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20. Role of Television in Shaping the Minds of Children

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Introduction

Television is a telecommunication device used for transmitting moving images in monochrome (black & white), or in colour. It is a machine with a screen. Televisions receive broadcasting signals and turn them into pictures and sound. It is also a mass medium for advertising, entertainment and news. The word 'television' comes from the words tele (Greek for far away) and vision (sight). It was invented in 1920s with a basic purpose to change the world inrough visual and audio communication technology.

Television today has become the important and integral part of our life. It is very difficult to imagine human life without TV. It has proved to be the most reliable and informative device that keeps us in tune with the fast moving world. Every happening in the globe is quickly reported to us by it. It has become the dearest friend of both children and adults equally. It has many positive effects on its viewers, particularly children.

Positive Effects

Education

Television is used as an educational device as it broadcasts educational programmes for all. Various channels broadcast different educational shows to inspire kids and engage them in creative, innovative and productive behaviours. These channels deal with topics of interest for children in interactive and participatory methods of teaching and learning to inspire children to learn things while having fun. Channels like Wild Kratts, Sid the Science Kid, Hanya Kamu, and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse introduce various problem-solving methods and provide children with a strong foundation in mental and analytical thinking. Children can learn about themselves and about life from such educational programmes. Some religious channels broadcast teachings of spirituality and ethical value education also. Children can learn lot of values such as responding to the older people, helping the needy and poor, be truthful and honest in life.

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Entertainment

Television is the most effective medium of entertainment at home in our hectic schedule. It never lets us feel lonely. Some of the programmes broadcasted on television relieve us completely and make us laugh even when there is nobody to give us company at home. Serials such as Tarak Mehta Ka Ulta Chashma and some comic TV shows are so entertaining that they can be watched by the whole family sitting together. Programmes specifically designed for children inspire them to think differently while entertaining them. Various entertainment shows keep children engaged, teach them new skills, stimulate their imaginations, teach them how to deal with things in tough situations and let them have fun.

Sports

Television is the most effective mode to introduce various games to children at a very early stage. As the parents are busy in their professional lives and cannot find time to spend or play with their kids, children can spend time in watching such games on TV. Games such as cricket, football, volleyball, hockey, tennis, badminton, wrestling and various athletic games are broadcasted by different sports channels throughout the year. The commentators explain the tactics and rules regarding these games while making commentary on the ongoing game. This helps children learn the games in detail. The basic games of India such as Kabaddi and Kho-Kho got popularised through such broadcastings. Kabaddi, in particular, has got wide publicity since Pro-Kabaddi matches have been broadcasted on Star Sports every year. These games are helpful to keep our children healthy and fit.

Introduction of New Technology

The world in which we live is the fastest changing world. Innovations occur every second. The new generation learners need to know these changes and innovations to keep themselves alive in the cut throat competition in which they are struggling to survive. Television is the best means to know about such changes and innovations. Channels like Discovery, and science and geography related channels continuously broadcast inventory and adventurous happenings to inspire feelings of curiosity and adventure among children. Watching these channels, children feel attracted towards the world of animals; they feel curious to search different parts of the world in the world map and try to know the special features of different parts. Even the advertisements displayed during intervals of various shows instigate the curiosity

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regarding various new things among children. They boost their thinking and analytical reasoning. Latest technological information make children creative.

Personality Development

Various television shows inspire independent thinking skills and teach children to understand the world. They learn etiquettes, manners, common sense, out of box thinking skills, clothe styles, and behavioural changes in different situations. These are helpful for their personality development. We see some children looking smart and performing extraordinarily by watching specific TV shows. They affect the social behaviour of our children positively and develop them into well-rounded individuals. It has been proved that the children who watch TV are smarter and more intelligent than the children who do not watch it.

Keep Them Busy

Some children do not sit silently at one spot for a few minutes. They continuously rant and prance around the house, play in hot sun and cold, can't keep quiet for a single minute, and create nuisance continuously. Television is the most effective and creative solution to kill their boredom. Once they develop interest in watching TV, they remain at home, engaged with healthy habits without harming their cognitive development.

Make Them Culturally Strong

Various reality shows introduce different art forms belonging to different parts of the nation. Dancing, singing, acting, mimicry, comedy, painting, drawing and many such art forms are regularly broadcasted by various channels. Television can develop our kids' talents by teaching them how to sketch, draw, dance, sing and act. They learn the techniques of these art forms from experts in these reality shows. They create interest among children for art and culture. Watching these shows many children perform better in their schools and colleges and on other platforms. This adds extra stature to their personalities making them versatile in performance.

Negative Effects

Lack of Focus

Children who spend too much time every day in front of the TV screen become lethargic and suffer from lack of focus in their lessons. They get addicted to TV. It is found that such children wish to watch everything on the screen irrespective of its utility for them; they do not





want to lose anything. They find it difficult to pay attention to other things either at home or at school. Such children are continuously obsessed by TV.

Time Stealing

Everything that is broadcasted on television is entertaining and attractive. Watching television continuously kills time. Children feel illumined by these programmes so much so that they don't do their home-works properly. They do not find enough time for their studies as they remain stick to the TV. They also do not find time for gossips with their family members.

Causes Violence

Children love watching action movies on TV which can lead to behaving aggressively. Violent acts on TV affect the thinking of children more effectively. Accordingly, they try to react to the things in real life aggressively. There is every possibility that it might become the part of their nature in the course of time. It may cause negativity among children. These shows and movies exaggerate reality and create extremely violent scenes that can be dangerous for kids. The excessive use of violence, guns and other weapons in various TV shows and movies can create the impression among children that the world is unsafe for them.

Affects Self-Image

Various TV shows and movies present exaggerated and hyperbolical images like Shaktiman that affect children adversely. Watching such imaginary personalities on TV, children wish to be like them. They do not develop their personalities in natural course of way. Instead, they wish to be like someone in these shows. This affects their natural development. Such children may suffer from the loss of self identity due to over indulgence in imaginary characters in TV shows.

Affects Social Development

As has already been said, TV plays its role as the best friend of many children. Kids who spend lot of time in front of TV do not find enough time to play or socialise. It also causes less or no interaction with their parents and other relatives affecting their social upbringing. They become reserve by nature and cannot interact with strangers properly. They miss their much needed healthy interaction with children in their circle. Watching TV excessively also affects the child's brain development. Such children have behavioural problems in their lives.

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Health Issues

Spending too much time in watching TV may cause obesity, weakening of eyesight, etc. The effect of watching TV continuously is found on eyes, making eyesight blurry or reduced vision. It affects their performance in school too. Some children are so lost in watching their favourite TV shows that they even forget hunger which can affect their health adversely.

Lack of Interest in Outdoor Games

The children who spend too much time in watching TV, suffer from lack of interest in outdoor games which affects their health badly. Parents too encourage their kids to watch TV as they cannot have an eye on them while playing outdoor games. The professionalism and small family system in modern world have adversely affected the social behaviour of children. Addiction to TV shows reduces the amount of physical activity among children. Sometimes they behave like lazy boys/girls. Children do not prefer playing outside.

Learning Problems

Although television introduces innovative learning methods to children, they remain as passive listeners in this process. It does not allow their creative skills to be projected. It does not engage them physically. The result is that they develop passive attitude and remain inactive during actual learning hours at school too.

Consumerism

A variety of advertisements which are displayed between intervals expose our kids to a variety of brands, products and other goods that they may not need. Sometimes parents become the victims of this consumerism as children insist on purchasing some items that they see on TV. Parents are compelled to buy things that their kids want but do not need.

Conclusion

Regardless of some of its negative aspects and adverse impacts on children, television has proved to be the most effective instrument that is possessed by every household. Properly planned, we can avoid some of its negative impacts and utilise it to unite the family and develop creativity among our kids. Parents need to be careful in selection of programmes and watchful for their children. Television can be used as an effective way to build the minds of our kids by showing them a lot of healthy programmes on it. There are many channels that teach them science, art, geography, history, languages and other useful things. Television plays a big role in sharpening the brains and developing talents in our kids

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