



Impact Of Web Series And Television On The Minds Of The Indian Viewers Ranging From The Age Group Of 20 To 60 Years

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Abstract: Mass media occupies a significant part of our time and can definitely be considered instrumental in changing the attitudes and habits of the masses. There has been a rapid shift in the number of viewers from traditional to digital platforms yet. This paper highlights the hours spent on watching web series and television shows by the viewers, the reasons what got them watching in the first place. To assess the kind and the degree of impact it has on their minds Likert scale was used. The sample size was restricted to the age group of 20 to 60 years. It can be concluded by saying that the kind of situation or environment around the viewers significantly impacts his viewership, the content preferred and the kind of shows which the person chooses to see also leaves behind a significant impact on their minds and also impacts their line of actions.

Index Terms -violence, addiction, information, peer pressure, partner.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term mass media refers to a diverse range of media technologies that are designed to reach out to a larger section of audiences. Predominantly there are six different types of mass media platforms comprising of traditional media, print media, electronic broadcasting media, outdoor media, transit media and digital media or new media. Over the years with the rapid development in technologies associated with mass media, various platforms of entertainment are continuously emerging. Viewers belonging to different age groups coming from various walks of life are entertaining the idea of entertainment from traditional as well as digital media platforms. While most of the viewers belonging to the older age group are more comfortable with traditional media platforms the younger generation is rapidly increasing their affinity towards digital media. Previously in case of traditional media such as radio or television, communication was mostly one way round process where occasionally at the end of a particular show fan mails were read out but in case of digital media it ensures two way communications where the viewers can immediately share their feedback on the content. Applications like Facebook live and Youtube live ensure that the viewers get to see live content of the scenario rather than viewing clips of previously recorded information. This is done to ensure a greater engagement of the viewers enabling them to be able to analyse the situation better and make it more engaging. In this regard (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), had mentioned that mass media occupies a significant part of our time and can definitely be considered instrumental in changing the attitudes and habits of the masses.

According to a recent study conducted by (Statistica 2018), India ranks ninth in the world, when the percentage of internet users who watch online video content on any device is analysed. (Statistica 2018), had pointed out that roughly 85 percent of the people in India are engaged in the watching online video content on any devices but the percentage share rapidly decreases when the percentage of internet users who watch online video content every day is calculated. India stands at the thirteenth position with 33 percent of the viewers who watch online video content on a daily basis. This study is extremely interesting to look at as it shows that in case of India the online digital media and online streaming services are still gaining grounds and there still is a significant share of viewers who still views content on traditional media platforms. This finding was further supported by a report published by (The Economic Times Bureau 2019), were they had predicted that almost eighty percent of the viewers are expected to shift to the online streaming apps such as Amazon Prime, Netflix and Hotsar but their viewing habits have also altered their lifestyle.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been ongoing debates pertaining to the impact of mass media on the lives of different people; the importance of the issue has been gaining momentum with the improvement in technology and predominance of digital media. Now-a-days indeed the world has become a global village where even if things are unattainable in the real world but their absence is not really felt by the masses as the viewers have a chance to experience those same things and partially fulfil their aspirations in the virtual world. Viewers now refer to themselves as “netizens”. Previously people used to say that it is not good to be a couch potato rather it is healthier to go out but now-a-days it has become more of a fashion statement, as an increasing percentage share of today’s youth likes to relax and unwind in front of their screens. (Canadian Paediatric Society 2003), (Amedie 2015), had mentioned that media has a significant influence on the psychological development of the youth as it has become an integral part of human lives but the kind of impact mass media would leave on the minds of the people depends upon the audience who choose to view the show, the content of the show, the perception and understanding viewers garner about the show. Shows focussing on travelogues, pro-social messages, various debate sessions tends to leave a much more positive and informative impact on the minds of the viewers rather than shows focussing on violence, criminal and paranormal activities which tends to leave behind a relatively dark and negative impact. A similar line of thought was expressed by (Koravi 2019). In a recent article published by (Rothwell 2019), the author has mentioned about research showing the type of a show a viewer views shapes the way the person thinks and his ability to comprehend a situation. (Tsfati and Cohen 2013), has also expressed a similar line of thought by saying that the type of information one consumes also shapes that perception that person has about the world but has also argued that the impact is also dependent on the people generating the news. In this context the authors had taken up the case of a news channel generating wrong information which can mislead and deceive the viewers. (Canadian Paediatric Society 2003), (Tsfati and Cohen 2013), has also raised a similar question on the validity of the information which is shared through these mediums; as the context of validity is dependent upon the character and intention of people generating it.

People now claim that the line between reality and virtual reality are starting to blur. (Koravi 2019), has mentioned that the younger generation are more likely to learn from the negative side shown in the web series adding on to this argument (Rothwell 2019), has also stressed upon the point that shows which are solely for entertainment purpose can have negative effects on children whereas high quality shows can be quiet educational. In this aspect it can be said that by watching content on internet and television for even as low as thirty minutes can also have ill effects on a person as it can lead to the loss of productive time. Scholars (Koravi 2019), (Rothwell 2019) has also pointed out that such web series leave behind a significant impact on the various skill developmental activities and outdoor activities of the youth, as they are more likely to adapt whatever is shown on the series, it also kills time and tends to divert the available time towards relatively unproductive work. (Siddiqui and Tajinder 2016), (Talaue, et al. 2018), (Abbas, et al. 2019), had also mentioned that it also hampers the time spent on education, as the viewers tend to get more diverted towards the virtual worlds they constantly think about it and misuse the time allocated for the purpose of studies. Previously (Rothwell 2019), (Canadian Paediatric Society 2003), (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), had given a detailed study based on the effect of various television shows on the minds of different viewers. Different scholars like (Canadian Paediatric Society 2003), (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), have discussed about the nature of violence shown on these shows, adversely affecting the mind of the younger generation and children are more vulnerable. (Siddiqui and Tajinder 2016), has mentioned that the many viewers also tend to learn various abuses after watching a particular show. This explanation matches with the “Cultivation Theory” (Mosharafa 2015), where the symbolic world of media and virtual reality shapes the viewer’s conception of the real world. However in this context (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), had tried to analyse the situation by stating that according to the “Catharsis Theory” (Glaab 2008), the mood of a person also reflects the type of things he or she chooses to watch and if a person is in a vexed mood ends up watching violent shows to release his pent up emotion. “Reinforcement Theory” (MEDIA 2015), states that violent portrayals which are aired on a show also increase the likelihood and preference for violence and aggressiveness among the viewers.

Some of the other ill effects pertain to the increase in cholesterol level among the viewers, eating deficiency disorders to fit into a typical stereotypic figure as publicized by media. Other than this the viewers also gets exposed to various abnormalities which in due course of time become pretty normal to imitate and later on become a lifestyle choice for many. Over the years it has become a fashion statement and people tend to understand that it is perfectly normal to behave in the abnormal way and based on it the definitions of normalities and abnormalities are also changing fast. The things which were treated as taboos in the past are now practiced without a second thought. This change cannot be categorised into the absolute positive or negative category as it has several undertones and layers to it. The impacts of this online and offline cannot be delimited to just a few areas of life but it has also spread to an array of things ranging from the dietary habits, behavioural pattern, dialectics, shopping patterns, issues pertaining to intellectual property, education and business. Binge watching is also one such trait where the viewers tend to watch multiple episodes of a particular show in a single sitting. (Ahmed 2017), had mentioned that it results in obesity as the viewers tend to consume large amounts of food within a short span of time causing depressive symptoms, low self esteem, a feeling of being compelled to watch something, energy loss.

(Canadian Paediatric Society 2003), (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), (Siddiqui and Tajinder 2016), (Koravi 2019), (Abbas, et al. 2019), has also stressed on certain advantages of web-series and television. It has made information easily available and affordable (Talaue, et al. 2018), (Chukwuere and Chukwuere 2017). It has become an integral part of research as it tries to present all kinds of information pertaining to a topic in a single platform. (Mehraj, Bhat and Mehraj 2014), had stressed on the point that mass media has made the world smaller and closer but in this context it can be said that in certain cases but it has also created a distance between the people by altering personal and social relationships where even if people are present in one room they tend to concentrate on their own worlds rather than interacting with one another. (Phoon 2017), has also supported this point. (Chukwuere and Chukwuere 2017), has noticed that with the development of media and technologies the present generation tends to publicise and over promote certain portions of their lives while doing so they do not present the ground reality. In spite of all the ongoing debates, it can be said that media, entertainment and technology has played a significant role in shaping and re-shaping various barriers across cultures, identities and boundaries, this view has been supported by (Harchekar 2017), (Siddiqui and Tajinder 2016).

In order to understand whether these impacts are positive or negative, several theories have been formulated which helps to understand the impact of media on human lives. In “The Cultivation Theory” composed by G. Gerbner and later expanded by Gerber and Gross in 1976 (Mosharafa 2015), talks about the impact on humans who tends to unknowingly consume different types of information and develop dominant images and imageries in their minds based on whatever is being shown to them. Secondly, “Social Learning Theory” by Albert Bandura in 1925 (Rorke 2006), talks about media as a teacher who is capable of teaching various traits to its viewers. Thirdly, “Agenda Setting Theory” by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 (Zain 2014), talks about the impact of presentation

and packaging done by media on the minds of the viewers who at times tends to under or over evaluate a situation based on the way it is presented. Fourthly “Play Theory” by William Stephenson states the role of media as an object which gives a certain degree of pleasure to the readers who consume that news. Based on the above observations I had conducted a case study to understand the various impacts of web-series and television shows on the age group of 20 to 60 years as an addition to the existing body of literature.

III. CASE STUDY

3.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The main objective of the study is to find out the positive and negative impact of web-series and television shows on the minds of the Indian viewers ranging from the age group of 20 to 60 years.

3.2 METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

The size of the population was restricted to 200 persons belonging to the age group of 20 to 60 years. In order to conduct this research a questionnaire survey consisting of structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions was formulated. A five point and 3 point Likert scale was used to assess the degree of impact television shows and web series have on the respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain the sample population, respondents who were students, working and non- working professionals were only chosen.

3.3 ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The age group of the samples was restricted from 20 to 60 years, out of which 109 respondents were female and 91 were male. 36 respondents belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years, 27 respondents belonged to the age group of 30 to 40 years and 22 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 40 to 50 years and 15 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 50 to 60 years. 65 respondents are students, 101 respondents are working professionals and 34 respondents are non-working professionals.

TIME SPENT ON WATCHING WEB SERIES AND TELEVISION

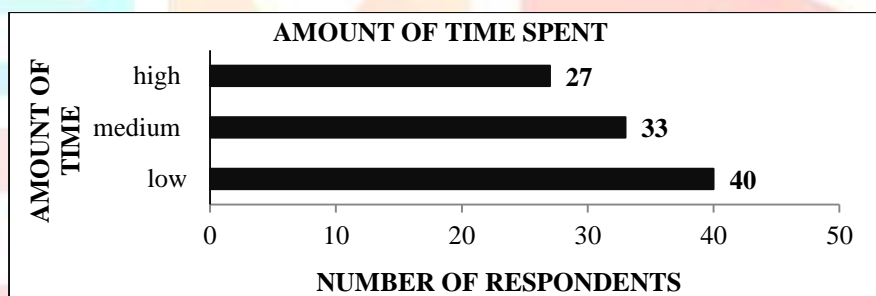


Figure 1- Showing the amount of time spent by the respondents on watching web series and television

The respondents were asked about the time they spent on a daily basis watching web series and television. 13 percent of the respondents watched it for one to two hours and 10 percent for nine to ten hours. Most of the respondents watched it for 3 to 4 hours. 40 percent of the sample population who watched it for 1 to 4 hours has been classified under low screen time. 33 percent who watched it for 4 to 7 hours has been classified under medium screen time and 27 percent who watched it for 7 to 10 hours has been classified under high screen time.

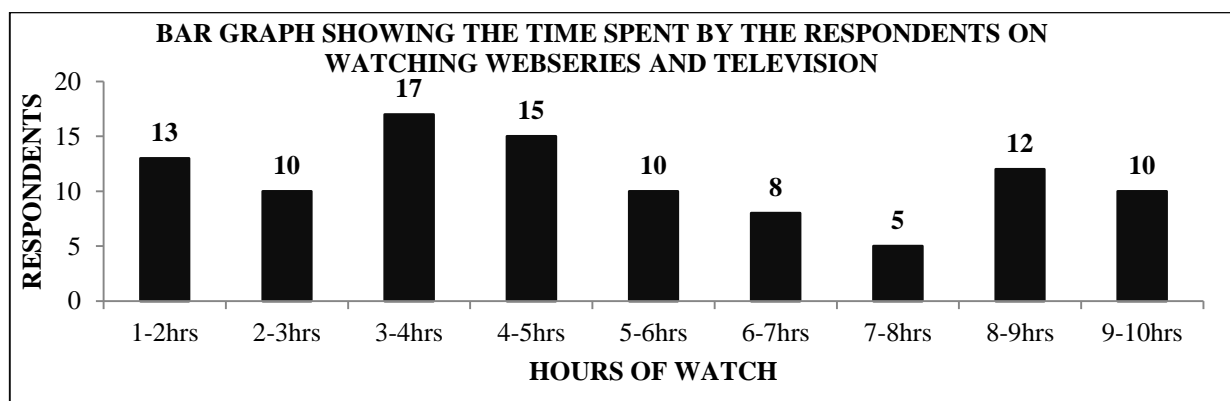


Figure 2– Bar graph showing the time spent by the respondents on watching web series and television

REASON FOR WATCHING

When the respondents were asked the reason why they were hooked on to television and web series they had mentioned a variety of reasons. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one option as a person could browse for various reasons. The respondents were asked to choose from options ranging from relaxation, need for a partner, peer pressure, information, addiction, prevents boredom, casual watch, nothing else to do and for a gripping story line.

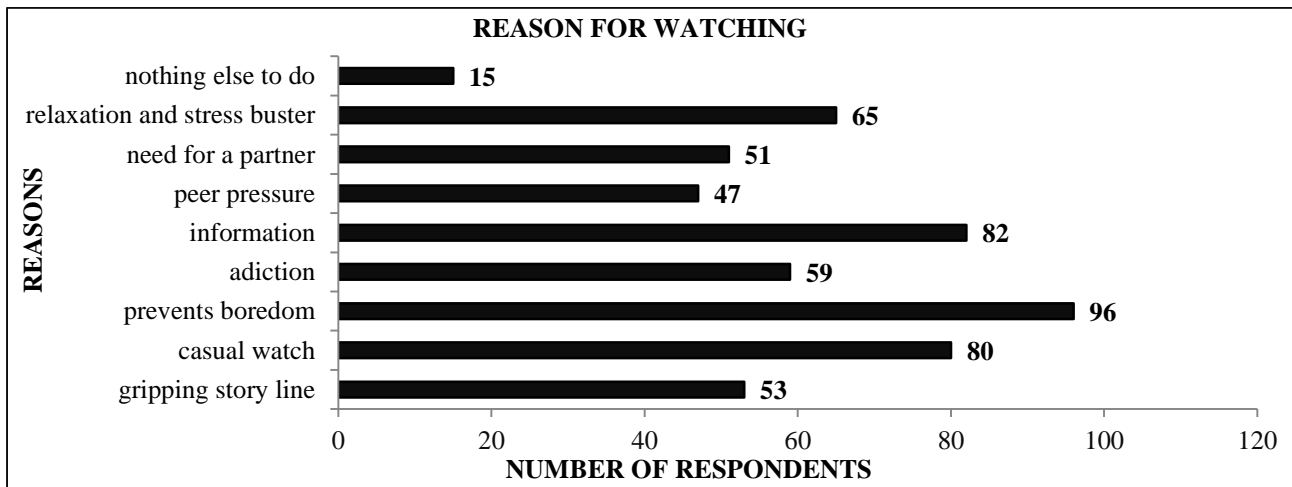


Figure 3- Showing the reasons for watching television and web series

65 respondents stated that after completing their jobs they felt so stressed out and found viewing television or web-series as a stress buster and a great way to unwind as they had the ability to choose their watch, duration of the watch and had the luxury of choosing the place where they could watch. 47 respondents said that they were hooked on to viewing a particular content because out of sheer peer pressure as most of their friends watches and discusses the same thing over and over again, so it is very important for them to watch the same content as it would enable them to be a part that group. 53 respondents were hooked on to the show for its gripping story line or the plot. They had mentioned that neither was it possible for them to let go off the show or watch it at intervals, these respondents mentioned that they would binge watch all the episodes in the show within a single watch. 51 respondents said that the want of a partner drove them to their present state. The respondents had mentioned of television and web shows as a low maintenance partner with which they could spend endless hours and this case there was no need to please anybody or seek approvals hence it was the best choice for them. 80 respondents said that watching these things was just another casual watch for them as they did not have to think about anything and it was just another source of detached attachment. 59 respondents had also mentioned that watching such things has become an addiction for them and it has become a part and parcel of their lifestyle and they cannot stop this habit. 96 respondents has claimed that to escape sheer boredom they view television and web series 15 other respondents had mentioned that when they have nothing else to do they end up watching these.

DOES IT LEAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR MIND?

The respondents were asked whether television and web series has left a significant impact on the minds of the viewers. As a response to this question the respondents said that it does leave a significant impact on their minds and activities long after their screen time has ended. A relatively higher percentage share of respondents agreed in favour of this question, only 27 percent did not agree to this point of view and 11 percent remained neutral who neither agreed nor disagreed.

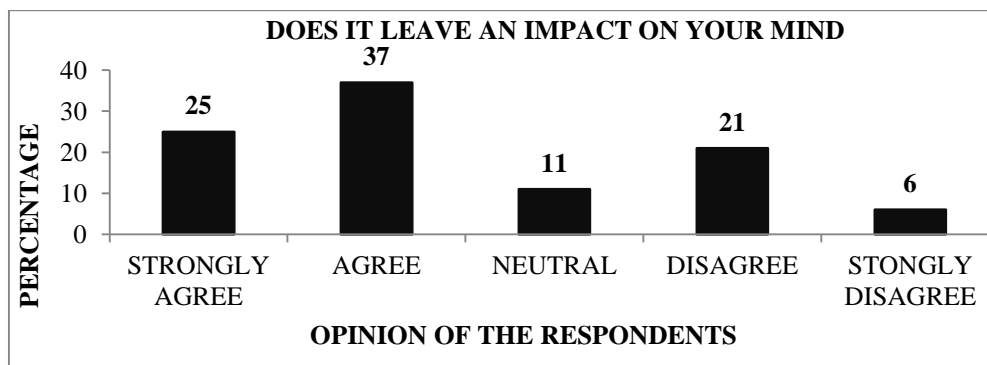


Figure 4- Showing the degree of impact it leaves on the minds of the respondent

KINDS OF IMPACT ON THE RESPONDENTS

Then the respondents were asked about the kind of impact it left on their minds they had mentioned that some of the shows had a strong impact on their minds which affected their psychological, emotional and physical well being. In some cases it was positive whereas in other cases it was negative. However judging by the response, it can be said that the impact on the minds of the respondents mostly depended upon the information shared in the show, the way it is presented, the genre of the show, the visuals shown to the viewers and the way in which the respondents viewed, perceived and understood the content. It can be stated that it did alter the behavioural pattern, dietary pattern, socialising pattern, physical activity and it also laid significant impact on their personal and professional life as well. Thus in order to judge the impact on the minds of the viewers it has been divided under the following heads-

1. Prevents from leading a normal life
2. Restlessness and inability to concentrate
3. Alters sleeping pattern and insomnia
4. Alters dietary habits
5. Insecurity
6. Violence and aggression
7. Alters behavioural pattern and dialectics
8. Preference towards staying alone and increase in isolation
9. Alteration in professional life
10. Alteration in outdoor and physical activities

1. PREVENTS FROM LEADING A NORMAL LIFE

The respondents were whether their habit of viewing television or online content prevents them from leading a normal life. Most of the respondents agreed and even said that sometimes some of the respondents even planned their daily chores in such a way so that they do not have to miss out on their viewing time. They even went on to say that during their viewing hours sometimes the respondents did not go out, entertain guests or engage in conversations with any one, as they considered it to be extremely disturbing. They reflected by saying that their definition of normality of life had changed and this habit seems more normal to them. Only 7 percent of the respondents remained neutral. However the views of 36 percent of respondents varied between disagree to strongly disagree. If the statistics are to be analysed it can be said that greater percentage share of respondents agreed to the statement than the number of people disagreeing to it.

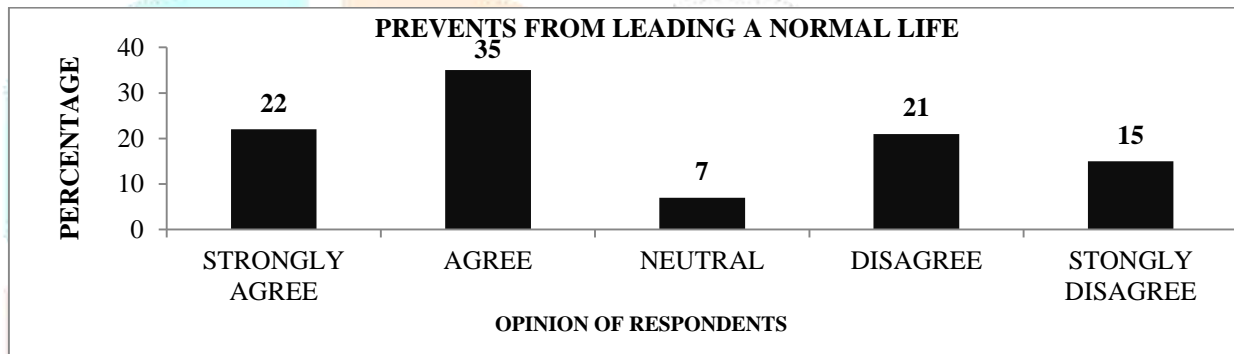


Figure 5– Showing the degree to which it prevents the respondents from leading a normal life

2. RESTLESSNESS AND INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE

The respondents were asked whether their viewing habits affected their ability to concentrate and instilled in them a sense of restlessness. 50 percent of the respondents agreed along with 14 percent who strongly agreed. They had stated that while watching these kinds of things they tend become extremely eager to know what would happen next and as a result, this impatience has also reflected on to other things and it is slowly altering their behaviour and making them extremely impatient. They had even mentioned that often they tended to skip from the relatively unimportant part right to the end. People who are also hooked on to the web series tended to engage in fights if their friends gave out gave parts of the story line prior to their watch. However the opinion of 30 percent of the respondents ranged between disagree to strongly disagree. Only 6 percent remained neutral.

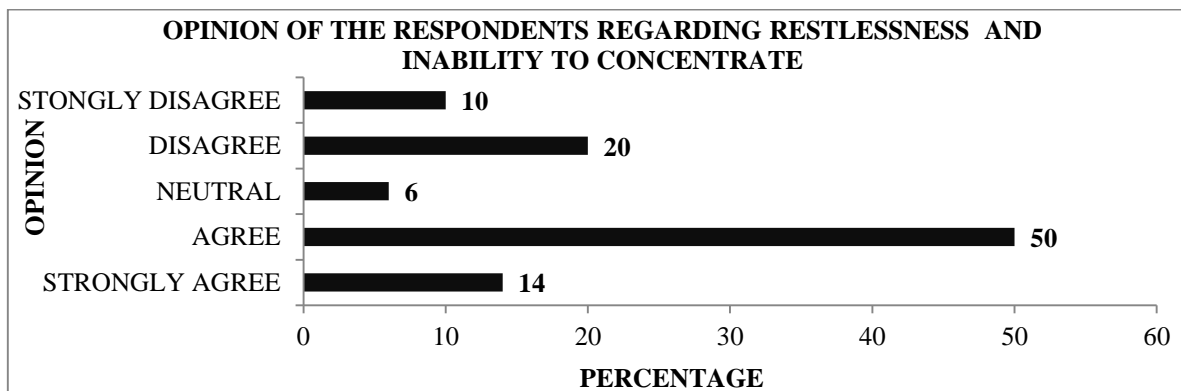


Figure 6- Showing the opinion of the respondents regarding restlessness and inability to concentrate

3. ALTERS SLEEPING PATTERN AND INSOMNIA

The respondents were asked to rate their opinion about alteration in the sleeping pattern due to their habit of viewing television and web-series. 39 percent of the respondents and 14 percent of the respondents have strongly agreed and agreed to this statement respectively. They had stated that due to the recent occurrences in course of the events about the pandemic they are constantly glued on to their television screens, they tend to watch it for long hours and as an aftermath of this viewing pattern they are left sleepless and this situation has also turned worst for some people leading them to insomnia. This situation is aggravated when thoughts pertaining to the longevity of their lives and changing dynamics of the recent time haunts them. Respondents who also indulge in binge watching have stated that due to their habit they keep up at wee hours in the night and try to watch all the episodes within a single session. They have kept on leading this lifestyle for a considerable period of time resulting in the alteration of their sleep timings. 18 percent of the respondents and 27 percent of the respondents have stated otherwise.

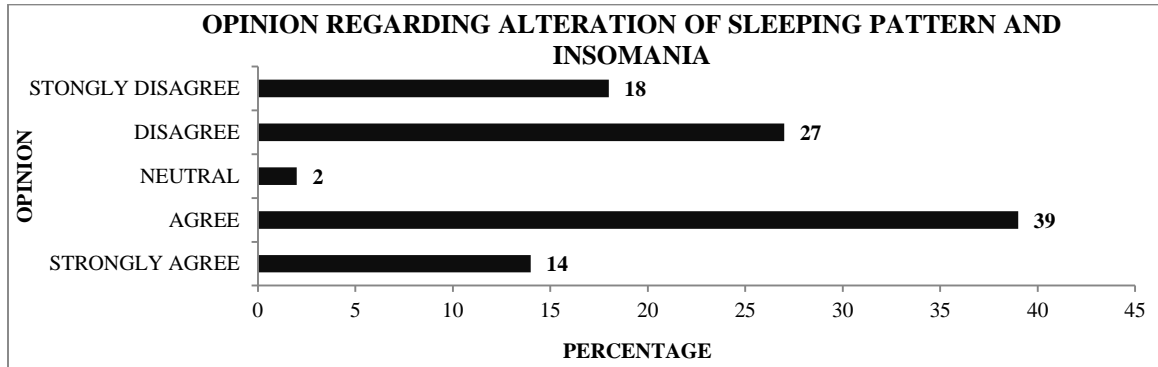


Figure 7- Showing the opinion of the respondents regarding alteration of sleeping pattern and insomnia

4. INSECURITY

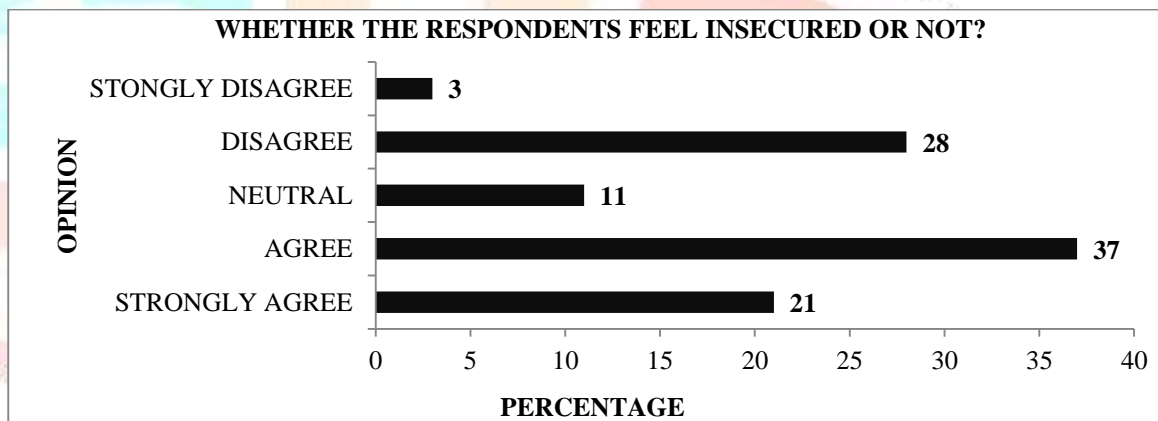


Figure 8- Showing whether the feelings of the respondents regarding insecurity

When the respondents were asked whether they felt insecure after watching web shows and television, in response 58 percent of the population agreed in affirmative among which 37 percent agreed and 21 percent strongly agreed to the question. 11 percent remained neutral and 31 percent denied to this claim. Among the people who agreed to the claim 80 percent of the respondents had stated that after watching news on television they have become extremely insecure about themselves, their family, future, profession, whether they will at all receive their monetary claims from, the longevity of their lives, how to manage their expenditure as the prices of essentials are escalating. 33 percent of the respondents who have high sugar and blood pressure are also very scared if they would be able to acquire their medicines on time. From the survey it can also found out that shows dealing with crimes also lead to a certain insecurity in the minds of the viewers who are extremely afraid either because they get to know what is happening or when they try to over analyse the situation and are scared as people are constantly discussing it in front of them, making them even more scared as they tend to think about what else could also have happened which was not shown explicitly on the show. Many of the respondents have stated that they tend to become extremely depressed after watching the news as they have started to believe that there is no way out and the world is coming to an end. The respondents who have accepted that they are binge watchers and those who tend to watch melodramatic shows tends to become even more depressed after watching such shows but they cannot give up on their habit to watch such content as it has become an addiction for them.

5. ALTERS DIETARY PATTERN

In this case 10 percent respondents had mentioned that their dietary pattern has altered after watching certain web series and had stated that it is now okay to smoke and consume alcohol as do most of the characters on web-series. They have branded it saying that it is a much more new age life style which they have now grown to like. 8 percent respondents have said that they have changed their dietary pattern after viewing various products shown on television and web-series. 3 percent respondents have stated that they had decided to go vegan after watching such things. However such content also poses harm to the viewers as it gives a much more generalised dietary plan. 2 percent of the respondents had mentioned that they had followed one such programme based on keto diet and had tried to follow the diet plan but it did not suit their internal metabolism and resulted in several physical complications. The respondents had also mentioned that almost 47 percent of respondents were more inclined towards consuming the dietary products which are shown on the online and offline mediums without analysing the composition of such products. 33 percent of the respondents had mentioned that cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption among their peer group have been aggravated by certain shows which treat them as a part of highly urbanised and sophisticated lifestyle and as a result when they socialise with one another they do not mind indulging or at times over indulging in such things.

6. ALTERS BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN, DRESSING PATTERN AND DIALECTICS

61 percent of respondents had claimed that after watching different kinds of web show and serials their dialectics have changed, they had mentioned that it has become more cosmopolitan in nature and a deviation of the dialect they previously used. Words from different languages and dialects are often spoken by the same respondent in one sentence. These shows have also had a significant impact on the dressing pattern of the respondents. 73 percent of respondents have claimed to wear and buy mostly those types of clothes which they see on their screens. Previously certain behavioural characteristics were unsuitable in the society but now-a-days these trends are extremely in vogue among the respondents as many shows depict and overemphasise on them. There can be endless debates on whether it has altered the society for the good or bad but the exposure of viewers towards such content and towards a varied types of shows has significantly altered the their outlook towards the society, it has also questioned and changed certain fundamental characteristics of the society as well.

7. VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

34 percent of the respondents have agreed on this point stating that after watching certain content they have become much more violent and aggressive, they had mentioned that they have anger issues and are unable to control themselves when their favourite characters have died on a particular show. Among them 7 percent respondent had mentioned of manhandling objects in that state. They had tried to justify their emotion by stating that they had high hopes from the character and they felt the ending to be unjust hence at the heat of the moment they had done it. 27 percent of the respondents in this regard have also mentioned that at some point of time in their lives they had got influenced to perform certain aggressive, illogical and violent acts on themselves or on their peers and family members. Among those 27 percent respondents only 6 percent have later on regretted over their actions but 21 percent said that they had not done anything wrong as it is frequently aired on various shows and they were just expressing their opinion.

8. PREFERENCE TOWARDS STAYING ALONE AND INCREASE IN ISOLATION

63 percent of the respondents prefer to stay alone with their digital media or traditional media rather than going out and socialising. They stated that doing such things gives them a sheer happiness as they can do whatever they want to and do not have to abide by any rules, seek approvals or spend endless hours in the company of strangers with a fake smile pasted on their lips and talk about some of the most uninteresting aspects of their life. 39 respondents have also mentioned that they preferred to stay isolated as their screens do not pressurise or tend to compare them with others and it makes them relieved as they prefer not to indulge in things which put additional pressure on their minds. 23 respondents have also complained saying that with the availability of unlimited data and phone calls it has made them and others unsocial in general, as now-a-days people tend to sit aloof and stare at their phones rather than socialising. 77 respondents had mentioned that as the technology and devices of mass media are getting more and more advanced people are trying to seek all their happiness and vent out their frustrations at these devices and are opting for mass media platform companionship over human companionship.

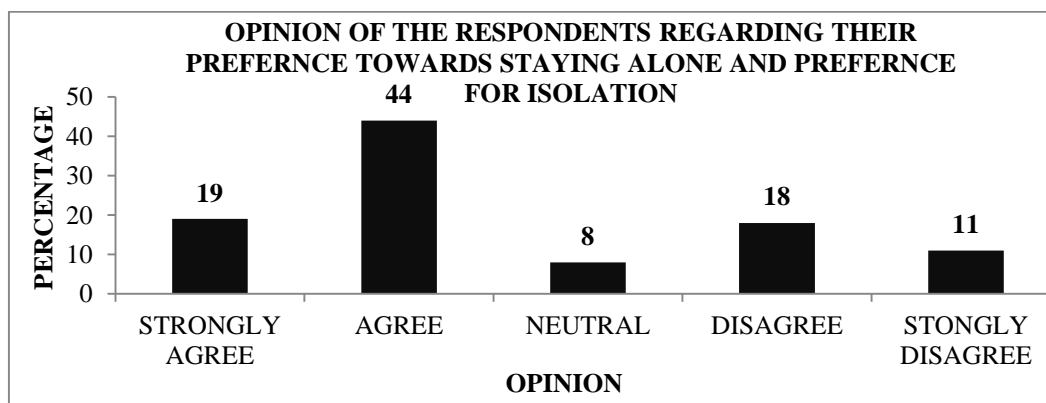


Figure 9 – Showing the opinion of the respondents regarding their preference towards staying alone and preference for isolation

9. ALTERATION IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE

There has been a mixed response when this question was put forward. 55 percent of the respondents replied in affirmative. They said that due to the flooding and over access of information, they often gets confused as to which site or channel they should follow and what is the source of correct and authentic information. 69 respondents had also mentioned that they sometimes tend to lose focus as they get caught up in a web of different information, serials, web-shows, news. They either end up leaving their work aside and binge watching on them or continuously think about such things on and off basis. 37 percent respondents disagreed and 12 percent remained neutral.

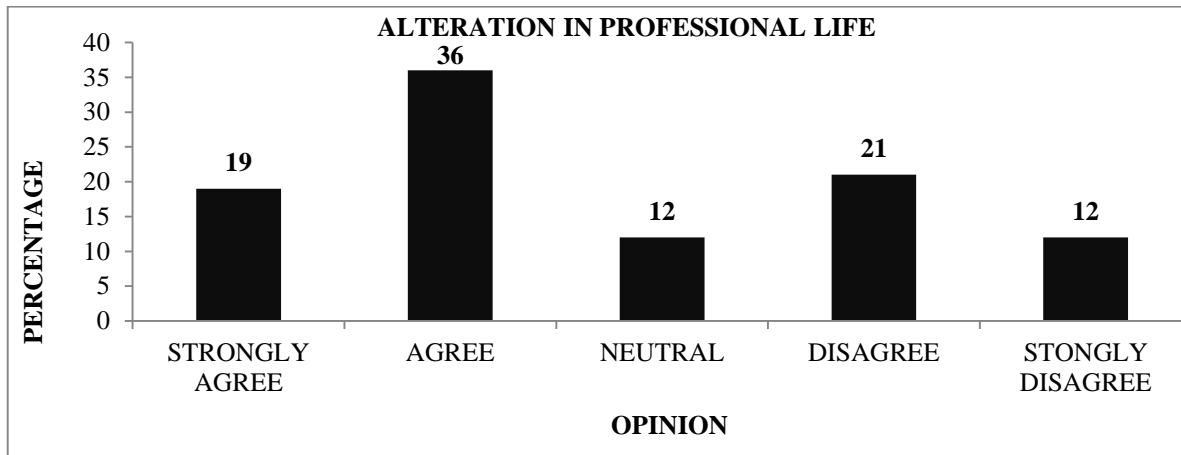


Figure 10- Showing the alteration in the professional lives of the respondents

10. ALTERATION IN OUTDOOR AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Most of the respondents had mentioned that it does affect the outdoor and physical activity as most people have become couch potatoes and prefer to stay indoors rather than going out. Respondents had mentioned that it has also caused eyesight problems and obesity as people also tend to munch on something or the other and ends up eating a lot of unhealthy food while watching web series and television. Some of the respondents had also mentioned that since it has become a lifestyle which many people have adopted for a prolonged period of time such people have also lost the interest to go out and pursue physical activities rather they prefer to do otherwise.

IV CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that television and web-series has significant impact over the sample population. If the respondent cannot control the hours of watch, the reason or the purpose of his activity it can have disastrous consequences on their being making them complacent in their virtually created cocoon. This makes them even more aloof from the real world, people, being able to feel real emotions and in their place the viewer tends to nurture and cultivate seeds of loneliness, depression, anxiety, isolation, weight management problems, and lack of willingness to get out of the couch and do anything. It can be concluded by saying that with the increasing diversity of television shows and web-series it is continuously altering the boundaries, meanings, norms of the society. It is also changing and challenging inter-personal and intra-personal relationships over time.

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