

Impact of Television on Our Social Values

Culture is the inner core of civilization which in itself is the product of so many forces, historical, social and even natural. That is why cultural values must undergo a change; if they remain static, they become irrelevant for the present day life. People following orthodox type of culture would lag behind the more advanced nations and there is a possibility that some of the new institutions which they adopt in their political and social life may not be in proper harmony with their cultural values. Such a conflict many times results in the degeneration of the society. That is why some time external methods are used to change the cultural values of a society formal harmony of certain ideas is resorted to. That is why some time external methods are used to change the cultural values of a society and as resistance to change is too much in an orthodox society formal harmony of certain ideas is resorted to. That is why television is increasingly used for tuning the people of India for a new social and political order, as a means of re-orienting our cultural values in accordance with the demand of the present day. As far as the impact is concerned there are so many factors which may be offsetting the impact.

Indian Television is trying to preserve our tradition particularly in fine arts by presenting the traditional dances and also folk songs on television. As far as the social values are concerned television is making an earnest effort to make these values relevant to the present day circumstances. Most of the serials take up the problems faced by the Indian women while discharging their functions as a member of the society. Exploitation of the women and their physical weakness have been the theme of so many serials. They have tried to project woman as an apostle of peace and non-violence. A woman needed in the present set of circumstances is a woman who can fight for justice and can face heavy odds with courage and determination. As a woman should be equal to man in political and social sphere the serials have tried to serve as a booster of their morale. No doubt in ancient Indian culture, woman was given equal status to man yet at a later stage, particularly during the Muslim rule, in India, she was relegated to the subordinate position. So television is trying to reorient this social aspect of our culture.

Some of the serials are making us aware of our environment and the changing political and social conditions of the world. They make us to consider religion something subordinate to other affairs in life as they wanted it to be a private affair only. This also is in accordance with the demands of the political set up we have adopted. Ours is a secular state and religions should not create differences among us. Communal harmony is more important than anything else because it

may result in the disintegration of state. Otherwise also if the communal virus goes on doing harm we will never be able to become a strong country. Naturally many of serials are directed against this evil. Another social evil of the present times is the caste system. Though Gandhiji fought against it and though caste distinctions are legally banned yet caste plays an important role in politics as well as in life. In order to eradicate it completely it is necessary that the people should be made to think that caste is completely irrelevant to our day to day life. Our democracy will become a farce if caste is allowed to have its own way. So this is also one of the reforms which they try to impress upon people through television.

Television has become easy, simple and a regular source of entertainment for the people. By telecasting programmes three times a day, they have been able to keep the people occupied. Obviously this will make them more concerned with themselves and less concerned with their neighbor, more prone to entertainment than to even religious meditation and more interested in the latest developments than in any other thing. This utilization makes them busy with their own affairs.

With the help of effective advertisements television is trying to impress upon the people that boys and girls should be married only when they are fully matured mentally and physically. In India early marriage had been one of the most serious problems, it was responsible for a large number of the deaths, exploitation of the women and over-population. It is supplemented with some advertisement which make the people conscious of the need for family planning.

The conventional thinking of an average Indian has been contrary to what is advertised; early marriage was a necessity for them, birth of the children was not considered to be within powers of man. Those social reforms are also necessary.

How far the television can leave a permanent impact on a wide scale is difficult to conjecture. In fact poverty is the main hindrance; a large number of people in the rural areas cannot afford to buy a television. Apart from it they are not educated enough to understand the real significance of certain serials. They are simply interested in programmes dealing with agriculture. Moreover till the television stations are set up to cover even the smaller areas its impact cannot be felt. Regional programmes should be more artistic and more impressive than what they are. Diversity of languages spoken in India does not allow the programmes telecast on the national network to become popular. Some of the serious programmes are not understood properly whereas humorous programmes are simply lost in humour. Television in India has become more a spokesman of the ruling party than a medium of free expression that is why the viewers take it as a medium of communication representing the ruling party. No denying the fact that television can become effective medium in changing the social and political order

yet it can be effective only after it is allowed to function independently and without being influenced by party politics.