

# Children's and Parent's Perspective towards Television Viewing in Jammu (J& K) India

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**Abstract:** *The present research was conducted to study the Children's Perspective towards T.V viewing. The sample comprised of 50 respondent children in the age group of 6-12 years. The sample was selected from Gole, Talab Tillo, Jammu. Tool used for the study was self devised interview schedule and observation. Data was collected through personal home visits. Findings revealed that T.V watching was preferred by all the sample children. Children were fond of T.V watching and their most favorite programs were cartoons, sports related programs and reality shows. T.V advertisements were liked by majority of children and their favorite advertisements were of food products, toys and cosmetics related advertisements.*

**Keywords:** Perspective, preferred, children, favorite, reality shows, interested

## 1. Introduction

Children today live in a world where many of their experiences are mediated by screen technologies. Television has an influence on children from a very young age and affects their cognitive and social development (Elkind, 2007; wright et al 2001). Social cognitive theory, developed by Psychologist Albert Bandura, stresses that children learn many social behaviors by observing those modeled by others. Children are more likely to try a behavior if they can identify with the person modeling the behavior and the model is successful at achieving a goal or obtaining a reward. While watching children have the feeling that they are interacting, but they are not. That's one of the disadvantages of television as a socialize – it satisfies social needs to some extent, but does not give children the social skills (or the real life practice in those skills ) that allows them to function effectively with people. Since the average child watches 3 to 4 hours of T.V a day, the time left for playing with others and learning social skills is drastically reduced. Even infants average about an hour and a half of television viewing a day between the time they are born and age 2(Wright et al 2001).

On average, children ages 2-5 spend 3 hours a week in front of a T.V. kids ages 6-11 spend about 28 hours a week in front of the T.V. The vast majority of this viewing 97% is of live T.V.

Children who watched the most television were more likely to rank in the top 10% for concentration problems, impulsiveness, restlessness and being easily confused. Each additional hour of viewing increasing the child's likelihood of having attention problems by about 10% (Guardian, 2004). T.V viewing is probably replacing activities in child's life that parents would rather have them do ( things like playing with friends , being physically active, getting fresh air, reading, playing imaginatively, doing home-work , doing chores. Excessive T.V viewing can contribute to poor grades, sleep problems, behavior problems, obesity and risky behavior. In 63% of household, the television is usually "on" during meals. In 5% of households that T.V. is

"on" most of the time, kids with a television in their bedroom spend an average of almost 1.5 hours more per day watching television than kids without a T.V. in the bedroom. Kids who spent more time watching television spend less time interacting with family members (Zimmerman, 2004).

Some good television programs have good effects on children. In fact T.V shows for children on some channels like discovery or national geographic channel can increase child's knowledge. Such knowledge is a must have in this competitive age. It is necessary on the part of parents that they can encourage their children to watch such shows. There are also some T.V programs which help children understand the importance of proper nutrition, health and exercise. Apart from that, children also learn a lot of things which are helpful in their academic and future life. They can also watch quiz contest which increase their general knowledge.

Although with positive effects, television programs can also have negative impact on children. T.V programs affect the behavior of child the most. Most of the children watch cartoon films. They get infatuated with it so much that they start using the dialogues used by their favorite cartoon characters frequently. If accidentally, children watch the television programs meant for adults it can prove dangerous. At times, unwanted thoughts may start coming to their attention from studies and force them to undesirable things. It can create disturbance in child's life and make his or her life stressful watching television for longer time can also deteriorate child's health. Parents believed that T.V advertisements are changing the pattern and behavior of children. They have negative impact on children. T.V advertisements are an important factor which drives their product choice and inculcate unhealthy eating habits in them. Children love watching T.V and prefer it over social interaction, physical and developmental activities. It also indicates that T.V advertisements provide children knowledge about products and brands. It demonstrates that children demand more of the product whose advertisements they like (Mittal et al (2010).

## 2. Materials and Methods

For the study, 100 respondents (50 mothers and 50 children i.e. 25 boys and 25 girls) were selected from Gole, Talab Tillo Jammu through snowball sampling technique and the tools used for collection of data were self-devised interview schedule and observation. The issues highlighted in interview schedule are Demographic characteristics of respondents, Mother's perception about effect of T.V on issues related to sleeping, eating and playing pattern, perception about effect of T.V viewing on academic performance of children, children's perspective towards T.V viewing

## 3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented as:

**Table 1:** Mother's views on schedule and time regarding T.V viewing of children

Routine regarding T.V watching	Daily routine Boys/Girls (N=25/25)%	Weekly routine Boys/Girls (N=25/25)%
(1-2hr)	9(36%)/12(48%)	6(24%)/9(36%)
(2-3hrs)	13(52%)/8(32%)	15(60%)/12(48%)
(3-4hrs)	2(8%)/3(12%)	3(12%)/4(16%)
More than 4hrs	1(4%)/2(8%)	1(4%)/--
Total	25(100%)/25(100%)	25(100%)/25(100%)

It was observed that T.V was watched by 100% of the respondent children. The mother's of the children were interviewed. According to mothers, 100% children in all the age group from 6-12 yrs watch T.V daily. 52% mothers reported that boys spent 2-3 hrs in watching T.V daily, 32% reported that girls spent 2-3 hrs, 48% reported that girls spent 1-2 hrs, 36% reported that boys spent 1-2 hrs, 12% reported that girls spent 3-4 hrs, 8% reported that boys spent 3-4 hrs, 8% reported that girls spent more than 4 hrs and 4% reported that boys spent more than 4 hrs in watching T.V daily. Regarding the weekly routine of T.V watching by children i.e. boys and girls, 60% mothers reported that boys spent 2-3 hrs in watching T.V weekly, 48% reported that girls spent 2-3 hrs, 36% reported that girls spent 1-2 hrs, 24% reported that boys spent 1-2 hrs, 16% reported that girls spent 3-4 hrs whereas 12% reported that boys spent 3-4 hrs. It was found that 4% mothers reported that boys spent more than 4 hrs in watching T.V weekly. From the view point of the mothers, it was found that all children were interested in watching T.V daily, and also weekly.

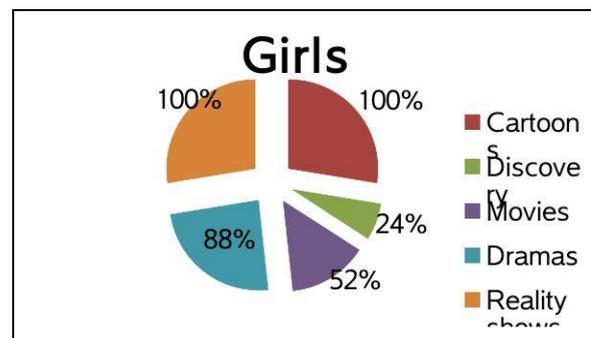
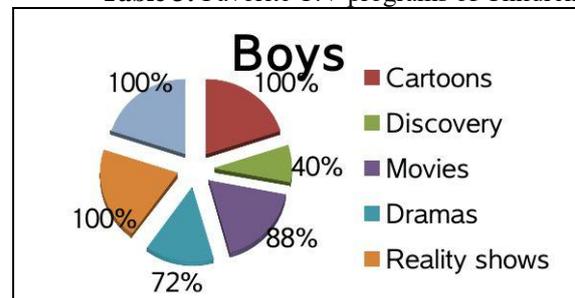
**Table 2:** Children's perspective on T.V advertisements

Perspective on advertisements	Boys N=25 (%)	Girls N=25 (%)
Interested in viewing T.V advertisements	23 (92%)	21 (84%)
Not interested in viewing T.V advertisements	2 (8%)	4 (16%)
<b>Total</b>	25 (100%)	25 (100%)
Favorite T.V advertisements of children		
Advertisements	Boys N=25 (%)	Girls N=25 (%)
Advertisements related to Food products	23 (92%)	21 (84%)
Advertisements related to Toys	17 (68%)	13 (52%)
Advertisements related to cosmetics	14(56%)	22(88%)
Advertisements related to dress material	12(48%)	20(80%)

\*Multiple responses

This table revealed that majority (92%) of boys and (84%) of girls were interested in watching advertisements. It was also found that (16%) of girls and (8%) of boys were not interested in watching advertisements. The results reveals that the responses of the children towards T.V advertisements were also varied according to their sex. Majority (92%) of boys were more inclined towards advertisements showing food products like fast food i.e. pizza, burgers, chips, chocolates, snacks, cold-drink, maggi etc and (84%) of girls also liked to watch advertisements of food products like snacks, fast food, maggi, cold drink etc. It was also observed that eating habits of children were influenced by watching advertisements. Majority (88%) of girls were more inclined towards watching beauty care aids like fairness cream, shampoos like clinic plus, sunsilk, and soaps such as Dove, LUX, Hamam etc whereas 56% boys also like advertisements of shampoos that is head and shoulder, clinic all clear etc and soaps i.e. life boy, dettol, Rexona etc. (68%) of boys were fascinated by advertisements showing toys such as transport toys that is cars, bikes, bicycles and fighting toys like guns, pistol whereas girls (52%) were seem to have been fascinated by soft toys such as Barbie dolls, teddy bears etc. It was also found that 80% girls were fascinated by advertisements showing dress materials like Barbie frocks, Hanna Montana dresses etc whereas 48% boys were fascinated by dresses like T-Shirts of their favorite cartoon characters i.e. Ben Ten, Bheem, spiderman etc.

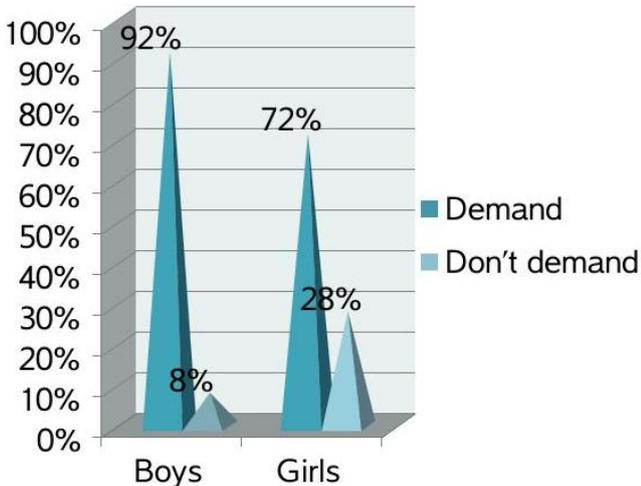
**Table 3:** Favorite T.V programs of Children



The above table reveals that both boys and girls had cartoons and reality shows as their favorite programs which include Fear Files, CID, Dance India Dance, Nach Baliye, Saavdaan India etc. and cartoons like Tom and Jerry, Oggy and the cockroaches, BEN10, Doremon, etc. All the boys have sports as their favorite program and girls did not have sports as their favorite program. Variation was seen in other programs i.e. (88%) of girls and (72%) of boys watch

dramas. (88%) of boys and (52%) of girls liked movies i.e action and religious movies. It was also found that (40%) of boys and (24%) of girls liked discovery and watch Man v/s Wild , food factory etc programs on discovery. In this table it was found that children also watch dramas as dramas were watched by the majority of family members which had made children to watch this programs along with the family.

**Table 4:** Perception on purchase of items related to T.V Advertisements:



The above table reveals that most of the children were likely to insist upon their parents for getting the things propagated by T.V. Around (92%) boys and (72%) girls become adamant until and unless their demands were fulfilled. Only a small fraction of children did not keep any of their demands before their parents. i.e (8%) of boys and (28%) of girls. Boys are found to be more obstinate than girls are. It was observed that most of the children demand items from their parents after viewing on T.V and if parents didn't buy those things/items for their children they started crying and some started beating their mothers. This shows that T.V has put bad impact on children that they even forget discipline and manners of how to behave with parents.

**Table 5:** Reaction on not approval of items related to T.V advertisements:

Children's reaction on not getting things.	Boys N=25 (%)	Girls N=25 (%)
Start crying	5 (20%)	16 (64%)
Verbal aggression	12 (48%)	14 (56%)
Physical aggression	8 (32%)	4 (16%)
Throwing things	19 (76%)	8 (32%)
Raising voice	21 (84%)	12 (48%)
Calling names	3 (12%)	--

\*Multiple responses

The above table reveals that raising hue and cry was the reaction of most of children when they did not get the desirable things. 84% of boys and 48% girls showed this kind of attitude. It was also found that 76% of boys and 32% of girls throw things when their demands were not fulfilled. The tendency of crying was greater in girls 64% than boys (20%). It was also found that 56% of girls and 48% of boys showed verbal aggression to their parents on not fulfillment of demands. Physical aggression was seen more in boys (32%) than girls (16%). Less number of children that is boys

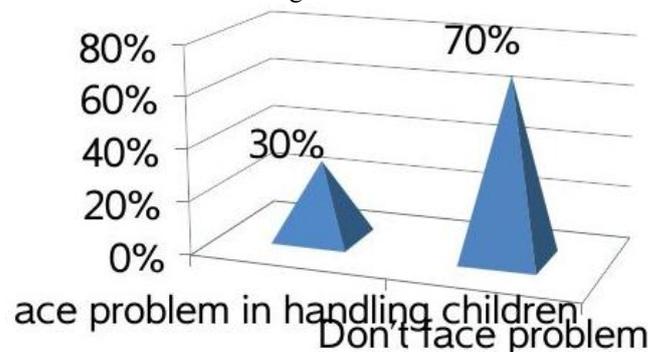
(12%) used to call bad names on not having their demands fulfilled.

**Table 6:** Late night TV watching and its effect on sleeping pattern:

Views of respondents.	N=50	%
Watch late night	9	18%
Don't watch late night	41	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Reaction of children when not allowed by parents for late night TV viewing.</b>		
Keep on insisting	7	14%
Watched secretly	2	4%
Don't watch late night	41	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Views on T.V viewing and sleeping pattern of children:</b>		
T.V watching disturbs sleep of children	19	38%
T.V watching don't disturb sleep of children	31	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table reveals that majority (82%) of mothers were of the view point that their children did not watch late night programs or movies because they have habit of sleeping early as they have to go to school early in the morning whereas (18%) mothers reported that their children watch late night programs and films. Regarding the reaction of the children when not allowed by parents for late night T.V viewing, 14% mothers reported that children keep on insisting if they don't allow them and 4% reported that children watched secretly when parents fell asleep. It was also found that those children who watch late night programs or movies become habitual of watching their favorite programs and they watch T.V for late hours i.e 12:00-1:00 am which effects their eyesight. Results also reveals that Majority 62% mothers reported that T.V viewing did not disturb the sleeping pattern of children as it has become their habit now whereas 38% mothers reported that it disturb the sleeping pattern of children. Respondents also reported that children get scared in dreams if they watch scary or fearful programs or movies before going to bed and also don't sleep at night due to fear so, they have problem in waking up early in the morning which effect their daily schedule. They also reported that children don't go to toilet alone at night if they had seen horror show or program at night.

**Table 7:** Parent's perception on problems related to T.V viewing of children:



Majority (70%) of mothers did not face problem in handling their children whereas 30% mothers faced problem. Those respondents who didn't face problems when their children

watch T.V while studying reported that their children complete their homework at proper time and children also obey their mothers so they didn't face any problem in handling their children and those who face problems in handling their children reported that children didn't concentrate on their studies as they pay more attention in watching their favorite programs and take more time in completing their home work so they have no time for learning and other school related activities which effect their academics. One of the respondent said that her child don't listen to her and don't study so she face problem in handling her child.

**Table 8:** Respondent's views on impact of T.V on children

Impact of T.V on N=50 children.		%
Positive	--	--
Negative	19	38%
Both	27	54%
None	4	8%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

The above table reveals that Majority 54% of mothers reported that T.V has both negative as well as positive impact on children whereas 38% mothers reported that it has only negative effect on the mind of children whereas remaining 8% believed that it has no positive and negative impact on the children. Educational programs like discovery, news and quiz contests has positive impact on children and low performance in the academics, unhealthy schedule of eating and other health related problems were the negative impact of T.V as responded by majority of mothers. Mothers also reported that T.V has negative impact if it is seen in excess and continuously because it interferes with their studies and have bad effect on their eyes. Their interaction with their friends also becomes low. They also adopt aggressive behavior by watching it on T.V and they should be allowed to watch informative, good and entertaining serials.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study reveals that T.V watching was preferred by all the sample children. Children were fond of T.V watching and their most favorite programs were cartoons, sports related programs and reality shows. Television viewing is a major activity and influence on children. Time spent by children in watching T.V takes them away from important activities like reading, school work, playing, exercise and family interaction. They are influenced by thousands of commercials , many of which are for junk food, fast foods and toys. Parents are the primary forces for shaping media usage by their children. So active parenting can ensure that children have a positive experience with T.V.

#### 5. Recommendation/Suggestions

- The parents should regularize the time that children spend in various daily activities, which include entertainment, education, play and other routine tasks.
- The parents should keep a watch and accompany their children, while watching T.V.

- The parents should have periodical discussions with their children regarding, what they learn from T.V viewing.
- T.V viewing is related to attention problems (Christakis and Zimmerman , 2004). So, parents should control TV viewing.
- Also it has been found that eating food along with watching TV is linked with increased food intake, indigestion and obesity, which further leads to early onset of diabetes and hypertension. So parents should control the over viewing of TV.

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