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TELEVISION CHANNELS

Whenever you are hungry, you look up to your mother to provide you with something really delicious. But imagine what will happen if your mother serves you the same *chapati* and *daal* every day. You will definitely get bored. That is why we feel many a times to have food in restaurants or also try to make different dishes at home itself. The variety helps us choose the food according to our taste and mood.

Now imagine, if we had only one channel in our television sets offering us only two or three programmes on a daily basis ? That was how it used to be in the mid seventies when Doordarshan used to broadcast only black and white programmes for a few hours only. People who owned television sets would wait for the time to switch on the television. Today, we are fortunate enough to have a varied range of television channels offering us different programmes. Improved technology has changed the world of television.

In this lesson, you will learn about the various categories of television channels available in our country and the types of programmes telecast through them.



OBJECTIVES

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

- classify different categories of television channels;
- differentiate between various types of television programmes;
- enlist various programme formats available on television.

15.1 DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF TELEVISION CHANNELS

You must have sometimes wondered if variety is the only reason to have so many types of television channels? The fact is that television keeps all types of audiences in mind whether they are children, women, youth, elderly, farmers, industrial workers, students or even illiterates and thus offers a number of channels for everyone.

Television telecasts many such programmes that are audience specific – these are known as special audience programmes like children’s programmes, women’s programmes, youth programmes and educational/school telecasts.

Keeping the target audience in mind, these special programmes are planned, fulfilling the desires of specific groups. In case of children’s programmes, stories, music, games and general knowledge are available. In women’s programmes, tips on cooking, sewing, legal problems etc. are given. In the case of farmers programmes, subjects on agriculture, dairy farming, poultry, cooperative activities etc. are adequately covered.

The youth programme has a separate format which provides for discussion on the problems, desires and requirements of the youth, generally presented by young anchors and for the young audience. Now let us discuss the different categories of television channels available with us.

News Channels

What comes to your mind when you see the word news? If we were to answer this question 10-15 years back, we may have said that news bulletins are telecast at night. But today, the answer would be news channels showing news round the clock.

Initially news on television meant a bulletin of half an hour or one hour usually telecast at the prime time comprising the top stories of the day. But today the meaning and definition of news has changed considerably. There are various programmes, various formats and a number of ways in which the news is being broadcast.



Fig. 15.1

News may be defined as something that is new or information about recent events or latest happenings, especially as reported by newspapers, periodicals, radio, or television. But news has today come to mean much more. Just a little over a decade ago, only one television channel used to give us news and current affairs – that is, the sober old Doordarshan.



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At present, we have more than half a dozen news channels in Hindi. Some of them are Aaj Tak, Star News, Zee News, NDTV India, Sahara Samay and ETV. There are English news channels which include NDTV 24x7, CNBC-TV18, Times Now and Headlines Today. In addition there are channels in all other major languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya and Urdu.

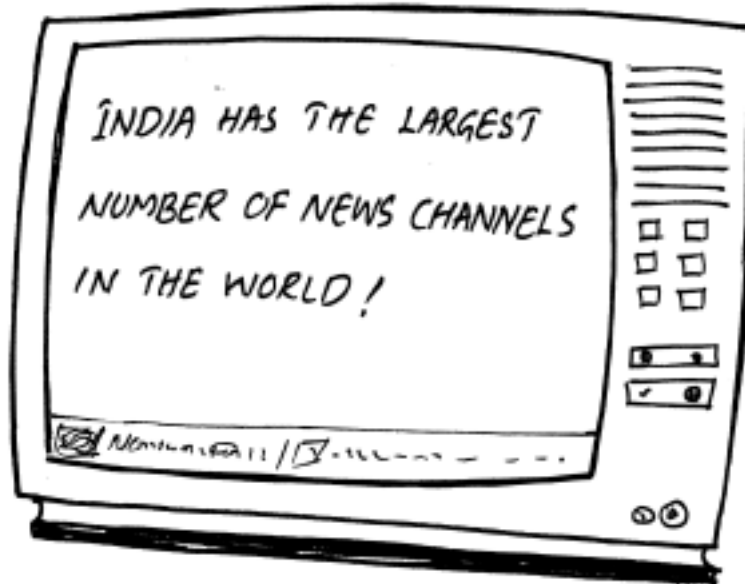


Fig. 15.2

Sports Channels

Have you ever seen a live cricket match on television? Or for that matter a football tournament? Apart from news channels, another important category of television channels are sports channels.



Fig. 15.3: Sports channels



Sports channels are television specialty channels that broadcast sporting events like twenty-20 world cup- usually live, and when not broadcasting live events, they offer sports news and other related programmes. There are some channels that focus on only one sport, in particular or one specific region of a country, showing only their local team's games.

Do you know?

The first sports channel was from the Sports Channel networks in US. ESPN began broadcasting in 1979.

These channels have greatly improved the availability of sports broadcasts, generating opportunities, such as the option to see every single sport our team plays in any part of the world.

The concept of sports channels is also not that old. Earlier, you might even remember that in India many serials were not telecast at their routine timings because the cricket match was to be shown live. Today this is surely not the case. We now have exclusive sports channels which telecast live sports events thereby not hampering the schedule of other popular fiction and entertainment programmes available on other channels. What to watch is definitely the viewers' choice always.

Cartoon Channels

Do you have any younger sister or brother at home? Ask them which is their favourite channel on television. Well, their answer would probably be Pogo or Cartoon Network. The most popular category of television channels among kids are the cartoon channels.

Cartoon Network India is the most popular cartoon-dedicated television channel in India. It airs English, Tamil and Hindi-dubbed versions of a variety of cartoons, including traditional Cartoon Network programmes featuring Tom and Jerry, Scooby-Doo and Popeye the Sailor.

Programmes also include the superhero series including Superman: The Animated Series, Batman: The Animated Series and Justice League Unlimited, Pokémon, Beyblade, Xiaolin Showdown, Digimon, Duel Masters, Transformers: The Unicron Trilogy and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.



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Fig. 15.4: Cartoon channel

Cartoon Network has also aired a few Indian-made cartoons, featuring '*Akbar and Birbal*', '*Tenali Raman*', '*Sindbad*', '*Ramayan*', '*Mahabharata*' and '*Vikram and Betal*'.

Entertainment and Lifestyle Channels

Have you ever seen the coloured supplement that comes along with your newspaper? It has stories related to films, actors, home decors and other entertainment related items. In television also there are channels dedicated to subjects such as home, garden, kitchen and family.

These are called lifestyle channels and they offer a variety of programmes catering to various lifestyle conditions and patterns. Stylised anchors, well decorated and lit up sets, mesmerising locations and a cool attitude is how these channels can be best described. To know what your favourite celebrity likes or dislikes, you may watch the lifestyle channel. Zoom and Discovery's Travel and Living are some of the lifestyle channels.

Science and Discovery related channels

Just like sports channels offer a variety of programmes related to sports, science channels feature only science-related television shows. Each day has specialised blocks that cover certain topics such as weather, technology and space.

If you want to learn about dinosaurs, snakes, tigers, waterfalls, nature, scientific inventions and discoveries, science channels like National Geographic and Discovery are a must for you.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.1**

1. Tick mark the appropriate answer from the choices given :
 - i) Channels dedicated to the subjects of home, garden and family :
 - a) science channels
 - b) news channels
 - c) sports channels
 - d) lifestyle channels
 - ii) The most popular category of television channels among children :
 - a) news channels
 - b) sports channels
 - c) cartoon channels
 - d) lifestyle channels
 - iii) Which of the following is a news channel?
 - a) Discovery Channel
 - b) NDTV 24x7
 - c) ESPN
 - d) Zoom
2. List any two types of television channels. Give one example of each.

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3. Give five examples of entertainment programmes on television.

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15.2 TYPES OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Now we all know that there are different categories of television channels. Depending upon our mood, interests and other requirements, we select and watch the channels. Various programmes that are offered on these channels serve different purposes. Some programmes are used to inform the people, some to entertain the masses and others to educate the community. Time and again it has been proved that the television has provoked and persuaded the common people. Many of us have an emotional involvement with this medium.

Providing information, entertainment and education is the basic objective of television. Our priority changes from time to time and so does the channel that we select at a given moment. With time, new words like 'infotainment' and 'edutainment' have crept in, but in both the cases entertainment is common and that is what has become the main role of television.

Informative Programmes

Very often, we get to know a lot of things through television programmes. What is happening where? Which exhibition will be held and until when? Who has been declared the best sportsperson of the year?

Well, programmes whose main aim is to provide information to its viewers are termed as informative programmes. Different types of informative programmes are:

- **News and Current Affairs Programmes:** For eg. *News bulletins, news commentaries - direct coverage of proceedings of important events, news based interviews and panel discussions.*
- **Sports Programmes:** for eg. *Cricket matches, sports diaries, sports commentary.*
- **Cookery shows, food related programmes** eg. *Cook it up with Tarla Dalal, Khana Khazana, Mirch Masala.*
- Programmes imparting information related to contemporary environmental issues, scientific and technological inventions and discoveries and economic policies like *Surabhi, Bharat ek Khoj.*

Entertainment Programmes

Do you always watch television because you want to know something? Surely not. The most important reason why most of us watch television is to be entertained.

Apart from programmes that provide us with information, there are a number of programmes on television that entertain us. These programmes are known as entertainment programmes.



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Examples of entertainment programmes are:

- **Serials, soap operas, dramas and plays** like: *Junoon*, *Ghar ek Mandir*, *Kyunki saas bhi kabhi bahu thi*, *Banu mein teri dulhan*.
- **Comedy shows** like *laughter challenge*, *comedy circus*.
- **Musical programmes**: Light music programmes, classical music programmes like *Ghazal Goshthi*
- **Game shows** like *Master Card Family Fortune*
- **Chat shows** like *Koffee with Karan*, *Oye, its Friday!*, *Jeena isi ka naam hai*.
- **Cartoons** like *Tom and Jerry*
- **Fairy tales/ fantasy based programmes** like *Alladin ka Chirag*
- **Horror shows** like *Aahat*
- **Reality television shows** like *Indian Idol*, *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* and *Voice of India*.

Educational Programmes

Do you know that television can be an excellent teacher as well. It can act as an effective tool of distance education. You have learnt about *Gyandarshan* which is the educational channel of Doordarshan in your earlier lesson. Programmes telecast through this channel is a perfect example of educational programmes. Programmes that come under this category are:

- Open university and distance learning programmes (UGC and IGNOU)
- **Social and development programmes**: Health and science, fitness and hygiene, agriculture and rural development programmes, public service telecasts, literacy campaigns, family planning and welfare.
- **Culture and gender studies programmes** : Programmes related to literature, arts, theatre, cultural heritage and gender sensitisation.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.2

1. Tick mark the appropriate answer from the choices given
 - i) Culture and gender studies programmes are a type of-
 - a) entertainment programmes
 - b) educational programmes
 - c) informative programmes
 - d) none of these



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- ii) Comedy shows are a type of :
 - a) educational programme
 - b) informative programme
 - c) entertainment programme
 - d) none of the above
 - iii) Cookery shows can be classified as :
 - a) educational programme
 - b) entertainment programme
 - c) informative programme
 - d) none of the above
2. Give three examples of informative programmes which you like to see on television.

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15.3 DIFFERENT FORMATS OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Man needs variety in his life, whether in taking food, getting dressed, making friends or even selecting entertainment. Here in television also we go by the saying 'variety is the spice of life'.

Many times while watching television you must have thought that some programmes are a work of the director's imagination while others appear to be real life experiences. This is very true because on one hand we have programmes which are based on imagination and on the other hand, we have programmes that are based on real incidents and events. Thus, we have two broad formats of television programmes which we shall discuss here.

- Fiction Programmes
- Non Fiction Programmes

Fiction programmes

Almost all the fiction programmes that depend on imagination and dramatization are meant for entertaining the audiences. Drama/ soap operas like *Humlog*, *Ghar*

MASS COMMUNICATION

ek Mandir, Kyunki saas bhi kbahi bahu thi are ongoing, episodic works of fiction.

Do you now?

The name soap opera stems from the original dramatic serials broadcast on radio that had soap manufacturers as the show's sponsors.

How often do people in your house fight for the remote ? Why does this happen? Your mother wanted to see a serial but your sister preferred something else. Your father wanted to see the news while you wanted to see the cricket match. And ultimately your mother managed to win the slot as everyone agreed to watch the daily serial. Serials in television are series, often in a weekly prime time slot, that rely on a continuing plot and unfolds in a serial fashion episode by episode.

Interestingly, many film-based programmes with a mixture of fiction and song/segments of film clippings etc are also available these days on television which blend various formats into one.

Non-fiction programmes

Apart from different serials and other entertaining works of fiction, you must have watched programmes on television that provide a lot of information regarding various events that take place in our surroundings and also impart education on contemporary issues. Let us now discuss the various non-fiction programmes available on television.

News Bulletins: News bulletins essentially present a summary of news stories in their order of importance and interest. National and international happenings get the pride of place, while regional and local news are read out if time permits. Human interest stories and sports news generally round off the major bulletins. News bulletins in English, Hindi and various regional languages are presented on Doordarshan.

But with the advent of 24-hour news channels, half an hour bulletins are no longer popular. Rather the news has taken the 24X7 format where it is presented almost instantly as and when events occur.

Game/Quiz Show: You may have seen Derek O'Brien presenting the most popular quiz programme, called Bournvita Quiz Contest (BQC) telecast every Sunday afternoon. Beginning with the Bournvita jingles, the programme gets off the ground quickly and moves at a hectic pace, taking the audience along with it.. It's the sense of participation and involvement in the quiz questions that makes the quiz programme an enjoyable family fare.

Talks and Discussion Programmes: There are many issues which are of importance and concern to us happening in our society. Reporting them through news alone is not enough. Several factors and viewpoints of experts help us to gain an insight into these issues. Talks and discussion programmes about topical issues are thus a very important format of television programming. Most of these



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shows feature a regular host, who interviews guest speakers. Typically, it includes an element of audience participation, usually by broadcasting conversations with listeners who have placed telephone calls to speak with the programme's host or guest. Generally, the shows are organized into segments which are separated by a break for advertisements. Examples of such programmes include 'We the people' and 'Muqabla'.



15.4 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

→ Different categories of television channels

- news channel
- sports channel
- cartoon channel
- entertainment and lifestyle channel
- science and discovery channel

Types of television programmes

- informative
- entertaining
- educational

Different programme formats

- Fiction : serials, film based programmes
- Non-fiction: News bulletins, game/ quiz show, talks and discovery programmes



15.6 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Discuss the various categories of television channels in detail giving examples.
2. What are the various types of television programmes? Explain with examples.
3. Which is your favorite television programme and favourite television channel and why? To which category does it belong to ?
4. Describe the various types of television programme formats.



15.7 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 15.1** 1. 1. i) (d) ii) (c) iii) (b)
2. i) News channel – example –Zee News
ii) Sports channel – example- ESPN
iii) Any other
3. Refer to section 15.1

- 15.2** 1. i) (b) ii) (c) iii) (c)
2. Refer to section 15.2