



## TELEVISION IN INDIA

Can you imagine a world without television? No serials, news channels or cricket matches. Will it not be a boring world? Today television has become an integral part of our lives. Your brother might get angry if disturbed while he is watching his favourite television programme.

However, television is a recent invention. Very few homes had television sets some fifty years ago. Also, till the 1990s Doordarshan was the only channel available to a vast majority of Indians. This lesson will take you through the story of television.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- trace the evolution of television;
- identify the milestones of television history in India;
- analyze the impact of television in our daily lives;
- explain the new trends in television.

### 13.1 EVOLUTION OF TELEVISION

Isn't it wonderful that a newsreader who is hundreds of kilometers away in a news studio can be seen and heard by just switching on your television set? However, television is a recent invention. Ask your grandfather whether he had watched television in his childhood. Most probably he would have had a radio set at home but not a television. Radio, print and cinema were already there before the arrival of television. The idea of television existed long before the actual invention of television. Several inventors were working on the creation of a technology which could transmit sound as well as visuals.

Though many pioneers have contributed to make it possible, John Baird is generally regarded as the father of television. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) of Britain began the first television service in 1936. If you have a satellite or cable



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connection, you will be able to watch BBC, the world's oldest television broadcaster. By 1939, television broadcasts began in the United States also. These two countries were clearly ahead in the race. Other countries began television broadcasting on a wide scale only by the 1950s. Though the second World War slowed down the rapid development of the new medium, the post war years made up for it.

We have seen how television came into existence. However, early television viewing was not like what we see on a television set today. It was quite primitive. The limitations of the early camera forced the actors and anchors to work with impossibly hot lights. Imagine trying to read news with full make up under a blazing light.

The early television broadcasts were all black and white. The first successful programme in colour was transmitted by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in USA in 1953. The television set became one of the important mediums of entertainment with the advent of several popular shows. Television gradually matured as a medium during the next two decades. From being "radio with pictures" it acquired a unique style of its own. As a result of this, this phase is often called the "golden age" of television.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

1936	-	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) of Britain began the first television service of the world
1939	-	Television broadcasts began in US
1950s	-	Other countries began television broadcasting on a wide scale
1953	-	The first successful programme in colour was transmitted by CBS in USA

In today's world, television has become one of the most powerful means of mass communication. It can impart education, information and entertainment. Television has become an integral part of our lives. In the next section you will learn about the of history of television in India.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.1**

1. Who is generally credited as the father of television?
2. Name the world's oldest television broadcaster.
3. When did the world's first colour broadcast happen?
4. Tick mark the correct answer.
  - i) Which of the following was a later invention?
    - (a) cinema



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- (b) radio
  - (c) print
  - (d) television
- ii) Which country began the first television service?
- (a) UK
  - (b) US
  - (c) Spain
  - (d) India
- iii) Name the event which slowed down the development of television.
- (a) Second World War
  - (b) First World War
  - (c) Crimean War
  - (d) Gulf War

### 13.2 HISTORY OF TELEVISION IN INDIA

Did you know that television broadcasts started in India under All India Radio (AIR)? Television began in India on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1959 as an experiment. There were only two one-hour programmes a week, each of one hour duration. Imagine a television set working for only two hours a week. Can you think of such a situation today? But, that was the case in the early years of television. All India Radio handled these initial broadcasts.

**1959- TELEVISION BEGAN IN INDIA ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS.**

The early programmes on these experimental broadcasts were generally educational programmes for school children and farmers. Several community television sets were set up in Delhi's rural areas and schools around Delhi for the dissemination of these programmes. By the 1970s, television centers were opened in other parts of the country also. In 1976, Doordarshan, which was All India Radio's television arm until then became a separate department.

**1976- DOORDARSHAN BECAME A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT INDEPENDENT OF ALL INDIA RADIO (AIR)**

Are there any community television sets in your area? Several community television sets were distributed as a part of one of the important landmarks in the history of Indian television, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). It was conducted between August 1975 and July 1976. Under this programme, the Indian government used the American satellite ATS-6 to broadcast educational programmes



to Indian villages. Six states were selected for this experiment and television sets were distributed in these states. Was your state a part of the SITE programme? Ask your elders if community television sets were distributed in the neighbourhood during this period.

#### **1975-1976 SATELLITE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION EXPERIMENT (SITE)**

SITE was an important step taken by India to use television for development. The programmes were mainly produced by Doordarshan which was then a part of AIR. The telecasts happened twice a day, in the morning and evening. Other than agricultural information, health and family planning were the other important topics dealt with in these programmes. Entertainment was also included in these telecasts in the form of dance, music, drama, folk and rural art forms.

A major milestone in the history of Indian television was the coverage of the Ninth Asian Games in 1982. Doordarshan provided national coverage for the first time through the satellite INSAT 1A. Also, for the first time, the transmission was in colour. In addition to the domestic transmission, Doordarshan was also providing content for the broadcasters of many other countries. After 1982, there was a huge increase in the live coverage of sports by Doordarshan.

#### **1982- DOORDARSHAN PROVIDED NATIONAL COVERAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME THROUGH THE SATELLITE INSAT 1A.**

By 1983, government sanctioned a huge expansion of Doordarshan. Several new transmitters were set up throughout the country. Thus towards the end of 80s around 75 per cent of the population could be covered by the transmitters. Many of the programmes of Doordarshan like Hum Log, Buniyaad and Nukkad were immensely popular. Have you seen any of these serials ?

#### **1983- GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS HUGE EXPANSION OF DOORDARSHAN**

In 1997, Prasar Bharati, a statutory autonomous body was established. Doordarshan along with AIR was converted into government corporations under Prasar Bharati. The Prasar Bharati Corporation was established to serve as the public service broadcaster of the country which would achieve its objectives through AIR and DD. This was a step towards greater autonomy for Doordarshan and AIR. However, Prasar Bharati has not succeeded in shielding Doordarshan from government control.

#### **1997- ESTABLISHMENT OF PRASAR BHARATI**

Do you watch Gyandarshan, the educational channel of Doordarshan? Do you find the programmes in the channel useful? Which is your favourite channel of Doordarshan? Today, about 90 per cent of the Indian population can receive

Doordarshan programmes through its network. From its humble beginning as a part of All India Radio, Doordarshan has grown into a major television broadcaster with around 30 channels. This includes Regional Language Satellite Channels, State Networks, International Channel and All India Channels like DD National, DD News, DD Sports, DD Gyandarshan, DD Bharati, Lok Sabha Channel and DD Urdu. Which channel of Doordarshan broadcasts in your regional language?



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**Activity 13.1**

*Make a list of all the channels of Doordarshan. Watch at least five of them and identify the purpose of each channel.*

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- 1959 - Television started in India as an experiment.
- 1975 - SITE programme starts
- 1976 - Doordarshan, which was AIR's television arm, becomes a separate department
- 1982 - Coverage of Ninth Asian Games. Doordarshan starts national coverage and colour transmission for the first time.
- 1983 - Government sanctions a huge expansion of Doordarshan
- 1997 - Establishment of Prasar Bharati

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.2**

1. What is the full form of SITE?
2. What is the importance of the year 1982 in the history of Indian television?
3. What is Prasar Bharati?
4. (i) Television in India began as
  - (a) an experiment
  - (b) a source of entertainment
  - (c) a medium for education
  - (d) a tool for development
- (ii) Gyan Darshan is
  - (a) an entertainment channel
  - (b) an educational channel
  - (c) a sports channel
  - (d) news channel



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- (iii) The satellite used by Doordarshan for national coverage in 1982 is
- ATS -6
  - Aryabhata
  - IRS 1C
  - INSAT 1A
- (iv) Doordarshan began as a part of
- AIR
  - Prasar Bharati
  - SITE
  - Krishi Darshan

### 13.3 EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE TELEVISION CHANNELS

So you have seen how Doordarshan has evolved over the years. But today we have many channels other than Doordarshan. You may have heard the term “satellite channels”. Generally satellites are used for communication or research purposes. Man made satellites are objects which are launched to orbit the earth or any other celestial body. Let us see how satellites help in bringing your favourite television channels to your homes.

What is the relationship between a satellite and a serial that you see in the cable network? They might seem completely unrelated. But, communication satellites are instrumental in bringing the serial to your home. Have you ever owned a television set with an antenna which had to be positioned exactly to catch the signal? A heavy rain or rough weather can disrupt your television viewing in such a case. The introduction of communication satellites has improved the situation greatly.

How many channels can you watch on your television set? Star TV, Aaj Tak, NDTV, Zee etc are a few of the many television channels available to us today. Ask your mother if she had such a wide choice of channels in her childhood. The answer will be ‘no’. This is because these private channels came into the Indian Television scene quite recently. In the earlier days, Doordarshan had a monopoly as it was the only channel available to the Indian television audience. This changed in the 1990s with the arrival of private channels. The coverage of the Gulf War by the American news channel, Cable News Network (CNN) propelled the arrival of satellite television in India. Satellite dishes were used to catch the CNN signals and cable operators took to satellite broadcasting immediately.

**1990s :ADVENT OF PRIVATE TELEVISION CHANNELS  
IN INDIA**

Hong Kong based STAR (Satellite Television Asian Region) entered into an agreement with an Indian company and Zee TV was born. It became the first privately owned Hindi satellite channel of India. The agreement between STAR and Zee did not last long. But the Indian television audience was waiting for a shift from the monopoly of Doordarshan and soon a number of private channels emerged.

The Supreme Court ruling of 1995 which stated that the airwaves are not the monopoly of the Indian government boosted their growth. Several regional channels also came into being during this period. Sun TV (Tamil), Asianet (Malayalam) and Eenadu TV were a few of them. Today almost all major Indian languages have television channels in them. Which is your favourite regional channel?

Apart from the regional channels, a host of international channels like CNN, BBC and Discovery are also available to the Indian television audience. With different categories of channels like 24 hour news channels, religious channels, cartoon channels and movie channels, there is something for everyone to watch.

**Activity 13.2**

*Classify the different channels offered by the cable network in your area into various categories like news channels, movie channels, religious channels etc.*

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.3**

1. What was the Supreme Court ruling about the government monopoly of airwaves?
2. Name the event which led to the arrival of satellite television in India
3. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/s:
  - (i) \_\_\_\_\_ was the first privately owned Hindi satellite channel of India
  - (ii) Asianet is the regional channel of \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iii) The full form of STAR is \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iv) Before the advent of private channels \_\_\_\_\_ was the only television channel available to the vast majority of Indians
  - (v) \_\_\_\_\_ is an example of a private television channel.

**13.4 IMPACT OF TELEVISION IN OUR DAILY LIVES**

We have seen that television is an immensely popular medium of mass communication. It is very much integrated into our daily lives and has the power to

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influence our outlooks. This influence can have both positive and negative results.. On the positive front, television can be an excellent teacher. Wouldn't your younger sister get thrilled if a cartoon show teaches her mathematics? Television can also be used as an excellent medium for mass education as in the SITE experiment. Identify one programme in your favorite channel which can have a positive impact on society.

Television can also open up new horizons for us. Sitting in your living room, you can access information about what is happening in a distant country like Iraq by just a click of the remote. Television can also be used to create awareness about various issues like environmental pollution and global warming. Can you recall any programme or public service advertisement which has increased your awareness about the need to conserve our environment? Television can also provide entertainment and can be used as a tool for relaxation.

**Activity 13.3**

*Identify three television programmes which have increased your awareness about social issues*

As a child, have you ever nagged your parents to get you the brand of chocolate advertised on TV? How did your parents react?



**Fig. 13.1(a) : A child watching the ad of a particular brand of chocolate on TV**



## Notes

Stereotype: an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group



**Fig. 13.1(b) :** The same child creating a fuss in a shopping mall for the chocolate bar advertised and seen by him on TV.

Mindless television can have negative impacts. Have you heard of the term ‘couch potato’? This is used for people who spend most of their time in front of a television set. Do you know any couch potatoes? Too much television can distract you from other activities, like reading, sports or helping your parents with household chores. Since television viewing is a sedentary activity, it can also lead to obesity. Catchy advertisements on television can tempt people to buy various products.



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Fig. 13.2: Couch Potato

Television viewing has also been linked with the creation of stereotypes. Watch some of the women based serials and observe where maximum time is spent by the heroine. You are most likely to find her spending most of the time inside a house. Here the stereotype that women are supposed to spend most of the time at home is subtly re-enforced. You would have come across the portrayal of a “madrasi” in Hindi comedy shows. This depiction may not have any real relation to a South Indian.



**Activity 13.4**

*Identify any two television programmes which contain stereotypes.*

A lot of studies has been conducted on the connection between television violence

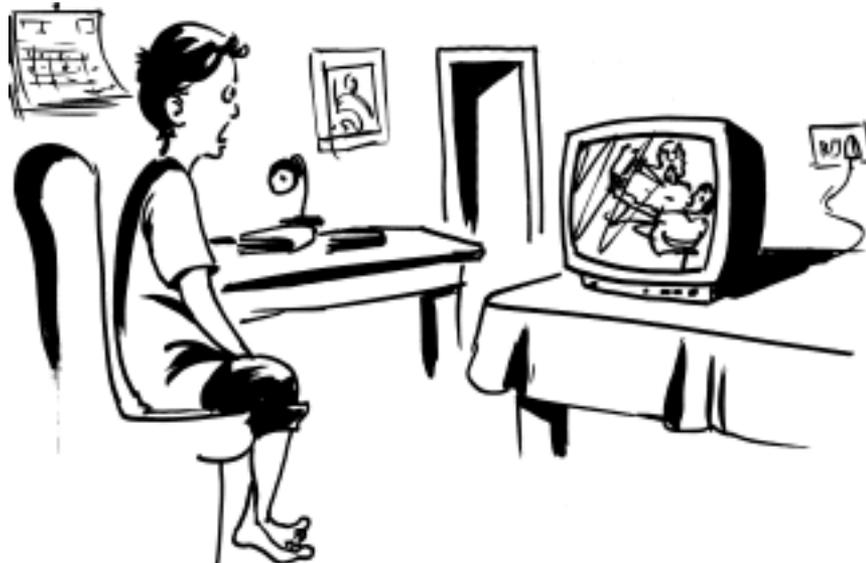


Fig 13.3 : Watching violent content.

and violent behaviour in children. The general assumption derived from these studies is that increased exposure to violence make children think that it is an acceptable behaviour. Watching violent programmes have been linked with aggression in both adults and children. These programmes have been found to cause more adverse effects on children who have experienced violence, poverty or neglect in their lives.

**Activity 13.5**

*Monitor the amount of violence depicted in your favourite channel over a week and discuss its impact with your friends.*

Some television programmes can induce fear in children.



**Fig. 13.4 : Expressing fear**

Thus, television in itself is neither good nor bad. It is just another medium of communication. The positive and negative effects depend upon how we use the medium.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.4**

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of violent television content on children?
2. List two positive impacts of television.
3. Which of the following is not a negative aspect of television
  - (a) provides entertainment
  - (b) can contain excessive violent content
  - (c) can lead to excessive consumerism



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4. State whether the following statements are true or false.
- (i) any television programme can provide you with information
  - (ii) increased exposure to violent television can lead to violent behaviour in some children.
  - (iii) watching television leads to obesity
  - (iv) the only purpose of television is to provide entertainment
  - (v) television is bad for children

### 13.5 NEW TRENDS IN TELEVISION

So, we have seen the impact of television in our lives. Now let us have a look at the new developments in the field of television.. Do you depend on an antenna to watch television? In that case your television set relies on terrestrial transmission. Television content can be delivered in a variety of ways. It can be distributed through terrestrial transmission. In this system, an antenna connected to the television viewer is used to receive the signals telecast by the broadcaster's transmitter. This is the traditional method of television broadcast. Other methods of delivery include distribution through cable networks and direct broadcast satellite.

Have you ever thought how the cable operator in your area supplies all those bouquet of channels? The cable distribution in India can be seen as a chain which begins with the signal sent by the broadcaster to the cable operator. The cable operators then relay these signals to our homes. There are free to air channels and pay channels. For the free to air channels, the broadcaster does not charge the cable operator. Examples of free to air channels include Aaj Tak, Sahara and Times Now. Pay channels like Sony and Star Plus charge a certain amount of money per subscriber per month.

Where would you ideally place your television set? In the living room, is it? However the arrival of new delivery platforms is going to change this forever. How about watching your favourite channel on your mobile phone? This has already become a reality in India. This way, you will not miss your favourite television programme while you are traveling.

#### *DID YOU KNOW?*

*There are cars which come with an antenna which allows you to watch television programmes from a host of channels.*

Another interesting technology is Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) which allows you to watch television on computers and mobile phones. This allows the consumers to watch television, record programmes and share their experiences with their friends with the help of an internet connection and a set top box provided



for the purpose. Under this system, a cell phone can be used to schedule the recording of a programme. This will offer the consumers greater choice, control and convenience. Many of the major Indian channels provide video clips of their programmes through their websites.

Do you have a cyber café in your neighbourhood? Have you gone there to search the internet? If you are not yet familiar with computers, you should make it a point to visit a cybercafé. Internet or new media has opened a whole new world of communication. This newer medium has created a challenge for television. Do you know that many young people in developed countries spend more time on the internet than in front of a television set?

New media allows greater audience participation. You will learn more about this in the module on new media. Television has invented its own ways to meet the challenges put forward by internet. Audience backed shows where the audience decides the winner is an example. Ask your mother if there were any such programmes on Indian television 15 years back. The answer will be 'no'. This is because new media is a recent addition to the media scene and television had no such challenges in the past. Reality television is another new trend. Have you seen programmes like 'Indian Idol', 'Big Boss' and 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'? They are examples of reality television.

Thus, in this age of internet, television has been constantly reinventing itself as a medium. The new delivery platforms are steps in that direction. One of the disadvantages of television as a medium is delayed feed back. On the other hand, internet is all about interactivity. So to cope up with this, television has began to package its content as well as delivery in an interactive manner.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.5

1. What is IPTV?
2. What is a pay channel?
3. Which of the following is a traditional method of TV broadcasting?
  - (i) terrestrial transmission
  - (ii) IPTV
  - (iii) HDTV
  - (iv) Mobile TV broadcasting



4. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/s:
- (i) \_\_\_\_\_ is an example of a free to air channel
  - (ii) Mobile TV broadcasting is a \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iii) ..... is a drawback of television.
  - (iv) ..... is an interactive medium



### 13.6 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

#### → Evolution of television

- father of television
- first television service BBC
- black and white service
- colour transmission

#### History of television in India

- television as a part of AIR
- establishment of Doordarshan
- first national coverage by DD
- establishment of Prasar Bharati

#### Emergence of private television channels

- satellite communication
- advent of Star TV

#### Impact of television in our daily lives

- information channels
- educational channels
- entertainment channels
- exposure to violence
- creation of stereotypes
- generation of fear

#### New trends in television

- cable network
- direct broadcast
- Internet Protocol Television



### 13.7 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. List three milestones in the history of television in India.
2. How does television influence our daily lives?
3. Outline the new trends in television.
4. Identify the major events in the evolution of television.



### 13.8 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 13.1**
1. John Baird
  2. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
  3. 1953
  4. (i) (d) (ii) (a) (iii) (a)
- 13.2**
1. Satellite Instructional Television Experiment
  2. Refer to section 13.2
  3. Refer to section 13.2
  4. (i) (a) (ii) (b) (iii) (d) (iv) (a)
- 13.3**
1. Refer to section 13.3
  2. The coverage of the Gulf War by the American news channel CNN
  3. (i) Zee
    - (ii) Kerala
    - (iii) Satellite Television Asian Region
    - (iv) Doordarshan
    - (v) Times Now, any other
- 13.4**
1. Refer to section 13.4
  2. Imparting information and education
  3. (a) provides entertainment
  4. (i) False (ii) True (iii) False (iv) False (v) False



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- 13.5**
1. Refer to section 13.5
  2. Refer to section 13.5
  3. (i) terrestrial transmission
  4. (i) Aaj Tak, any other  
(ii) New television delivery platform  
(iii) Delayed feedback  
(iv) New media