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Impact of TV viewing on children and methods adopted for preventing excessive TV viewing

Prasad Deshmukh and Jaya Bangale

Abstract

A sample of 150 rural school going children (80 male and 70 female) age ranged between 7-13 yrs were selected by following purposive random sampling method from 6 villages of Parbhani District. The data pertaining to the study were collected by personally interviewing the sample rural school going children based on open ended interview schedule cum checklist after developing rapport with them. Irrespective of gender, all the rural school going children stated that viewing different programmes on TV is a source of their recreation, they get acquainted with new information and also this is the source of getting relief. In addition to these, irrespective of gender, considerably a higher percentage of rural school going children (87-98%) specified that viewing TV programmes was beneficial in developing pro-social behavior like helping to others (95-98%), sharing (87-92%) and co-operating (92-96%). About 94-97 percent of rural school going children expressed that due to viewing various programmes on TV, they developed moral values, followed by enhanced curiosity (87-94%), for updated self (77-84%), enhanced vocabulary (82-83%), got to cultural variations (77-82%), learnt mannerism (70-80%) and also for enhanced general knowledge (55-67%). On the whole statistically no significant differences were recorded with regard to the advantages of the TV viewing reported by the rural school going children. Predominantly it was notices that causing eye strain, parental aggression and adverse effects on school performance were the disadvantages of TV viewing reported by rural school going children. Based on gender statistically no differences were found among sample rural school going children about it.

Keywords: TV programmes, advantages, disadvantages, strategies adopted

Introduction

Television has the unique feature of combining audio and visual technology and serves multiple purposes of entertainment, information, and education. TV viewing is common childhood behaviour that has been linked to a number of positive and negative outcomes. During the preschool years, children's consumption of screen media greatly increases and then remains high in future. These children will most likely to be continued to be heavy media users later in life (Rajesh *et al.*, 2014) ^[10].

Although a diverse range of factors have been found to be associated with young children's TV viewing, the home environment is particularly influential by parents beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Tinsley, 2003) ^[14]. Recent research has shown that family TV viewing is an opportunity for parental modelling and it is positively associated with children's TV viewing and that parental rules that restrict screen time are negatively associated with TV viewing among children and adolescents (Cillero and Jago, 2010; Vandewater *et al.*, 2006; Velde *et al.* 2010) ^[1, 15, 16]. Children tend to imitate the characters they watch on TV programmes or a video games because they do not distinguish between fact and fantasy until 5 yrs of age. They may accept the violence as an ordinary means to solve problems over the time. Therefore the personnel working in the area of child development and education should make parents and teachers media-literate meaning that they should comprehend the risk of exposure to violence and teach their children how to interact what they see on TV (Wood *et al.*, 2013; Drzal *et al.*, 2014) ^[17, 3]. Excessive television viewing leads to multiple health problems i.e. physical and psychological problems among children. As children are found to be spending more time on TV viewing, its decreasing their amount of time available for pursuing other more constructive activities such as sports, physical activities, community service, cultural pursuits, reading and family time. There is growing literature about impact of electronic media exposure on attention, memory, executive functions, language and communication, visual-spatial processing, reasoning, socio-emotional functioning, poor school performance, disturbed sleep pattern, highest rate of violence.

In this context parents are the first line of control and contact for their children. The use of media by parents and the provision of it for children play an important role (Darlington *et al.*, 2018) [2]. Therefore proper media parenting is now not only the need of the hour but also an unavoidable activity in day to day life. For this, a multitude of approach starting from paediatricians, school teachers, psychologists to policy makers, media awareness programme is needed for fostering the media parenting and prevent the media related hazards on children in long term prospect. (Sahoo *et al.*, 2021) [11]

Earlier mostly studies oriented to TV viewing pattern of urban area based children had been conducted. Hence there is a paucity of rural based studies on above mentioned topic. In light of above facts it is felt necessary to study the advantages and disadvantages of TV viewing on rural school going children.

Methodology

A sample of 150 rural school going children (80 male and 70 female) age ranged between 7-13 yrs were selected by following purposive random sampling method from 6 villages of Parbhani District. The data pertaining to the study were collected by personally interviewing the sample rural school going children based on open ended interview schedule cum checklist after developing rapport with them. Similarly all the sample children's parents also were interviewed based on the open ended interview schedule cum checklist for obtaining information additionally required for the study. The data thus collected were pooled, tabulated, statistically analysed and discussed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 reveals about background information of the sample rural school going children. Irrespective of gender, relatively a higher percentage of them (Girls 61% and Boys 53%) were found to be in the age group of 7 to 10 yrs followed by 10 to 13 yrs (Girls 39% and Boys 47%). Irrespective of their gender, about 54 to 60 percent of the sample rural school going children were found to be first born followed by last born (25-31%) and middle born (14-16%). With regard to their type of family, it was recorded that irrespective of gender relatively a higher percentage of the sample children hailed from nuclear families (55-71%) followed by joint families (20-40%) and extended families (4-9%). About 41 to 48 percent of the sample rural school going children belonged to the small family size followed by the middle size (30-34%) and large size (22-24%) families. With respect to the timings of rural school going children, it was observed that relatively a higher percentage of the sample children's school timings were from 10.00 to 16.00 hr (70-75%) followed by from 9.00 to 15.30 hr (11-14%), from 7.30 to 12.30 hr (3-11%) and 12.30 to 17.00 hr (7-9%). With respect to the family SES, it was observed that irrespective of gender about 67 to 70 percent of them belonged to upper lower socio-economic status, while 15 to 16 percent of them belonged to lower middle socio-economic status followed by lower socio-economic status (6-10%). However about 4 to 10 percent of them observed to be in upper middle socio-economic status.

Table 2 reveals about availability of TV connection and its arrangement at sample rural school going children's homes. The results of the study clearly indicate that about 50 percent each rural school going boys were recorded to be having Direct-To-Home (DTH) free dish. DD Free Dish DTH service is owned and operated by Public Service Broadcaster Prasar

Bharati. This is the only Free-To-Air (FTA) DTH service where there is no monthly subscription from the viewer's fee (<https://prasarbharati.gov.in>). Whereas in case of rural school going girls, it was found that 51 percent of them had DTH free dish and remaining 49 percent had DTH paid dish. With reference to the place of TV in sample rural school going children's home, irrespective of gender, a higher percentage of them (71-75%) had their TV set in living rooms.

However despite of having recommendations of American Psychological Association (APA) and Indian Pediatric Society (IPS) for keeping TV sets away from the bedrooms, about 25-28 percent of rural school going children's TV sets were found to be in bedrooms. Even though the ideal distance of viewing TV programme is considered to be 8-10 ft, irrespective of gender, a higher percentage of rural school going children used to view it by maintaining 5-7 ft distance. Whereas majority of the rural school going children (40%) and 25 percent boys were recorded to view TV programmes by maintaining less than 5ft distance from TV sets. Which might cause some visual problems to them. However 17.00 percent rural school going girls and 24.00 percent boys were found to be viewing TV programmes by maintaining more than 7ft distance from TV sets. However as compared to the rural boys significantly a higher percentage of rural girls were found to be viewing TV programmes by maintaining less than 5ft distance from TV sets.

Table 3 and Fig. 1 exhibit about the advantages of the TV viewing by the rural school going children. Irrespective of gender, all the rural school going children stated that viewing different programmers on TV is a source of their recreation, they get acquainted with new information and also this is the source of getting relief. In addition to these, irrespective of gender, considerably a higher percentage of rural school going children (87-98%) specified that viewing TV programmers was beneficial in developing pro-social behavior like helping to others (95-98%), sharing (87-92%) and co-operating (92-96%).

About 94-97 percent of rural school going children expressed that due to viewing various programmes on TV, they developed moral values, followed by enhanced curiosity (87-94%), for updated self (77-84%), enhanced vocabulary (82-83%), got to cultural variations (77-82%), learnt mannerism (70-80%) and also for enhanced general knowledge (55-67%). Further considerably a higher percentage of rural school going girls (80.00% each) expressed that due to viewing TV programmes they created interest in arts and craft activities followed by developing interest in outdoor play (40.00%). The corresponding percentage of their counterparts rural school going boys were observed to be 50.00, 73.75 and 52.50. Whereas 22-24 percent rural school going children also claimed that after viewing certain programmes on TV they developed interest in musical instruments. On the whole statistically no significant differences were recorded with regard to the advantages of the TV viewing reported by the rural school going children. Some of these findings are in line with the results reported by Mirium Bar-on (2000) [9], Jusoff (2009) [8] and Singh (2014) [13].

Disadvantages of viewing TV programmes reported by children are illustrated in Table 4 and Fig.2. Irrespective of gender, about 52-56 percent rural school going children reported that they developed eye strain due to excessive TV viewing. Where as 55-57 percent of them expressed that, as they enjoy viewing various TV programmes, they do not want to study. Further about 45-50 percent of them stated that due to viewing TV programmes, their interest in doing household

chores is remarkably reduced and even they lost their interest in playing outdoor games (22-37%). As most of the adverse effects of prolonged TV viewing, there is a great need to develop awareness about it. In addition to these, 41-44 percent of them revealed that, their extreme TV viewing was a cause for their parental aggression towards them. Besides these majority of them (41-42%) also disclosed that their unrestrained TV viewing affected their school performance. Predominantly it was noticed that causing eye strain, parental aggression and adverse effects on school performance were the disadvantages of TV viewing reported by rural school going children. Based on gender statistically no differences were found among sample rural going children about it. General practices adopted by the parents for monitoring TV viewing to their children are illustrated in Table 5. A higher percentage of sample rural school going boys parents were stated that while monitoring TV viewing of their sons they

used to shout at them, whenever their sons found viewing TV programmes excessively. The other strategies adopted by these parents were recorded to be switching off TV (18.75%), beating (15.00%), changing channels (11.25%) and unplugging TV cables (8.75%). However a very few parents (6-25%) expressed that they used to convince their sons for not viewing TV programmes immoderately for avoiding its harmful effects. The corresponding percentages of their counterparts rural school going girls parents were noticed to be 37.14, 12.86, 10.00, 11.43, 7.14 and 4.28. Shouting to offsprings for controlling their excessive TV viewing was found to be the common practice adopted by the parents of rural school going children. However as compared to the rural girls significantly a higher percentage of rural school going boys parents were observed to be shouting to their sons for controlling them from excessive TV viewing.

Table 1: Background information of the rural school going children

Background variables	Percentages of rural school going children	
	Boys (80)	Girls (70)
Age (yrs)		
07-10	52.50(42)	61.43(43)
10-13	47.50(38)	38.57(27)
Ordinal position		
First born	60.00(48)	54.29(38)
Middle born	15.00(12)	14.29(10)
Last born	25.00(20)	31.42(22)
Family type		
Nuclear	71.25(57)	55.71(39)
Joint	20.00(16)	40.00(28)
Extended	08.75(07)	04.29(03)
Family size		
Small	47.50(38)	41.43(29)
Middle	30.00(24)	34.29(24)
Large	22.50(18)	24.28(17)
Socio-economic Status		
Upper middle	10.00(08)	04.29(03)
Lower middle	16.25(13)	15.61(11)
Upper lower	67.50(54)	70.00(49)
Lower	06.25(05)	10.00(07)
School timings		
7:30 to 12:30 hrs	11.25(09)	02.86(02)
9:00 to 15:30 hrs	11.25(09)	14.28(10)
10:00 to 16:00 hrs	70.00(56)	74.29(52)
12:30 to 17:00 hrs	07.50(06)	08.57(06)

Figures in parentheses indicate number of the rural school going children

Table 2: Availability of TV connections and their arrangements in rural school going children’s homes

TV viewing habits	Percentages of rural school going children (150)		
	Boys (80) (a)	Girls (70)(b)	Z values Vs b
Availability of TV connections			
DTH free dish	50.00(40)	51.43(36)	00.08 ^{NS}
DTH paid dish	50.00(40)	48.57(34)	00.17 ^{NS}
Place of TV sets			
Living room	75.00(60)	71.50(50)	00.47 ^{NS}
Bed room	25.00(20)	28.50(20)	00.21 ^{NS}
Distance from TV sets maintained for viewing TV programmes (Ft)			
Less than 5	25.00(20)	40.00(28)	02.14*
Between 5-7	51.25(41)	42.86(30)	01.12 ^{NS}
More than 7	23.75(19)	17.14(12)	01.00 ^{NS}

Figures in parentheses indicate number of the rural school going children

*-Significant at 5% level NS-Non Significant

Table 3: Advantages of the TV viewing reported by the rural school going children

Advantages of the TV viewing	Percentages of rural school going children (150)		
	Boys (a) (80)	Girls (b) (70)	Z values a Vs b
Source of			
Recreation	100.00(80)	100.00(70)	---
Information	100.00(80)	100.00(70)	---
Relief	100.00(80)	100.00(70)	---
Pro-social development			
Helping	98.75(79)	95.71(67)	01.00 ^{NS}
Sharing	87.50(70)	92.86(65)	01.00 ^{NS}
Cooperating	96.25(77)	92.86(65)	01.02 ^{NS}
Helped in enhancing			
Vocabulary	83.75(67)	82.86(58)	00.16 ^{NS}
General knowledge	67.50(54)	55.71(39)	01.50 ^{NS}
Curiosity	87.50(70)	94.29(66)	01.49 ^{NS}
Mannerism	70.00(56)	80.00(56)	01.43 ^{NS}
Moral values	97.50(78)	94.29(66)	01.00 ^{NS}
For updating self	77.50(62)	84.29(59)	01.16 ^{NS}
Got exposure to cultural variations	77.50(62)	82.86(58)	00.93 ^{NS}
Generated interest in			
Arts and craft activities	50.00(40)	80.00(56)	03.14 ^{**}
Musical instruments	22.50(18)	24.29(17)	00.29 ^{NS}
Grooming	73.75(59)	80.00(56)	01.03 ^{NS}
Outdoor play	52.50(42)	40.00(28)	01.50 ^{NS}

Figures in parentheses indicate number of the rural school going children

** - Significant at 1% level NS - Non Significant

Table 4: Disadvantages of viewing TV programmes reported by rural school going children

Disadvantages of the TV viewing	Percentages of rural school going children (150)		
	Boys (80)	Girls (70)	Z values a Vs b
Caused eye strain due to excessive screen time	56.25(45)	52.85(37)	00.49 ^{NS}
Parental aggression	53.75(43)	54.29(38)	00.12 ^{NS}
Affected school performance	41.25(33)	44.28(31)	00.24 ^{NS}
A cause for lack of time for studying and completing school assignments	41.25(33)	42.85(30)	00.08 ^{NS}
Affected eating habits	36.25(29)	41.42(29)	00.62 ^{NS}
Became demanding	36.25(29)	38.57(27)	00.25 ^{NS}
Developed aggression	32.50(26)	40.00(28)	01.02 ^{NS}
Arrogant behaviour	25.00(20)	12.85(09)	00.89 ^{NS}
Promoted negative behaviour	22.50(18)	21.45(15)	00.40 ^{NS}
Reduced physical activities	15.00(12)	07.15(05)	00.52 ^{NS}
Fear	07.50(06)	07.15(04)	---
Reduced interest in			
Reading	65.00(52)	57.14(40)	01.00 ^{NS}
Study	55.00(44)	57.14(40)	00.18 ^{NS}
Doing household chores	50.00(40)	47.14(33)	00.37 ^{NS}
Outdoor play	22.50(18)	37.14(26)	01.10 ^{NS}
Caring of younger siblings	07.50(06)	05.71(04)	00.53 ^{NS}

Figures in parentheses indicate number of the rural school going children

NS - Non Significant

Table 5: General practices adopted by the parents for monitoring TV viewing of their rural school going children

Practices adopted for monitoring TV viewing of children	Gender and Percentages of rural school going children (150)		
	Boys (80) a	Girls (70) b	Z values a Vs b
Shouting	56.25(45)	37.14(26)	02.37*
Switching off TV	18.75(15)	12.86(09)	01.20 ^{NS}
Beating	15.00(12)	10.00(07)	01.00 ^{NS}
Changing channels	11.25(09)	11.43(08)	---
Unplugging TV cables	08.75(07)	07.14(05)	00.25 ^{NS}
Convincing him/her to switch off TV	06.25(05)	04.28(03)	00.66 ^{NS}

Figures in parentheses indicate number of the rural school going children

* - Significant at 5% NS - Non Significant

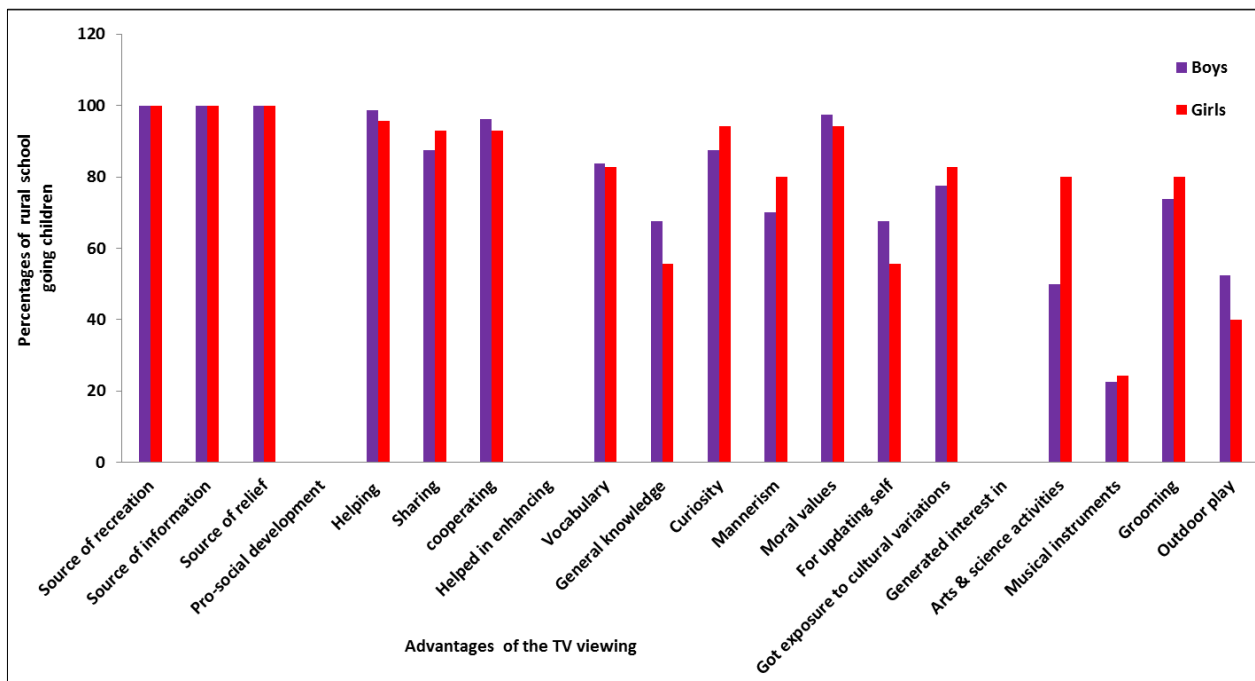


Fig 1: Advantages of viewing TV programmers reported by the rural school going children

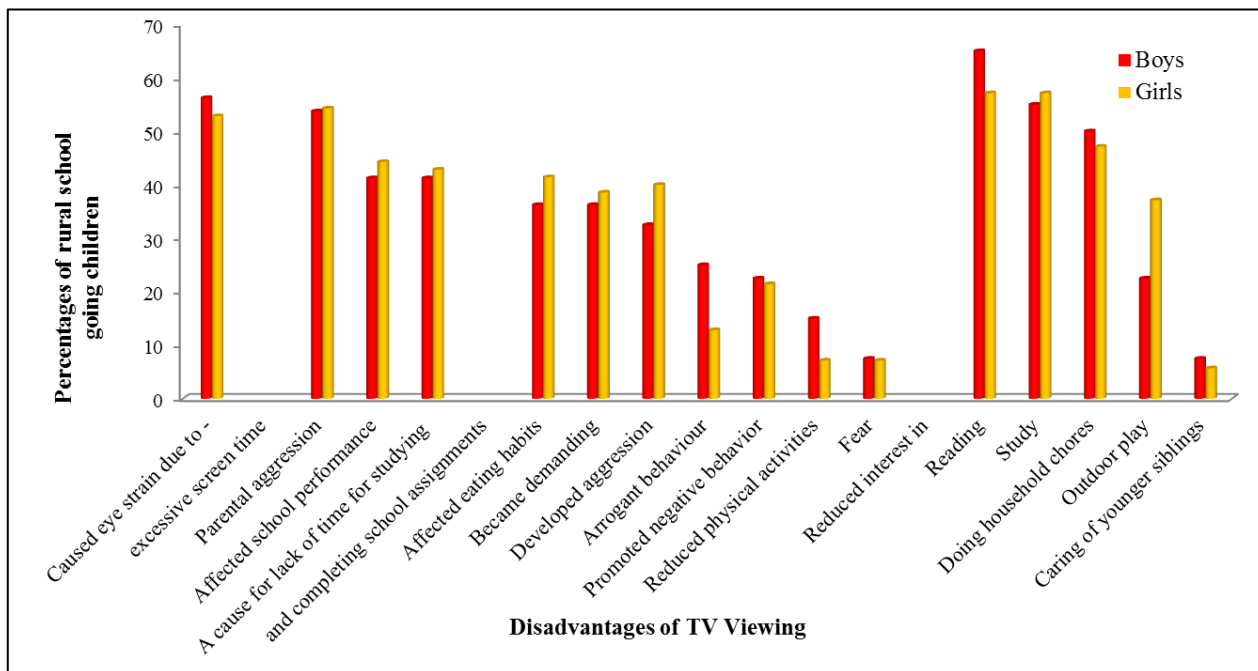


Fig 2: Disadvantages of viewing TV programmes reported by rural school going children

Conclusion

Irrespective of gender, all the rural school going children stated that viewing different programmes on TV is a source of their recreation, they get acquainted with new information and also this is the source of getting relief. In addition to these, irrespective of gender, considerably a higher percentage of rural school going children (87-98%) specified that viewing TV programmes was beneficial in developing pro-social behavior like helping to others (95-98%), sharing (87-92%) and co-operating (92-96%). About 94-97 percent of rural school going children expressed that due to viewing various programmes on TV, they developed moral values, followed by enhanced curiosity (87-94%), for updated self (77-84%), enhanced vocabulary (82-83%), got to cultural variations (77-82%), learnt mannerism (70-80%) and also for enhanced general knowledge (55-67%). On the whole statistically no

significant differences were recorded with regard to the advantages of the TV viewing reported by the rural school going children. Predominantly it was notices that causing eye strain, parental aggression and adverse effects on school performance were the disadvantages of TV viewing reported by rural school going children. Based on gender statistically no differences were found among sample rural going children about it.

Shouting to off springs for controlling their excessive TV viewing was found to be the common practice adopted by the parents of rural school going children. However as compared to the rural girls significantly a higher percentage of rural school going boys parents were observed to be shouting to their sons for controlling them from excessive TV viewing.

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