisation of Information Technology toward the goals and objectives detailed above. It is a vital component for building a homogenous Indian character. Information Technology helped U.S.A. in this regard turning it, over a period of four or five decades, from a multiracial, multilingual and multi-religious society into a far more homogenous and integrated community of people. India also could work towards such a goal and benefit even more, bearing in mind, India's broad cultural uniformity and metaphysical maturity built-up through age old traditions and rituals. The Planning Commission must, therefore, take urgent steps to investigate, deliberate and decide on how to harness Electronics Media to derive maximum socio-economic and techno-economic benefits.

## Media Administrator of India (MAl)-Concept, Role and Functions

The issue as to whether Electronic Media should be privatised like the print media has become a bone of contention with differing political ideologies even running into serious conflicts at times. It appears possible to strike a golden mean between regulatory mechanism and ownership by the Government on one side and total unbridled freedom on the other. A possible management structure could be on the following lines.

There shall be created an autonomous and statutory Institutional Authority exclusively devoted to overview appropriate development of norms for utilisation of Electronic Media. Such an Authority shall be made totally independent of the executive government, somewhat on par with the Chief Justice of India or the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The head of the new Authority could possibly be named as Media Administrator of India (MAl) reporting directly to the President of India and giving an annual report of its own to the Parliament.

The objective of MAl shall be to provide detailed parameters on all aspects of Electronics Media and even other media-Radio broadcast, Television telecast, Direct satellite reception, Cable and wireless distribution of stored video programmes, interactive network-based information dissemination etc.

MAl shall operate in a structure that enables it to work with multilingual, regional and national information-related issues in various areas like formal education, vocational training, literacy mission, entertainment, news, current affairs, non-formal education, continued education, distance education etc. It could, therefore, create wings with specialisation and avoid organisational bureaucratisation by decentralisation of decision-making within prescribed broad guidelines on contents. Censorship could be avoided by putting onus to remain within prescribed norms and thereby remove structural bottlenecks in the paths of the creative programme producers.

Various wings, with. suitable checks and balances, shall be headed by Media Commissions which will have representatives from institution. Institutional Experts from fields of education, social psychology, mass communication culture, Science and Technology, Engineering, Meidcal Sciences, Theology etc. could be invited to serve on these commissions depending on what the respective commission overviews.

There shall be corresponding media tribunals to consider and dispose of any complaints and grievances whose appellate authority could be MAl himself. These tribunals shall be vested with full judicial powers, both civil and criminal.

Bearing in mind the fact that it is the society that finally is the recipient of the output of Information Software and keeping in view the availability of a large number of socially conscious and intellectually capable members of the society to be able to guard the societal interests, MAl could evolve feedback and control mechanism based on such feedback. In a sense, it is synonymous to consumer protection against misinformation and infringement of moral and ethical codes. MAl structure should revolve around such thematic concepts.

Today there is a tendency to blur the difference between news lInd views. Many times this is confusing to the recipient which occasionally results in disinformation. Some unethical reporting seems to slip through the media causing undesirable effects & tensions. MAl, therefore, could prescribe that only accredited News Agencies who could be made fully accountable are able to feed news reports. Competition will provide essential choice to the recipients because even the news could differ based on individual perceptions of facts.

# Chapter 11

## Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

*Preamble*

Establishing codes of conduct and ethical standards for audio-visual arts like drama or cinema has been the most discussed subject matter. It also has been widely written about but the writings have been rarely ever conclusive. Freedom of expression is a spicy subject for debates which may end up with blows but never with an acceptable compromise. I have, however found it a relatively easy task. The reason for this belief rests on a uniquely distinguishing feature of TV compared to other audio-visual mass media such as cinema or theatre. It is its location. Television is primarily viewed in homes, in living rooms and bedrooms. People watch television in privacy of their homes. They watch it along With their young children, with their aging parents, with relations or family friends or the neighbours. Every home follows a code of behaviour. It has its own traditional unwritten norms. These standards might undergo change but they are slow and they take relatively long periods to get into motion. Family culture prevails over everything. Even the radicals within a family often find no courage in defying such cultural barriers, in breaking the codes of behaviour or violating the traditions and ethical standards adopted by their families. While it is true that such codes of behaviour and ethical standards vary widely from family to family, there is a common denominator which is almost universal in nature. Almost everyone in the household is bound by it, although outside their homes, some may plead for entirely revolutionary ideas on behavioural conduct and ethics. If we simply list and logically present ethical standards and codes of conduct which no civilised guest can violate while visiting a private home, we would have the desired standards. The television cohabits with the family in their living rooms and bedrooms. It delivers messages and information that needs no skill to understand and appreciate. It is viewed and listened to by everyone from a baby to great grand dads and moms. It brings into their homes not only the human drama but the real and direct images from life and nature. It brings to them actions, events and happenings as they occur. But there is a significant difference between TV images and reality. The images brought

into private houses by television or video are structured and edited by experts in the art of visual communication. They are capable of crafting simple plain images into highly dramatised and devastating visuals aided by haunting music and narration. Thus television could become an instrument of manipulation on a mass scale. It is indeed known to have growing influence on the children as shown in every organized study, making it almost the Third Parent. One may notice that out of all the TV programmes on Doordarshan, it is the advertisements which seem to prevail in terms of retentiveness. Children easily remember and recite musical ad jingles than the other contents of programmes. There is a strong reason for it. Messages in advertisements are carefully cultured after extensive research by experts in visual art. Money invested in creating a TV advertisement is often several times the money spent on a dramatic episode. One 30 Sec. advertisement for automobile tyres on Doordarshan is known to have costed over Rs. 40 lakh, whereas a 30 minute serial episode rarely costs over Rs. 3 lakh.

Thus one must remember that Doordarshan, with its access to millions of private living rooms, would slowly but surely cultivate the Indian mind, like a farmer cultivating his land for a certain crop. Dr. George Gerbner has established this in principle. He says that aggregate flow of reiterated formulae, formats and ritualisation "cultivates" the social environment almost as farming cultivates the natural environment. Thus there is a scope to create a shared cultural environment within which minds are fertilised and nurtured. That's why I prefer to consider television like a knife. Depending on who holds it, it could become a killer's weapon or a surgeon's healing knife.

Television is a guest in a home and like a decent, well behaved and honourable guest, it must follow the codes of conduct and ethical standards of an average Indian family consisting of a mixed audience of children and adults in varying age groups. Like a guest, it has the responsibility to entertain them, inform them, enthuse them, stimulate them, warn them, amuse them, educate them and enlighten them by remaining within the unwritten behavioural standards of do's and don'ts. Television or the videos

should not bring into the private homes anything that would not be expected from a well-meaning guest. Television programme content must be consistent with the present societal norms, the traditions and the cultural ethos. Codes of conduct and ethical standards described here are drawn up on this simple premise. Many of these standards also presently form a part of regulatory standards for audio-visual programmes and advertisements adopted in some West European countries. It is hoped that the outline given below could form a nucleus for the ultimate national standards to be set after wider discussions by a variety of experts. It is also appreciated that such standards would need a periodical review to accommodate changing human and societal perceptions with regard to acceptable conduct and behaviour.

Codes of conduct and ethical standards are described in two parts viz Part A-Programming and Part B-Advertising.

## Part A - Programming

*Accuracy*
It should be ensured that all news given (in whatever form) in programmes is presented with due accuracy and impartiality.

Any mistakes that occur, whether in news bulletins or in other programmes presenting news information, should be corrected as quickly as possible.

*Recorded Topical Programmes*
Programmes not used immediately should be checked before transmission in order to ensure that none of the facts being reported has been overtaken by intervening events.

*Reconstructions*
The use of 'reconstructions' in documentary and 'dramatised documentary' programmes for the purposes of greater authenticity or dramatic effect as opposed to mere effect, is legitimate, so long as they do not distort reality. Whenever a reconstruction is used in a documentary, it should be labelled so that the viewer is not misled. This requirement applies to all programmes, whether acquired or home-produced.

*Simulated Matter*

No simulation of a television news bulletin or news flash should be included in any programme, or in any portion, without the appropriate Authority having given its express previous approval in each case.

*Programmes on Medical Subjects*

For programmes on medical subjects it is necessary to obtain competent professional advice and on matters of potential controversy to give a hearing to more than one opinion. There are some subjects, such as cancer or certain aspects of mental health, that are particularly sensitive. A soundly-based un-sensational but informative programme can do a genuine service. But in order to avoid unnecessary distress it is essential to handle with care any information about controversial or novel forms of treatment or criticisms, explicit or implicit, of current medical practice. Equal care must be exercised in fictional programmes in which medical matters are featured.

### Offence to Good Taste and Decency

*Language*

Many people are offended by the use of bad language and profane talk in television programmes specially since TV is watched by the family together. On the other hand, writers and producers seek with reason to protect their freedom of expression. It is therefore important for them, if this freedom is not to be jeopardised, to avoid the gratuitous use of language and impious behaviour should not be used in programmes, specially designed for children. Moreover anything likely to be transmitted at a time when large numbers of children are likely to be watching should be suitable for viewing by a whole family.

There can be no absolute ban on the use of bad language. But when used it must be defensible in terms of context and authenticity. It is one thing, for example, when such language occurs in a documentary programme, and quite another when it is introduced for its own sake in a studio production. Many people who would not be unduly shocked by swearing are offended when it is used to excess and without justification, specially in their homes.

*Sex and Nudity*

Present laws of land regarding sex, obscenity, nudity etc. should be carefully observed. Unlike cinema, TV is seen in private homes in presence of children. That should remain a major guiding factor.

### Bad Taste in Humour

(i)  Jokes about Physical Disability

The roots of laughter are often found in deviations from the normal and familiar tract but there is a danger of offence in the use of humour based on physical disability. Even where no malice is present, such jokes can, all too easily and plausibly, appear to be exploitation or humiliation for the purposes of entertainment. This not only hurts those most directly concerned, but also it can and does repel many viewers. The use of such jokes in programmes needs to be considered with great care on every occasion.

(ii)  Religious, Linguistic and Caste based Jokes

There is a danger of offence also in jokes based on such characteristics. Producers need to be sensitive to changes in public attitudes to what is and is not acceptable. Even though it is hard to conceive that matters intended as a joke might constitute an offence, it may nonetheless offend against good taste or decency or be offensive to public feeling.

(iii)  Recorded Entertainment

Programmes not used immediately or which are rerun should be checked before transmission to ensure that jokes or situations are not rendered tasteless and improper by intervening events, such as death, injury or other misfortune.

*Suitable Screening Times*

So far as possible material unsuitable for children should not be shown at times when children are likely to be viewing.

Material screened between the hours of 5.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. should be suitable for a family auidence. After 10.00 p.m. programmes may be shown that are intended for adults only. It is assumed that parents may reasonably be expected to share

responsibility for what their children are permitted to see after 10.00 p.m. Reasons why a programme may be unsuitable for family viewing, include violence, bad language, innuendo, explicit sexual behaviour, and scenes of extreme distress.

Trailers must also comply with these time restrictions. Excerpts selected for trailering a programme containing violent material should be chosen with care, and should not give emphasis to violent incidents-uncharacteristic of the programme as a whole.

### Behaviour easily Imitated by Children

The portrayal of dangerous behaviour easily imitated by children, including the use of offensive weapons or articles readily accessible to them, should be avoided, and should be specially excluded at times when it is likely that large numbers of children will be viewing.

### Scenes depicting hanging and inhuman cruelty towards weak

No film or programme which includes hanging or preparations for hanging and acts of unprovoked cruelty and violence should be shown specially when large number of children may be viewing.

### Scenes of extreme suffering and distress

The choice of material reporting the effects of natural disaster, accident, or human violence, even during the News presentation may need to be determined in part by the time of day at which it is shown. It may be appropriate, for example, for different scenes to be included in late evening news from those included in daytime and earlier evening bulletins.

## Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, etc.

### Interviews with Criminals

Nothing should be included in the programmes which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling. While interviewing, there needs always to be careful consideration whether or not such an interview is justified in the public interest. Any programme item which, on any reasonable

judgement, would be said to encourage or incite crime or to lead to disorder is unacceptable.

### Demonstration of Criminal Techniques

In programmes dealing with criminal activities, whether in fictional or documentary form, there may be conflict between the demands of accurate realism and the risk of unintentionally assisting the criminally inclined. Careful thought should be given and, where appropriate, advice taken from the police, before items are included which give detailed information about criminal methods and techniques: a public-spirited warning to the general public against novel or ingenious criminal methods, for example, may defeat its own aims by giving those methods wider currency than they might otherwise have. Similar caution is needed in the representation of police techniques of crime prevention and detection.

### Relations with the Police

There is a variety of messages to the public which police may from time to time request broadcasters to transmit. These include, for example, warnings to stay away from a crash or an accident; information about road hazards for motorists; warnings of missing drugs; requests for help in tracing missing persons; and so on.

Police and other public service agencies should be reminded:-

a) that frequent use of television for public messages makes those messages less effective;

b) that, in the interests of justice; care has to be exercised in transmitting photographs of persons wanted by the police and of objects associated with suspected crime.

### Presence of Television Cameras at Demonstrations and Scenes of Public Disturbance

News editors and producers will be conscious of the need to be on guard against attempts to exploit television. The aim of any public meeting or demonstration is to attract public attention, but there is always the possibility that the presence of television cameras will provoke incidents that would not otherwise have occurred.

Disruption of meetings or public enquiries and incidents of the disorder or violence may be encouraged, however unwittingly, by the arrival of television news teams. If coverage is recorded, it is possible to exclude 'manufactured' incidents or to reveal them for what they are.

Where coverage is live, the difficulties are obviously greater, but every effort must be made to place what is being seen and heard in context, so that viewers can properly evaluate the significance of activities that could have probably arisen from the scope of television coverage.

*Smoking and Drinking*

Tobacco and alcohol are social drugs whose consumption carries no particular stigma even though they can constitute a major health risk and may be as addictive as drugs which are less socially approved, or actually illegal. It is therefore desirable that programmes should not include smoking and drinking unless the context or dramatic veracity requires it.

Particular care is needed since programmes are watched inside homes and are, therefore, likely to be seen by children and young people. Programmes made specially, for children should not normally contain any smoking or drinking of alcohol unless an educational point is being made, or unless, very exceptionally, the dramatic context makes it absolutely essential.

*Drug Taking and Solvent Abuse*

Drugs, drug addiction and their effect are valid subjects for television programmes. But care needs to be taken to avoid any impression that drugs are a normal feature of society, particularly in programmes of special appeal to children and young people. The same caution should be applied to solvent abuse (glue sniffing etc.). Any demonstrations of such practices that could easily be imitated are best avoided. Well intended programmes on Doordarshan, may have, in fact, served as guidance to youngsters on methods of distribution and access to drugs.

*Privacy, Gathering of Information, etc.*

The programmer's freedom of access to information and their freedom to publish are subject to certain limitations. These limitations arise not merely from consideration of national security, from the laws for example of libel, contempt and trespass, but also from the individual citizen's right to privacy.

There will be occasions when the individual's right to privacy must be balanced against public interest. This right should be protected from unwarranted intrusion, particularly on occasion, for example of bereavement or other situations of personal distress.

*Filming and Recording of Members of the Public*

When coverage is being given to events in public places, editors and producers must satisfy themselves that words spoken or action taken by individuals are sufficiently in the public domain to justify their being communicated to the television audience without express permission being sought.

*Filming and Recording in Institutions, etc.*

When permission is received to film or record material in an institution, such as a hospital, a factory, or a departmental store, for example, which has regular dealings with the public, but which would not normally be accessible to cameras without such permission, it is very likely that the material will include shots of individuals who are themselves incidental, not central, figures in the programme. The question arises how far and in what conditions such people retain a right to refuse to allow material in which they appear to be broadcast. As a general rule, no obligation to seek agreement arises when the appearance of the persons shown is incidental and they are clearly random and anonymous members of the general public. On the other hand, when their appearance is not incidental, and they are not random and anonymous members of the public, a producer should seek specific consent. Refusal to allow the film or recording to be shown must normally be respected. It cannot always be taken for granted that apparently willing co-operation in a filmed interview

automatically implies agreement to unspecified use in a broadcast. When by reason of handicap or infirmity a person is not in a position either to give or to withhold agreement, permission to use the material should be sought from the next to kin or from the person responsible for their care.

### Recorded Telephone Interviews

Interviews or conversations conducted by telephone should normally not to be recorded for inclusion in a programme or in the course of preparation for a programme, unless the interviewer has identified himself or herself as speaking on behalf of a programme provider seeking information to be used in a programme, and the interviewee has given consent to the use of the conversation in the programme.

### Hidden Microphones and Cameras

The use of hidden microphones and cameras to record individuals who are unaware that they are being recorded is acceptable only when it is clear that the material so acquired is essential to establish the credibility and authority of the story, and where the story itself is equally clearly of important public interest.

### Scenes of Extreme Suffering and Distress

Scenes of human suffering and distress are often an integral part of any report of the effects of natural disaster, accident or human violence, and may be proper subject for direct portryal rather than indirect reporting. But before presenting such scenes a producer needs to balance the wish to serve the needs of truth and the desire for compassion against the risk of sensationalism and the possibility of an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

### Interviewing of Children

Any interviewing of children requires care. Children should not be interrogated to elicit views on private family matters, nor asked for expressions of opinion on matters likely to be beyond their judgement.

## Politics, Religion and Matters of Controversy

### Statutory Requirements

Treatment of politics, religion and matters of public controversy are today covered by a set of guidelines. Two primary guidelines are as under :

a) News must be presented always with due accuracy and impartiality.

b) In all other programmes, taken as a whole, no undue prominence may be given to the views and opinions of particular persons or bodies on religious matters or matters of political or public policy. Programmes other than news may however include views related to the News but should provide equitable opportunity to divergent views to observe the essential impartiality.

### Politicians in Programmes

Appearances by politicians in news programmes when they take part as spokesmen for their party, or for their own political point of view, should be governed by the general requirement of fairness and impartiality.

### Feature Films

Guidelines concerning the showing of Feature Films should be so designed as to assist programme provider (programmers) in arriving at a decision as to whether a film is acceptable for showing and, if so at what time of day or night. All films, should be judged for their suitability against three key Iconsiderations:

a) that nothing is included which offends good taste or decency, or is likely to encourage or incite crime, or lead to disorder, or be offensive to public feeling;

b) that account is taken of circumstances such that TV is watched by total family including large numbers of children and young persons; and

c) that the prevailing laws and codes are fully observed.

## Part B - Advertising General Principles

*Fundamentals*

The standards prescribed for programming are applicable fully for advertising material also. These should be supplemented by the following additional guidelines for advertising productions.

An advertisement must be clearly distinguishable as such and recognizably separate from the programmes broadcast, telecast or videocast.

*'Subliminal' Advertising*

No television advertisement may include any technical device, which, by using images of very brief duration or by any other means, exploits the possibility of conveying a message to, or otherwise influencing the minds of, members of an audience without their being aware, or fully aware, of what has been done.

*Politics, Industrial and Public Controversy*

No advertisement may be inserted by or on behalf of anybody, the objects whereof are wholly or mainly of a political nature, and no advertisement may be directed towards any political end. No advertisement may have any relation to any industrial dispute.

No advertisement may show partiality in respect to matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy.

*Appeals and Charities*

Advertisements appealing for money by publishing the work of charitable or voluntary organisations shall be subject to careful scrutiny by the authorities.

*Good Taste : Protection of Privacy and Exploitation of the Individual*

Individual living persons should not be portrayed or referred to in advertisements without their permission. However, reference to living persons may normally be made in advertisements for books, films, radio or television programmes, newspapers, magazines

etc. which feature the persons referred to in the advertisement provided it is not offensive or defamatory.

*Stridency*

Audible matter in advertisements must not be excessively noisy or strident. The general sound level of the audio in the advertisement should be within +3dB of the average programme audio level telecast prior to the advertisement. Viewers of Doordarshan might have noticed that it is almost a common practice that audio levels are much higher in advertisements than preceding or succeeding programmes.

*Fear / and Superstition*

Advertisements must not without justifiable reason play on fear. No advertisement should exploit the superstition.

*Other Unacceptable Forms*

Advertisements for products or services coming within the recognised character of, or specifically concerned with, the following are not acceptable:

a) matrimonial agencies and correspondence clubs;

b) fortune-tellers and the like;

c) services associated with death or burial;

d) organisations/companies/persons seeking to advertise for the purpose of betting including lotteries;

e) cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, bidis and chewing tobacco;

f) private investigation agencies;

g) privately owned advisory services related to personal or consumer problems;

h) habit-forming or addictive eatables such as Pan Masala.

i) appeal for free use of drugs or medicinal preparations directed specially to children such as Hajmola.

### Indirect Advertising

An advertisement for an acceptable product or service may be unacceptable should it seem that its main purpose would be to publicise indirectly the unacceptable product. For example, advertisements for soda by liquor manufacturers.

*Simulated Matter*

No simulation of a television news bulletin or news flash should be included in any programme, or in any promotion, without the appropriate Authority having given its express previous approval in each case.

### Guidelines on the Insertion of Advertisements

*Advertising Breaks*

Spot advertisements may appear in the natural breaks occurring during the telecast.

The physical boundary between programming and advertisements should be highlighted by a suitable device in vision and/or sound.

Note: A natural break is a point in programming where some interruption in continuity would occur whether or not advertising were telecast.

The most obvious example, of course, is the interval between individual programmes. Other examples would be between the scenes of a play or film, half-time in a football match or the end of a round of questions in a quiz show.

What is a 'suitable device' will entirely depend upon the programme and discretion of the programmer. In a film or play it might be an 'end of part one' caption and in other cases a presenter may say "we will be back after the break". Even a momentary fade to black may suffice in some cases.

'Ad flashes' deserve special mention, being textual messages superimposed on the screen. Where they overlay programming they should be isolated in a separate band of colour on the screen to preserve a physical separation.

*General Presentation*

Advertisements should be inserted in programme services so as not to cause:
- distaste or offence in their juxtaposition to programming.
- confusion with programming.

*Confusion will normally result where :*
- an advertisement's theme, setting or title resembles that of a programme.
- an actor or presenter in an advertisement adopts a similar character or role to that in a programme.

In either circumstance, the advertisement should be differentiated from the programme.

Note: This sets out the two major principles to be borne in mind when scheduling commercials. Aside from these, and any directions as to the amount of advertising which may be carried, there are no presentation rules dealing with the length of advertising spots, or breaks, or which establish any kind of advertising pattern; such matters are left entirely to the Programmer's discretion.

As to good taste etc., care is required in the selection of advertisements appearing adjacent to e.g. religious discussion programmes or documentaries containing harrowing scenes. Similarly advertisements which may be alarming to some should be scheduled thoughtfully. Programmes showing plight of women should not be interrupted or followed by an advertisement showing scantly clad woman in a soap advertisement etc.

Confusion of advertising and programming would occur, for example, where a programme presenter was also the presenter in an adjacent advertisement, or alternatively the same studio set was used both for programme and adjacent commercial. Neither alternative is ruled out (in the interests of producing cost effective advertisements) but in such cases there should be a time separation of one complete advertising break or at least 15 minutes (whichever first occurs between programme and advertisement).

*News readers and programme presenters:*

News Readers or Programme Presenters should not be permitted to appear in Advertisements or even in TV dramas.

## Restricted / Prohibited Sponsors and Programmes

*Unacceptable Products*

Goods or services which are excluded from advertising by the Advertising Code (e.g. Cigarettes), are not acceptable for sponsorship.

No sponsor's credit is acceptable which, in the Service Provider's opinion, would publicise directly or indirectly, any goods or services so excluded.

A sponsor is not acceptable for a particular programme if his advertisements could not appear in or around that programme.

*Political Sponsorship*

Any organisation whose aims and objectives are wholly or mainly of a political nature is prohibited from programme sponsorship.

Sponsorship by non-political organisations is not acceptable where the sponsoring of a programme is directed towards any political end or has any relation to any industrial dispute.

*News and Current Affairs*

News and current affairs programmes shall not be allowed to be sponsored.

*Others*

Sponsorship of any programme is not permissible, in case of prohibited sponsors and, in particular, sponsorship of an event by a cigarette brand or brands of Alcoholic drinks, or tobacco house will not be acceptable.

The use of a company's house name of tobacco or Alcoholic drink manufacturer as an underwriting or commissioning credit would be unacceptable as indirectly publicising cigarettes! alcoholic drink.

In regard to undue visual emphasis on Commerical Products in a Programme, some considerations might be:

i) Are these products/services consonant with the argument or germane to the plot of the programme, or are they obtrusive and contrived? Would a viewer be left wondering why they had been included?

ii) Is the camera dwelling on the products/services? Are they in close-up for no good reason?

iii) Without the opening or closing credits, would it be possible to deduce the identity of the sponsor?

## Advertising and Children

Particular care should be taken over advertising that is likely to be seen or heard by large numbers of children and advertisements in which children are to be employed.

*Foreign Brand Products*

The Government or appropriate authority may at its discretion require confirmation that such advertisements are acceptable under the laws and regulations of the country constituting the' primary target for the advertising.

*Child Audience*

No product or service may be advertised and no method of advertising may be used, in association with a programme intended for children or which large numbers of children are likely to see or hear, which might result in harm to them physically, mentally or morally and no method of advertising may be employed which takes advantage of the natural credulity and sense of loyalty of children. Children's ability to distinguish between fact and fantasy will vary according to their age and individual personality. With this in mind, no unreasonable expectation of performance of toys and games must be simulated by the excessive use of imaginary backgrounds or special effects.

*In Particular*

a) No advertisement which encourages children to enter strange places or to converse with strangers in an effort to collect coupons, wrappers, labels, etc. should be allowed. The details of any collecting scheme must be submitted for investigation to ensure that the scheme contains no element of danger to children.

b) Advertisement must not directly urge children to purchase or to ask their parents or others to make enquiries or purchases.

c) No advertisement for a commercial product or service should be allowed if it contains any appeal to children which suggests in any way that unless the children themselves buy or encourage other people to buy the product or service they will be failing in some duty or lacking in loyalty towards some person or organisation whether that person or organisation is the one making the appeal or not.

d) No 'advertisement should be allowed which leads children to believe that if they do not own the product advertised they will be inferior in some way to other children or that they are liable to be held in contempt or ridicule for not owning it.

e) If there is to be a reference to a competition for children in an advertisement, the published rules must be submitted for approval before the advertisement can be accepted. The value of the prizes and the chances of winning one must not be exaggerated.

f) Advertisement for toys, games and other products of interest to children must not mislead, taking into account the child's immaturity of judgement and experience.

  i) the true size and scale of the product must be made easy to judge, preferably by showing it in relation to some common object by which its size and scale can be judged. In any demonstration it must be made clear whether the toy is made to move mechanically or through manual operation;

  ii) treatment which reflects the toy or game seen in action through the child's eyes or in which real-life counterparts of a toy are seen working must be used with due restraint.

There must be no confusion as to the noise produced by the toy - e.g. a toy racing car and its real-life counterpart;

g) Cartoon characters and puppets featured in children's programmes and regular presenters of such programmes must not expressly recommend products or services of special interest to children or be shown using the product. This prohibition does not extend to public service advertisements nor to cartoon characters or puppets especially created for advertisements.

*Prices*

Advertisements for toys games and similar products must include an indication of their price. If parts, accessories or batteries which a child might reasonably suppose to be part of a normal purchase are available only at extra cost, this must be made clear. The cost must not be minimised by the use of words such as 'only' or 'just'.

*Health and Hygiene*

Advertisements shall not encourage persistent eating throughout the day or the eating of sweet, sticky foods at bed-time. Advertisements for confectionery or snack foods shall not suggest that such products may be substituted for proper meals.

*Behaviour Easily Imitated by Children*

The portrayal of dangerous behaviour easily imitated by children, including the use of offensive weapons or articles readily accessible to them, should be avoided, and should be excluded at times when it is likely that large numbers of children will be viewing.

## The Child in Advertisements

*Contributions to Safety*

Any situations in which children are to be seen or heard in advertisements should be carefully considered from the point of view of safety if children are participating.

*In Particular*

i) Children should not appear to be unattended in street scenes unless they are obviously old enough to be responsible for their own safety; should not be shown playing on the road, unless it is clearly shown to be a play-street or other safe area; should not be shown stepping carelessly off the pavement or crossing the road without due care; in busy street scenes they should be seen to use pedestrian crossings to cross the road; and should be otherwise seen in general, as pedestrians or cyclists, to behave in accordance with the relevant traffic rules.

ii) Children should not be seen leaning dangerously out of windows or over bridges, or climbing dangerous cliffs;

iii) Small children should not be shown climbing up to high shelves or reaching up to a height to take things from a table above their heads;

iv) Medicines, disinfectants, antiseptics and caustic substances must not be shown within reach of children without close parental supervision, nor should children be shown using these products in any way;

v) Children must not be shown using matches or any gas, paraffin, petrol, mechanical or any such appliance which could lead to their suffering burns, electrical shock or other injury.

*Good Manners and Behaviour*

Children in advertisements should be reasonably well-mannered and well-behaved.

*Children as Presenters*

Children must not be used formally to present products or services which they could not be expected to buy themselves, nor must they make in relation to any product or service, significant comments on characteristics on which they cannot be expected to have direct knowledge.

*Testimonials*

Children must not be used to give formalised personal testimony. This will not, however, normally preclude children giving spontaneous comments on matters in which they would have an obvious natural interest.

## Industry and Trade Publicity

*Trade Descriptions and Claims*

No advertisement may contain any descriptions, claims or illustrations which directly or by implication mislead about the product or service advertised or about its suitability for the purpose recommended.

*In Particular*

a) Special Claims-No advertisement shall contain any reference which is likely to lead the public to assume that the product advertised, or an ingredient, has some special property or quality which is incapable of being established.

b) Scientific Terms and Statistics-Scientific Terms, statistics, quotation from technical literature and the like must be used with a proper sense of responsibility to the ordinary viewer or listener. Irrelevant data and scientific jargon must not be used to make claims which appear to have a scientific basis they do not possess. Statistics of limited validity should not be presented in such a way as to make it appear that they are universally valid.

Advertisers and their agencies must be prepared to produce evidence to substantiate any descriptions, claims or illustrations.

*Price Claims*

Visual and verbal presentations of actual and comparative prices and cost must be accurate and incapable of misleading by undue emphasis or distortion.

*Comparisons*

Advertisements containing comparisons with other advertisers or other products, are permissible in the interest of vigorous competition and public information, provided they comply with the following observations.

All comparative advertisements should respect the principles of fair competition and should be so designed that there is no likelihood of the consumer being misled as a result of the comparison, either about the product advertised or that with which it is compared.

The subject matter of a comparison should not be chosen in such a way as to confer an artificial advantage upon the advertiser.

Points of comparison should be based on facts which can be substantiated and should not be unfairly selected.

*In Particular*

a) The basis of comparison should be the same for all the products being compared and should be clearly stated in the advertisement so that it can be seen that like is being compared with like.

b) Where terms are listed and compared with those of competitors' products, the list should be complete or else the advertisement should make clear that the items are only a selection.

c) Advertisement should not unfairly attack or discredit other products, advertisers or advertisements directly or by implication.

*Reproduction Techniques*

It is accepted that on television the technical limitations of photograph can lead to difficulties in securing a faithful portrayal of a subject, and that the use of special techniques or substitute materials may be necessary to overcome these difficulties. These techniques must not be abused; no advertisement in which they have been used will be acceptable, unless the resultant picture presents a fair and reasonable impression of the product or its

effects and is not such as to mislead. Unacceptable devices include, for example, the use of glass or plastic sheeting to simulate the effects of floor or furniture polishes.

*Testimonials*

Testimonials must be genuine and must not be used in a manner likely to mislead. Advertisers and their agencies must produce evidence in support of any testimonial and any claims therein.

*Guarantees*

No advertisement may contain the words 'guarantee' or 'guaranteed', 'warranty', or 'warranted'; or words having the same meaning, unless the full terms of the guarantee are available for inspection and are clearly set out in the advertisement or are made available to the purchaser in writing at the point of sale or with the goods. In all cases, the terms must include details of the remedial action open to the purchasers. No advertisement may contain a direct or implied reference to a guarantee which purports to take away or diminish the rights of a purchaser.

*Inertial Selling*

No advertisement will be accepted from advertisers who send the goods advertised, or additional goods, without authority from the recipient.

*Imitation*

Any imitation likely to mislead viewers, even though it is not of such a kind as to give rise to a legal action for infringement of copyright or for 'passing off', must be avoided.

*Use of the Word 'Free'*

Advertisement must non describe goods or samples as 'free' unless the goods or samples are supplied at no cost or no extra cost (other than actual postage or carriage) to the recipient. A trial may be described as 'free' although the customer is expected to pay the cost of returning the goods, provided that the advertisement makes clear the customer's obligation to do so.

*Competitions*

Advertisements inviting the public to take part in competitions which normally require the presence of an element of skill shall be accepted only if arrangements have been made for prospective entrants to obtain printed details of the conditions governing the competition, the announcement of results and the distribution of prizes. Any special conditions governing entry to the competition must be given in the advertisement.

*Homework Schemes*

Full particulars of any schemes must be supplied and where it is proposed to make a charge for the raw materials or components and where the advertiser offers to buy back the goods made by the home worker, the advertisement is not acceptable.

*Instructional Courses*

Advertisement offering courses of instruction in trades or subjects leading up to professional or technical examinations must not imply the promise of employment or exaggerate the opportunity of employment or remuneration alleged to be open to those taking such courses; neither should they offer unrecognised 'degrees' or qualifications. Advertisements by correspondence schools and colleges will normally be accepted only from those granted accreditation by the Central/State Government authorities.

*Mail Order Advertising*

Advertisements for goods offered by mail order will not be accepted unless:

a) arrangements have been made for enquirers to be informed of the name and full address of the advertiser if this is not given in the advertisement;

b) adequate arrangements exist at that address for enquiries to be handled by a responsible person available on the premises during normal business hours;

c) Samples of the goods advertised are made available there for public inspection;

d) an undertaking has been received from the advertiser that money will be refunded in full to buyers who can show justifiable cause for dissatisfaction with their purchases or with delay in delivery;

Advertisers who offer goods by Mail Order must be prepared to meet any reasonable demand created by their advertising, and should be prepared to demonstrate, or where practicable to supply samples of the goods advertised, to the monitoring agency.

*Direct Sale Advertising*

Direct sale advertising is that placed by the advertiser with the intention that the articles or services advertised, or some other merchandise or services, shall be sold or provided at the home of the person responding to the advertisement. Where it is the intention of the advertiser to send a representative to call on persons responding to the advertisement, such fact must be apparent from the advertisement or from the particulars subsequently supplied and the respondent must be given adequate opportunity of refusing any call.

Direct sale advertisements are not acceptable without adequate assurances from the advertiser and his advertising agency:

a) that the merchandise advertised will be supplied at the price stated in the advertisement within a reasonable time from stocks sufficient to meet potential demand; and

b) that sales representatives calling upon persons responding to the advertisement will demonstrate and make available for sale the articles advertised.

It will be taken as prima facie evidence of misleading and unacceptable 'bait' advertising for the purpose of 'switch selling' if an advertiser's sales representatives seriously disparage or belittle the cheaper product advertised or report unreasonable delays in obtaining delivery or otherwise put difficulties in the way of its purchase.

*Alcoholic Drinks*
Advertisement of all alcoholic drinks should be totally prohibited.

*Other Habit-forming Products*
No advertisement for such products may feature any personality whose example people under 18 are likely to follow or who have a particular appeal to people under 18.

Advertisements may not imply that such products are essential to social success or acceptance or that refusal is a sign of weakness. Nor should it be implied that the successful outcome of a social occasion is dependent upon the consumption of such products.

While advertisements may refer to refreshment after physical performance, they must not give any impression that performance can be improved by such products unless it has been clinically established by independent study. e.g. Advertisement for Glucose.

No advertisement for such products may publicise a competition or other sales promotion which entails or encourages intake beyond clinically permissible limit. e.g. Hajmola.

Advertisement must neither claim nor suggest that such products can contribute towards sexual success.

No advertisement should suggest that such products are an essential attribute of masculinity. Treatments featuring daring, toughness or bravado in association with drinking must not be used.

## Medicinal Products

*Unacceptable Products or Services*
Advertisements for products or services coming within the recognised character of, or specifically concerned with the following are not acceptable unless so authorised by the Government or the appropriate authority.

a) smoking cures-this does not preclude smoking deterrents which have been specifically approved by the relevant Government authorities;

b) products for treatment of alcoholism;

c) clinics for the treatment of hair and scalp;

d) pregnancy testing services;

e) hypnosis, hypo therapy, psychology, psycho-analysis or psychiatry.

*Impression of Professional Advice and Support*
The following are not allowable:

a) presentations of doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons, pharmaceutical chemists, nurses, midwives, etc., which give the impression of professional advice or recommendations;

b) statements giving the impression of professional advice or recommendation by persons who appear in the advertisements and who are presented, either directly or by implication, as being qualified to give such advice or recommendation. To avoid misunderstanding about the status of the presenter of a medicine or treatment, it may be necessary to establish positively in the course of an advertisement that the presenter is not a professionally qualified adviser; and

c) references to approval of, or preference for, the products or its ingredients or their use by the medical or veterinary professions.

*Establishments Offering Slimming Treatments*
Advertisements of establishments which offer or provide treatment aimed at the achievement of weight loss or figure control will be accepted only if:

a) such treatments are based upon dietary control, the availability of which is referred to in the advertisement;

b) medical opinion confirms that such treatments are likely to be effective and will not lead to harm, and any claims made are justified;

c) any financial and other contractual conditions are made available in writing to respondents prior to commitment.

*Celebrity Testimonials and Presentations*

No advertisement for a medicine or treatment may include a testimonial or be presented by a person well-known in public life, sport, entertainment, etc.

No advertisement shall employ any words, phrases, or illustrations which claim or imply the cure of any ailment, illness or disease, as distinct from the relief of its symptoms.

*Diagnosis, Prescription or Treatment by Correspondence*

No advertisement shall contain any offer to diagnose, advise, prescribe or treat by correspondence.

*Encouragement of Excess*

No advertisement shall encourage, directly or indirectly, indiscriminate, unnecessary or excessive use of products.

*Exaggeration*

No advertisement shall make exaggerated claims, in particular through the selection of testimonials or other evidence unrepresentative of a product's effectiveness, or by claiming that it possesses some special property, the authenticity of which is incapable of being established.

*Analgesics*

It is accepted that the relief of pain, such as a headache, may consequently ease tension. But no simple or compound analgesic shall be advertised for the direct relief of tension. In such advertisements there must be no reference to depression.

## User Safety

*Safety and the Protection of Children*

No advertisement shall encourage the adoption of any unsafe practices especially by children.

*Safety Oriented Products*

Products which involve user-safety like electrical appliances and for which Indian Standard has been prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) should be allowed to be advertised only if they are approved by a recognised standards inspection organisation by BIS and have an ISI mark.

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