Realism of Television and Ethical Issues

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"If you can't run, you crawl. If you can't crawl-- you find someone to carry you."

— **Joss Whedon**

Nowadays Television in India has become one of the most important subjects of popular culture which claims a considerable span of time in our everyday mores. In the early 1990s, television in India exclusively redefined the older paradigms of communication and reception. The book edited by Sen and Roy includes most recent theoretical developments in television studies and aims at understanding the political economy of the shifting codes of television culture in India.

When realism is shown in the behaviour of people, they recognize and accept the nature of situation and try to deal with it in a more practical manner. If things and peopke are shown with realism in sceneries, paintings or films, they are presented in a way that is like a real life. The basic meaning of realism is better be understood as recognition and acceptance of situation so as to acknowledge its existence or its truth.

John B.Watson argued that all human action is a conditioned response to external enviournment stimuli. His theory became known as behaviourism in recognition of its narrow focus on isolated human behaviours.The new behaviours are added to people's behavioural reportoire'- the individual's available behaviour in a situation which is given.

Human growth depends on the biological conditions. The external stimuli like surroundings, enviournment, culture, subculture, education, religion, education and media add to its complexities. The human existence is defined by the result of these complexities of human behaviour. Te realism that is distinguished through media, offers a wide array of behaviouristic and attitudinal changes, which in turn defines social structure.

The role of electronic media is very important in creating changes as it is one of the most popular media in all sectors of society. Over the years the rapid transformation ca be obsered in television and its content. It has increased the aura of charm. The increasing number of viewrship of televison in India, the land of cultural diversities, has raised aspirations of the viewers. The rapid pace of development has seen rapid transformation of television viewership.

Since the beginning of first satellite TV channel the expansion of private channels in India has been very speedy. The viewership has increased manifold. The ministry of Information and broadcasting has permitted 883 private channels, 497 non news channels and 386 are news channels till 2018. The growth in the categories such as News, Entertainment, Sports, Kids, Health, Spirituality, Lifestyle and Music etc. has created new dimension to the world of television. The regional trends in reality television, Television, HD technology, DTH, IPTV have revolutionized the pattern of television viewership.

The total number of television viewership increased from 124 million in 2009 to 130 million in 2010, showing growth rate of five percent. The penetration in India still remains 61% which is low as compared to developed nations which are above 90%. With the change in the financial condition and economy of country the increase of television per household will increase with passage of time. The television whereas have become the indispensable part of Indian houses, from being a luxury few years back to necessity these days. The viewership is among all the age groups of society as it provides vast options to viewers of every sector.

Before DTH cable industry played a major role in the growth of television in past 25 years. The report   FICCI-KPMG media entertainment report 2014 states that out of total 138 million TV homes, 73 million were covered by DTH and rest by Direct to home and Internet protocol television services. Digitization proved to be one of the asset and it will help in the future growth of the industry.

The television era of globalization becomes quite significant. The aura of small screen realism is bound to throw reflections in the realm of life. The message from television is perceived in different ways by different sectors of society. The variables religion, race, ethnicity, age , gender, education, occupation and income play a major role in construction of different meaning for the same images.   The prospective of television make people learn and understand multiple representations, as it created a very special place in home.

According to the cultivation theory television cultivates a world that possibly inaccurate, becomes the reality because people believe it to be so. The major contribution is cultivation, a cultural process relating to coherent frameworks or knowledge and by exposure to the total organically related world of television rather than exposure to individual programme and selections. Television often faces criticism for its fiction, unethical and unrealistic portrayals. Television in India started as a tool to promote political and developmental agenda. The primary role was sought after as information, education and communication. The introduction of infotainment changed the meaning of entertainment and it created wide variety of entertainment choices. It created consumers. The television continues to influence social, cultural, economic and political environment.

The viewers have a wide variety of choice to choose the channels, yet they are left with some when it comes to choosing something different. The news channels come under the scathing attack due to the increasing sensationalism and prejudgments to the issues. The news value and goals of journalism in this stage shows the condition of Indian media and television. The news related to any celebrity focusing full day as breaking news on all the news channel s, undue coverage to political or business tycoon, non entities when they are committing some crime and are sentenced, bollywood gossips, day to day non- news worthy stories are few of the instance which speak of critics that news channel test viewers patience. This element presents compulsion i.e. 24*7 . It is a compulsion to survive in the market more than journalism that makes the news channel to telecast news.

The soap operas construct a family which represent the realism and defines the existing moral values. Stereotyping of gender roles, show casting of unending conflicts and clashes within relationships, disastrous conspiracies within the families, are bound to create doubts, suspicions, lack of trust, fear besides a plethora of other problems and disorders. Kids, children, teenagers, women and adult are more addicted to this as they construct the images what they watch on television shows. Genre is defined as formula which if successful, is often repeated again and again and it can be used over a long period of time. The concept is more important in arising the expectations of an audience and how they perceive and select. Producers are said to take the concept because they can exploit the winning formula and minimize taking risks. One of the main functions of most of the mainstream media is to make a profit. The media producers has to create texts that audience want to buy, so a media producer has been proved popular with audiences it makes sense for the producer to recognize features which it is hoped will have audiences. It is for this reason that certain genres seem to be continuously popular.

The pattern of Indian television series is that once genre starts and all the channels try to focus on the same content. For Example saas bahu serial, reality shows and epic time. The repeated realism of situation, ideas raises many concerns. The main focus in media is when we watch representations in media we should keep in mind the illusion of the real world and the events taking place around us. The media has replaced the real world. The world of television represents a reality that is more real than which can directly experience in outside world. In this way media representation becomes a hyper- reality with the reality encountered in the world itself appeal shadow of this.

Reality shows are among the most preferred way of entertainment through television, their popularity is decreasing & viewers now understand the motives of show makers. But still viewers would like to see them. The future of the reality shows is brighter than other shows as viewers believe that they are interesting.

The entertainment saga has revolutionized with the reality television, which is one of the most popular genre of Indian television. The nonfiction programming which is unscripted has filled the prime time slots of Indian television channels. Laughter, quiz, singing, dancing, sports shows like Indian Idol, The Kapil Sharma Show, MTV Bakra,Big Boss, KBC etc have kindled the desires in the commonest of commons, providing platform to many which rewarded the winners in one or other way. This platform provided name, fame and recognition to those whose talent is given a chance. These shows are selling dreams to those who had forgotten to see the dreams. The reality shows are here to stay and become an integral part of small screen. However, what worries is the never mind approach of TV channels which refuses to take a break. Whosoever makes the headline for all reasons become the centre of appearance in television? Whosoever has the malicious tongue and abuses on others become the attraction. The filthy is becoming trendsetter. Day by day screen languages are becoming unpleasant and disgusting. Double meanings talk and pouches underlines the comedy and laughter shows. These images have long lasting imprints in the mind of children. The impact of television content is at rise among children in one or other way.

Reasons for popularity of reality shows:

1. Cost effective: It is possible to involve heterogeneous audience in a less amount.
2. Emotional content: This not only involve new customers but also keeps the existing because of emotional connects.
3. Family Appeal: All the age group whether children, teenagers, adults, grandparents watch the content all together and enjoy the show. It attracts all age group and genders.
4. Relatedness: It has a strong reflection of dreams, struggle and emotions of common man. Hence people tend to relate to them.
5. Involvement: It always binds with the show.
6. Results: The formats have a quick response from audience which boost the confidence and the spirit of participation.

A study was conducted regarding the reality shows and their exposure. A sample size of 100 respondents covered which included 61% female and 39 % male. From the total respondents 63% enjoy watching television whereas 32% believe that it is just an Idiot box.

Study showed following results:

1. Involvement   in the content and do not wish to change channels: 30 agreed that they enjoy whereas 32 disagreed whereas 38 feel sometime that they are involved in the content

2. People enjoy talking about reality TV shows with people they know: 62 of respondents said that they agreed, 13 of them said that they disagreed and 25 of them said that they sometimes talked about reality TV shows.

3. Reality shows put in a good mood: 39% of respondents said that they agreed, 35 of them said that they disagreed and 25 of them said that they sometimes talked about reality TV shows.

4. Reason for inviting Guests: To increase TRP: 37, Publicity of Guest's Upcoming event 39, Honor to invited guests: 24

5. Involvement not to change channel: Agree 30, disagree 32, sometimes 38.

According to the study conducted regarding the reality shows preference People are interested in watching the reality shows rather than daily soaps but movies comes first in the preference. Majority of population prefer to watch the reality shows. In Reality shows for various reasons people participate but for the main reason behind participating is that they are also getting a platform and a place for exposure. Mostly people believe that people participate in the shows for publicity. Celebrities are part of the show as they want the publicity. It is also seen that most of the reality shows are unreal and are created but still people are more towards these shows rather than soap operas.

There is both good and bad television. But the necessity of time is how audience select the good. That is why the look on children while watching television by parents is must. As the content which is favorable for the age group need to be shown as compared to the other which create health and behavioural problems among different age group of children. The critical cultural studies maintain that the audience needs opportunities and choices are constrained by access to media and media content.

Many a times audience fails to differentiate the content between good and bad required for them as well as for children in a particular age group. The dispute on what do audience want and what do they accept or reject can never reach a logical conclusion. Media always pretend that whatever is shown to the audience is all the content picked from real life. On contrary, it is media which teaches audience certain content. Media construct reality these days. Media have commercial implications. Media plays a major role in creating image of a nation. The need of the time is to work on the ethics rather than building audience for the sake of TRP. The vision of future what we expect is different from the way they are now. It is an expectation from the media to be visionary.   The ethics related to media is on decline as there is no one who decides what is good and bad and what is to be shown. The role of television in shaping the ethical sensibilities is more complex. Television being persuasive has power of

reflecting and shaping modern life. It is all about nurturing a realism which gives better ethical choices because it is said that humans learn partly by nature.

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