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Impact of Television on Scheduled Tribes: A Study of Rajupakalu Village in Visakhapatnam

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Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to ascertain the effectiveness of television programmes in the process of development with particular reference to Rajupakalu Agency in Chintapalle Mandal of Visakhapatnam District in India. It sets out to determine how effective television programmes can play in enhancing the process of Tribal development in the Rajupakalu Tribal agency of Visakhapatnam district, especially with particular reference to the farmers in the mentioned area, majority of who are illiterate.

Keywords: 1. Television 2. Scheduled Tribes 3. Mass Media 4. Rajupakalu

Introduction

Television is an omnipresent medium globally reaching millions homes daily, which is why, while the radio is referred to as the theatre of the mind, television has remained as the theatre of the home. As a family medium therefore, television has had a large heterogeneous audience belonging to different groups, classes, cities and nations despite the fact that its feedback is not instant. Dutta, Tara, (2001)

As one of the most advanced medium at mankind's disposal today, television has had certain definite advantages over other channels of communication. Studies indicate that television viewership for instance was increasing commensurate to the time spent on it. However, despite this tremendous influence and interest in society, nothing much has been recorded to confirm its impact on the process of development of Rajupakalu Agency area of Visakhapatnam District in South India, a reason why this study has taken it upon itself to investigate on. The general objective of the study was to investigate the role of television programmes in the process of development with particular reference to Rajupakalu Tribal Agency of Visakhapatnam District.

Globally, television is rated as one of the mediums of communication aids that are quite competitive in the modern world, which was why it was being touted as a means that could easily influence development patterns of a nation thereby improving society's living standards.

Perusing through various literature at all levels clearly confirm that the role it plays through its utilization towards national development of rural areas has been enormous. The potential for television in the tribal areas is still lacking due to economic problems. Interestingly, and this is quite true about the Indian case, none of such studies focused on Rajupakalu Tribal Village in particular, although Visakhapatnam district is said to be moderately developed in comparison to other districts in the State of Andhra Pradesh. It is for this reason that this article wanted to ascertain the factors that might have contributed to the district's current development status by attempting to ascertain how the role of television programmes have contributed to the development of the area on study, as well as finding out how if well utilized could boost the development agenda of its rural setting.

The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. They are most vulnerable section of our society living in natural and unpolluted surrounding far away from civilization with their traditional values, customs and beliefs intact. There has been a long and enduring debate among the social scientists to define a tribe. Notwithstanding the academic exercise, for the purpose of development and administration, the definition given by the Constitution serves our objective. The definition is practically an administrative definition. According to the Constitution "Any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community as deemed under article 342 are Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of the Constitution". Thus, the groups which are in the Scheduled list of the Constitution of India are defined as Scheduled Tribes. There is a procedure for including tribal groups in the Scheduled list. The President may, after consulting with the governor of a state, by public notification, specify the tribes which would deem to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State. Communities are notified as Scheduled Tribe under Article 342 of the Constitution based on the Characteristics such as - Primitive Traits, Geographically Isolated, Distinct Culture, and Shyness of contact with community at large, and Economically Backward.

Television started as a modest experiment in India on 15th September, 1959. There were only two one-hour programmes a week, each of one hour duration. The early programmes on these experimental broadcasts were generally educational programmes for school children and farmers. Several community television sets were set up in Delhi's rural areas and schools around Delhi for the dissemination of these programmes. In 1969 the AIR set up an experimental television service in Delhi. It was soon converted into a full-fledged telecasting station. By the 1970s, television centers were opened in other parts of the country also. Bombay was the second city in India to open a TV centre on October 2, 1972. A television centre was commissioned at Srinagar (Kashmir) on January 26, 1973 and another was opened at Amritsar (Punjab) on September 29, 1973. A relay centre was set up in Pune (Maharashtra) on October 2, 1973. In August 1975 Calcutta (West Bengal) and Madras (Tamil Nadu) opened TV centres.

The Television set-up that derived from All India Radio and, under the name "Doordarshan" was given the status of a full-fledged Directorate with effect from April 1, 1976. Separation of television from AIR was intended to facilitate fuller development of this medium and the specialised skills peculiar to it. The main objective of Doordarshan is development and education, besides providing rich entertainment through varied programmes like music, feature films, etc. Intended to benefit both urban and rural viewers, Doordarshan tries to project to the people development plans and their implementation. Doordarshan lends powerful support to the major multimedia campaigns initiated by the Central Government from time to time.

The most momentous development in television in India is the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) which was inaugurated on August 1, 1975. The experiment was jointly conducted by the Department of Space and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, through their agencies, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the All India Radio (AIR) respectively. ISRO's Space Applications Centre (SAC) in Ahmedabad is fully responsible for design and fabrication of the ground hardware and for conduct of the Experiment. SITE is the result of an agreement between India and the US concluded in 1969. Under this agreement ATS-6 satellite was made available to India for a period of one year. This satellite was launched from the US in May 1974, and it had been transmitting experimental TV programmes to parts of the US and conducting a few other experiments.

The prime earth station for the experiment was ISRO's Experimental Satellite Communications Earth Station (ESCES) at Ahmedabad set up in 1967 with the assistance of the United Nations Development Project (UNDP). Following the successful completion of the one-year Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) on July 31, 1976 it was decided to continue terrestrial television programmes for at least 40 per cent of the SITE villages. Terrestrial transmitters were set up at six locations: (1) Jaipur, (2) Raipur, (3) Muzaffarpur, (4) Sambalpur, (5) Hyderabad, and (6) Gulbarga. This service covered 954 out

of 2,400 existing SITE villages as well as 8,950 additional villages. The transmitters were to become operational in 1977. The first transmitter at Jaipur became operational from March 1, 1977. Initially these transmitters would put programmes, ranging from 1-1/2 hours to 2-1/2 hours every day with a morning service for primary schools and an evening service for adults. The programme patterns based on agriculture, health and hygiene, family welfare, child care, adult education and such other subjects would be the same as for SITE. (Mehta, 2008)

The purpose of these programmes is to educate the common man about recent innovations and the use of science in day-to-day life, remind him of his civic responsibilities and acquaint him with the traditional and performing arts from different regions of the country. The frequency of both the Science and Civics series was weekly, the duration being 15 minutes and 5 minutes respectively. The Arts series programme was fortnightly, the duration being 15 minutes. Several community television sets were distributed as a part of one of the important landmarks in the history of Indian television, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). SITE was an important step taken by India to use television for development. The programmes were mainly produced by Doordarshan which was then a part of AIR. The telecasts happened twice a day, in the morning and evening. Other than agricultural information, health and family planning were the other important topics dealt with in these programmes. Entertainment was also included in these telecasts in the form of dance, music, drama, folk and rural art forms.

In the earlier days, Doordarshan had a monopoly as it was the only channel available to the Indian television audience. This changed in the 1990s with the arrival of private channels. The coverage of the Gulf War by the American news channel, Cable News Network (CNN) propelled the arrival of satellite television in India. Satellite dishes were used to catch the CNN signals and cable operators took to satellite broadcasting immediately. Zee TV was formed as a result of culminative agreement between Hong Kong based STAR and an Indian Company. It became the first privately owned Hindi satellite channel of India. The agreement between STAR and Zee did not last long. But the Indian television audience was waiting for a shift from the monopoly of Doordarshan and soon a number of private channels emerged. The Supreme Court ruling of 1995 which stated that the airwaves are not the monopoly of the Indian government boosted their growth. Several regional channels also came into being during this period. Sun TV (Tamil), Asianet (Malayalam) and Eenadu TV were a few of them. Today almost all major Indian languages have television channels in them.

Cable TV has its roots in the late seventies. Indian television viewers were looking for entertainment options, apart from what state-owned broadcaster DD was offering. That came their way with the import and manufacture of video cassette recorders permitted domestically. There was a veritable boom in video cassette recorder sales during this period. Enterprising individuals in apartment blocks placed a video in their homes or their

garages and started offering a cable TV service to people who opted for it. The fare available was Hindi and English movies and pirated western comedies, music and game shows. At this stage, cable TV was restricted to the major metros and towns and the upper crust of society.

The impetus for its spread came in 1990 with the advent of the Gulf war. Ted Turner's CNN started beaming news reports of the bombing of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein and sparked off a demand for satellite dishes. Only the affluent could afford them. Some cable operators who had been running their Hindi and English movie channels added dishes and started relaying CNN into homes. This spurred demand for cable TV, making it a lucrative business and it attracted more individuals to the industry.

The launch of Star TV and ZeeTV further fuelled the spread of cable TV. In the first half of 1992, almost 4,500 households were being cabled up daily. That figure increased to 9,450 homes daily in the second half of the year, according to a study conducted by market research firm - Frank Small for Star TV: on how many homes could receive its service. (If one considers that almost all Indian cable homes can receive Star TV because it shares the same platform as Zee TV then the numbers would be a fair representation of the total number of C&S homes at that time because Zee TV has almost 100% penetration in cable homes.) From a mere 412,000 urban households in January 1992, the number of cable homes went up to 1.2 million by November 1992. Today approximately half of all Indian households own a television. As of 2010, a total number of 515 channels are available in the country out of which 150 are pay channels. Mehta, Nalin (2008)

The TV distribution platforms in India are terrestrial (owned by doordarshan), cable, DTH and IPTV. The Indian TV distribution industry now comprises 6,000 Multi System Operators (MSOs), around 60,000 Local Cable Operators (LCOs), 7 DTH/ satellite TV operators and several IPTV service providers. The business model is undergoing a change in India. At one point of time, India had nearly 100,000 cable operators. The industry was run by small operators. The emergence of large operators from Hinduja group (incablenet), Zee group (Siticable), Asianet, Hathway (Raheja group) and RPG group (RPG Netcom), who are now known as MSO (Multi System Operators) changed the way in which the industry is run. But the MSOs were concentrated on the metros and major cities only so far. The industry is in the hands of local cable TV operators in the rural areas and small towns. The entry of big players from corporate world led to the consolidation of small operators. This is because of the better quality of services offered by MSOs. While the local operators are able to offer around 30 channels, the MSOs are offering more than 65 channels to the customers. Besides, the MSOs are offering local channels which show films, local events, religious discourses, regional news etc. But all these MSOs operate on the model of franchising their cable TV feeds to the small operators.

Impact of Television on Scheduled Tribes of Rajupakalu

Visakhapatnam district occupies an area of approximately 11,161 square kilometres (4,309 sq mi), comparatively equivalent to Canada's Cape Breton Island. Visakhapatnam district is divided into 43 mandals for ease of administration. Visakhapatnam division, Anakapalli division, Narsipatnam division and Paderu division are the 4 Revenue Divisions. There are 10 mandals in Visakhapatnam division, 11 each in Narsipatnam and Anakapalle divisions and 11 mandals in Paderu division. Paderu is a new division formed on 3 April 2013 by allocating mandals from Visakhapatnam and Narsipatnam divisions. The district has 976 Gram Panchayats, 3082 Revenue villages with 3 Municipalities and the only Municipal corporation of Visakhapatnam City.

Visakhapatnam district has 43 mandals of which 29 are rural, 3 are urban and the remaining 11 mandals are from tribal area, which also known as agency or scheduled area

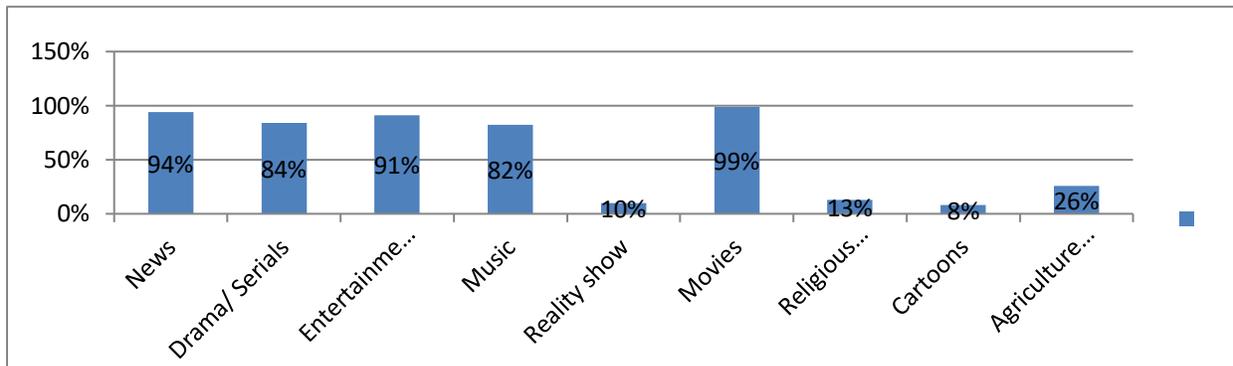
Chintapalle is a Mandal in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh State, India. It belongs to Andhra region. It is located 110 KM towards west from District head quarters Vishakhapatnam. Chintapalle consist of 294 Villages and 17 Panchayats. Itikabedda Bokkellu is the smallest Village and Chintapalle is the biggest Village. Its altitude co-ordinate is 30m elevation.

Telugu is the Local Language here. Total population of Chintapalle Mandal is 64,404 living in 13,926 Houses, Spread across total 294 villages and 17 panchayats. Males are 32,569 and Females are 31,835.

Rajupakalu, the alternative name of Barikadorapakalu, is a tribal village in Chintapalli Mandal of Visakhapatnam district. The village is around 13 kilometres from Mandal Headquarters of Chintapalli. It is around 127 kms from district headquarters of visakhapatnam district. There are 200 male population and 252 female population. Out of which 168 male and 150 female belong to scheduled tribe, mostly of *Gadaba* origin.

The Barikadorapakalu or Rajupakalu is a tribal village with a mix of Majority tribals and backward classes and forward classes living in harmony. The village diety is Goddess Parvathamma. It has a Elementary school, Anganvadi, panchayat building. It has two small thatched hotels and four kirana shops (grossary shops).

Chart 1: Types of Programmes Watched by Respondents

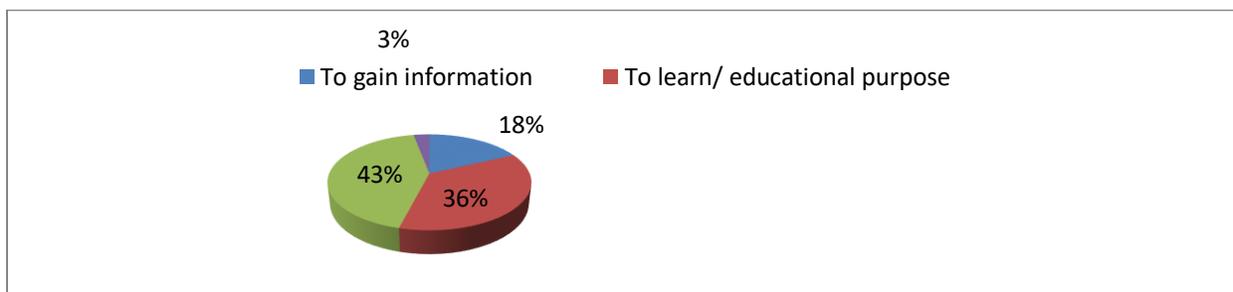


In response to the type of programs the respondents watch, the above illustrated graph shows the highly viewed programs are: Movies (99 per cent), News (94 per cent), Entertainment Programs (91 per cent), Drama/ Serials (84 per cent), Music Programs (82 per cent). However, respondents also 26 per cent watch Agriculture Based Programs, 13 per cent watch Religious Based Programs, only 10 per cent of them view reality shows, while 8 per cent watch cartoons.

We can also observe in the above findings that the tribal respondents mostly watch movies. Though a major portion of them view entertainment programs like drama serials, music programs, cartoon etc, but they also have an interest to know the information based program like news, which shows that people in the tribe also have an urge for the news and information other than the entertainment, compared to the news and entertainment.

Meanwhile, they also show interest in watching agriculture programs, but few members are engaged in agricultural activities. The Government has given land to cultivation to earn their livelihood, but they are unable to utilize it properly. This might be because they watch fewer programs related to the agriculture. On the other hand, that they might unable to follow the scientific method cultivation programs broadcasted in television.

Chart 2: Why Respondents Watch Televisions Programs

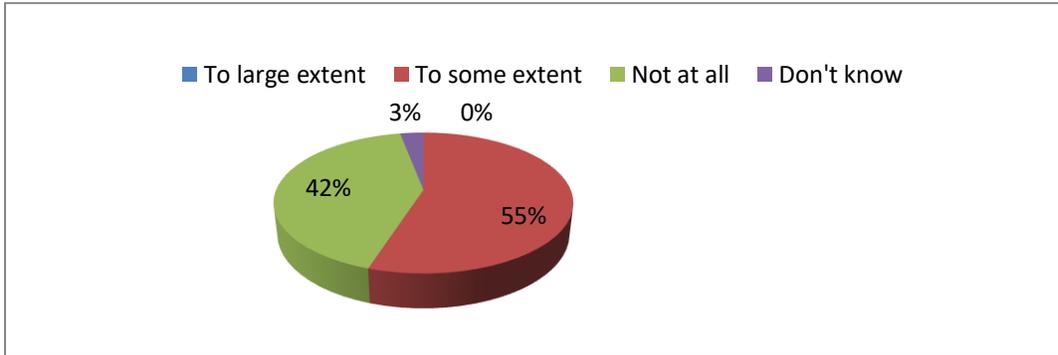


We can observe in the above graph on the reasons behind the respondents watch programs, it shows 18 per cent watch for the purpose of to gain information, 36 per cent to learn / educational purpose, 43 per cent for entertainment and 3 per cent of them said they

are unsure.

The illustration in the above graph shows that the respondents watch more for the entertainment purpose, than compared to the education and information purpose. This reveals that they watch more number of entertainment programs. This might be because of low literacy rate they go for less educational and informational programs.

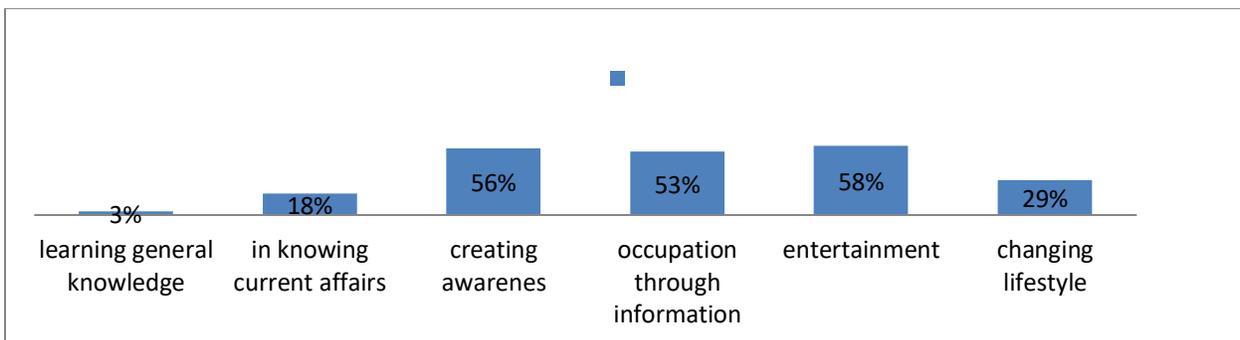
Chart 3: How Far Television Programs Have Been Affected Respondents



The chart indicates that the responses of the candidates on how far the television programs have been affected their lifestyle is, 55 per cent said that they affected their lifestyle to some extent, and 42 per cent said not at all affected and only 3 per cent said they were not sure.

The respondents in the Rajupakalu tribal agency accepted that television have affected nil in the large extent, but more than half of the total respondents accepted that it has been to some extent like they watch television for the purpose of education, entertainment and information and this might be influenced their lifestyle.

Chart 4: In What Way Television Programs Affect Respondents Lifestyle



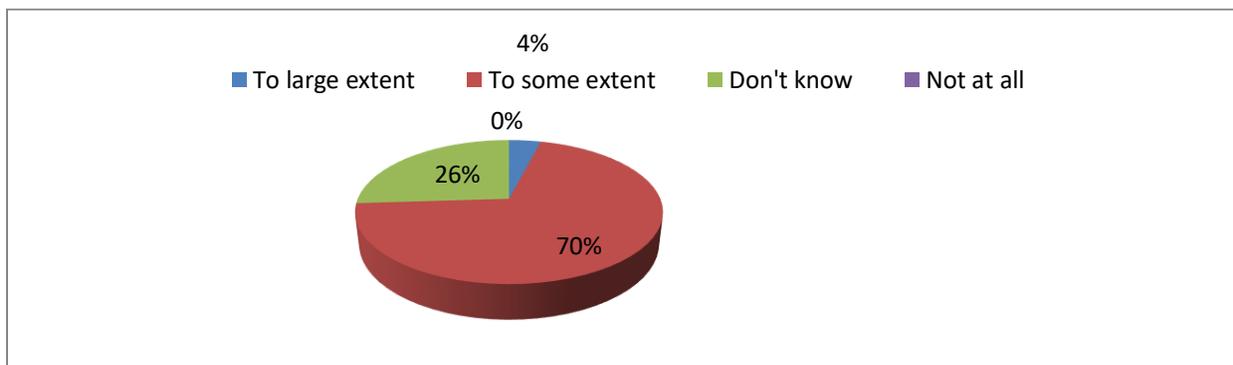
To the question, what way the programs they watched on television affected their lifestyle, the above graph explains only 3 per cent respondents said that it has helped in developing general knowledge, followed by 18 per cent affected in the way of adapting current trends in everyday life, 56 per cent creating awareness, 53 per cent in improved

prospects in job and 58 per cent in entertainment, while 29 per cent in changing their lifestyle.

On the effects of television on tribal above data indicates that considerable percentage of respondents have been affected through television by way of creating awareness and there is also a considerable percentage of respondents said that information relatively to occupation.

This development shows that the tribe people also watch the programs which are related to the occupation and the tribal interest to the occupation other than their traditional hunting, though we have seen how majority feel the entertainment programs affected them most there is a balance between entertainment, information and educational programs.

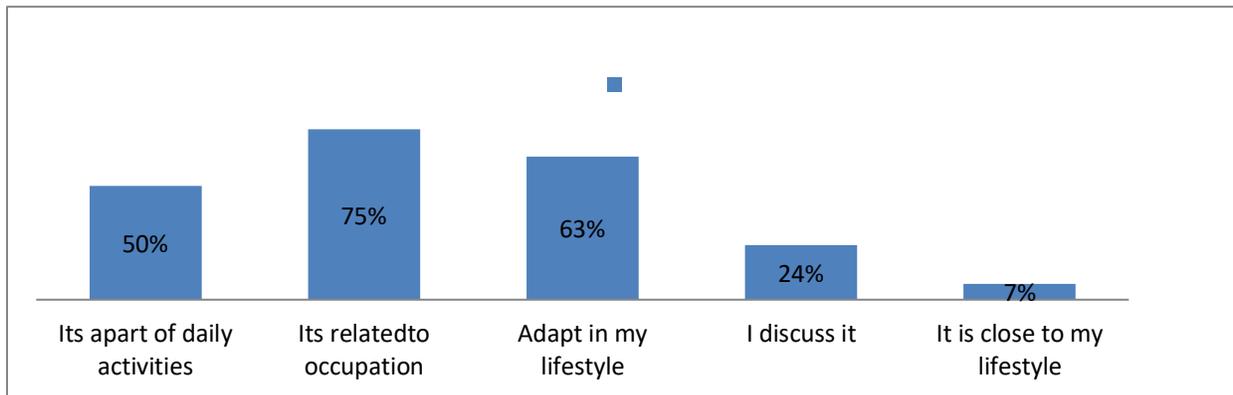
Chart 5: To What Extent Television Programs Relate Respondents Lifestyle



In terms of at what extent the programs related to their lifestyle, the above illustration represents that only 4 per cent said that the programs relate to a large extent, majority of the respondents (70 per cent) said to some extent while 26 per cent were not sure.

Though they have been exposed to the television the data shows that few number of people agree that television programs relate to their lives at a large extent, and more number of people relate television programs to some extent. This might be of westernization of media. The Rajupakalu tribe may not get related to the programs which are far of their culture and practices.

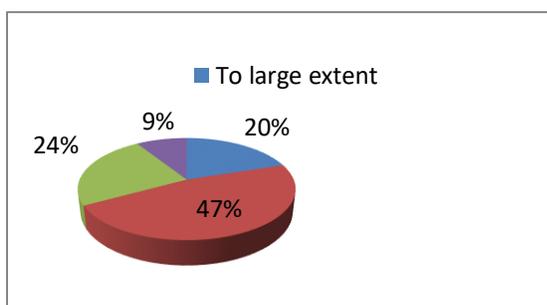
Chart 6: Respondents relate programs to their lifestyle



The above graph indicates that the percentage of respondents related the programs they watch on television. 50 per cent said it is their part of everyday activity, 75 per cent respondents relate to their occupation, 63 per cent said they adapt in their daily lifestyle (for eg: Health, beauty, cooking tips, general knowledge etc..) 24 per cent relate them by discussing with family/friends/neighbors and only 7 per cent said they are closely related to their life.

From the above data we can observe that majority of the respondents relate television programs to their occupation, and the considerable number of respondents have adapted whatever they have learnt from the television in their lifestyle. For at least half of the total respondents, television program become part of their daily activities. It is learnt that through television considerable percent of impact on their lifestyle occupation and daily activities. We can also appreciate how considerable number of respondents discusses these programs with family, friends and neighbors.

Chart 7: Positive Improvement In Their Lifestyle



The above graph shows that percentage of positive improvement in respondents' lifestyle by watching television habit; 20 per cent said to a large extent positive effect, 47 per cent said to some extent, 24 per cent said don't know/can't said and 9 per cent replied not at all.

Majority of the respondents have said television has considerable positive improvement in their lifestyle through their television viewing habits. However, a considerable percentage of respondents are not sure it has a positive improvement in their lifestyle. We cannot ignore the fact that small percentage respondents feel that there is no positive improvement at all, but still they watch television.

The study shows how the group of people is evolving and changes in their lifestyle through their television viewing habits. This research aims to find out the impact of television on this tribal community (Rajupakalu) and how the people of the tribal agency are being influenced by television. The study also focuses on how television, has helped in increasing general awareness among the tribes. The study also focuses to find the literacy levels amongst the tribe members and if through the audio visual media of television influence their education and learning.

The methodology used in this research was a survey conducted among the members of the Rajupakalu tribal agency living in Chintapalle Mandal. A questionnaire was an instrument that was specifically designed to find out some basic information about the residents of Rajupakalu, their literacy levels and their television viewing habits. The questionnaire in Telugu was then administered to over 100 respondents in the tribe.

After the data was collected from the questionnaires the results were then tabulated and charts and tables were generated for analysis which helped generate the findings of the study.

On the whole the respondents in the Rajupakalu tribal agency were low in the literacy but they used television as entertainment programs when compared to education. Here we can see an important aspect, that though they are illiterate, their urge to the informative and educative programs was perceived as education primarily in the form of entertainment and what they could relate with their occupation. SubramanyamV, and Mohan K.R.R., (2006)

Conclusion

Each question was classified and the frequency of each item was tabulated. The percentage was taken by the number of answers to the total number of respondents. Major findings of the study are as follows:

- ☒ The tribes of Rajupakalu are an isolated community who live in Chintapalle mandal. Yet they mingle with the urban people for their livelihood and communication.
- ☒ Television is their main source of information, education and entertainment for the Rajupakalu. This is clearly established by the fact that 100% of the respondents said that they watched television for at least 2-3 hours every day.

- ☒ Majority of the television viewers are women (55%) and the male were (45%).
- ☒ Most of the respondents (48%) who watched television belong to 26-35 age group and the age group of above 35 has second highest number of respondents. The least number of respondents belongs to 18-25 which shows that out of all the respondents' youngsters are comparatively less in number.
- ☒ The literacy level among the tribes of Rajupakalu is low, though they have exposed themselves to the television yet they are unable to perceive the importance of literacy, only 10% among 100% are educated only at school level, and 11% of the tribal have studied up to Intermediate or Pre University College (PUC).
- ☒ All the respondents are exposed to television and they do watch television.
- ☒ Most of them (76%) preferred to watch television in their residence while few (20%) preferred to watch it in their friends/neighbors house and while a very few of them preferred to watch television at work place (4%).
 - Out of the total respondents 21% spend 1-2 hours in a day for watching television, and 54% spend 2-3 hours, while 25% watch television for more than 3 hours in a day.
 - Most of the respondents (99%) watched movies. Most of them (91%) viewed channels that provided entertainment which they consider as stress buster and most of them (84%) watched drama/serials. Very few respondents watched reality shows (10%), cartoons (8%) and agricultural based programs (26%).
 - Most of them (94%) watched news more than any which is considered by many as more entertaining than the so called films and serials.
 - The reasons behind the respondents watch programs is as follows, 18% watch for the purpose of to gain information, 36% to learn / educational purpose, 43% for entertainment and 3% of them said they are unsure.
 - The responses of the candidates on how far the television programs have been affected their lifestyle is, 55% said that they affected their lifestyle to some extent, and 42% said not at all affected and only 3% said they were not sure.
 - Less than half of the respondents (43.3%) were ready to watch any channel and they don't have any preferences while others had their own particular choices and viewed them at particular times.
 - In terms of at what extent the programs related to their lifestyle only 4% said that the programs relate to a large extent, majority of the respondent (70%)

said to some extent while 26% were not sure.

- The percentage of respondents related the programs they watch on television and 50% said it is their part of everyday activity, 75% respondents relate to their occupation, 63% said they adapt in their daily lifestyle (for eg: Health, beauty, cooking tips, general knowledge etc..) 24% relate them by discussing with family/friends/neighbors and only 7% said they are closely related to their life.
- Percentage of positive improvement in respondents' lifestyle by watching television habit is 20% said to a large extent positive effect, 47% said to some extent, 24% said don't know/can't said and 9% replied not at all.
- Few of the respondents (24%) agreed to have discussed about the programmes they watch on Television with their friends and family.

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