

Indian Television in the Eras of Pre-Liberalisation and Liberalisation

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India witnessed a revolution in the television communication landscape following the shift in the economic policies in 1991. This analytical study looks into the changes and additions in the functions performed by mass communication using television medium before and after the implementation of liberalization policies in India. Tables are included to provide overviews of the historical developments at different periods and to distinguish the functions performed by television communication. In addition to information, education, entertainment, correlation and mobilization functions, empowerment and need satisfaction are also accounted as functions added in the due course of mass communication progression in the transnational and digitized era.

Keywords: Pre-liberalisation era, liberalization, broadcasting, *Doordarshan*, Prasar Bharati, digitization

The new economic policies launched in India in 1991 brought in considerable reforms in the world of industry and trade by opening up the capital market to private enterprises and providing operational freedom to private sector. It was a turnaround from the 'strategy of self-reliance' that was followed for more than forty years in the independent India to wide-ranging policy reforms and deregulations to "promote the growth of a more efficient and competitive industrial economy". (Rashmi & Das, 2012, p. x) The globalization and liberalization of economy included flow of technology and flow of foreign capital in terms of investment with relaxed norms and regulations than those before 1991. Transnational and domestic private corporations, especially media enterprises have thereafter become decisive factors in the economic growth of the nation. The changes in the media policies coupled with the massive expansion of the electronic media and technological advancements drastically changed the media landscape in the country. A very significant impact of the new policies was the beginning of 'transnational communication'—the communication that transcends the geographical borders of countries using satellite broadcasting technology. These changes resulted in the tremendous growth of television industry in India from one television channel, the *Doordarshan*, in 1991 to over 800 channels in 2012 providing television programmes to about 740 million viewers (Kohli-Khandekar, 2013, p. xxv).

The two important periods in the history of television broadcasting in India are: (i) the pre-liberalisation era which refers to the years before 1991 and (ii) the liberalization era which refers to the years of liberalization, globalisation and privatization and transnational communication beginning from 1991. The field of mass communication in India had been distinct in its ownership pattern till 1991, with the print industry enjoying the freedom of private ownership from the beginning whereas the broadcast media of radio and television under the complete control of the Government. The only radio was *Akashvani* or All India radio (AIR) and the only

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television, *Doordarshan*. This monopoly of the government in the broadcast media ended in 1991 with Cable News Network (CNN) bringing live coverage of Gulf War via the cable operators and Star TV broadcasting five channels from Hong Kong using the satellite, ASIASAT-1. The following years witnessed many changes in the media policies and in September 2007 the Indian Public Broadcaster, *Prasar Bharati*, an autonomous statutory corporation comprising of All India Radio and *Doordarshan* was established under the *Prasar Bharti* (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990. On the other side, the private media enterprises (both domestic and foreign) proliferated in the media market. By 2010, every major foreign transnational media investor was in India (Kohli-Khandekar, p. xv).

With the implementation of liberalization policies, the mass communication in India which was thus far only a government functionary as public broadcasting system turned into the huge media and entertainment industry. This paper examines the mass communication process in India with special reference to the broadcasting medium of television in the pre-liberalization and liberalization eras, focusing on the functions that it performs in society.

Mass Communication in India

The history of mass communication in India can be traced back to the start of the first newspaper in 1780, first moving picture in 1895, private radio broadcasting from the early 1920s leading to the then government bringing them under Indian State Broadcasting Services in 1930 which later in 1936 got renamed as All India Radio and additionally known as *Akashvani* from 1957 (Dwivedi, 2008, pp. 21-2), limited duration television programming of an hour in a week from Delhi Akashvani Bhavan (AIR station) in 1959 and regular broadcasting in 1965 (Pande, 2012, p. 29).

The growth of television communication in India was tremendous. The mere 41 television sets in the country in 1962, rose to 2,75,424 in 1974 and leaped with a 173 per cent growth to 4,76,026 in 1976. In 1984 it was recorded as 3,632,328 and in 2002, it was 74.71 million. Similarly the increase in the number of TV channels became phenomenal after the opening up of the sky for private media companies – about 80 in 2002 and over 800 in 2012. Simultaneously it was measured that the reach of television which was only 28 per cent in 1984, rose to 53 per cent in 1985, to 62 per cent by 1988 and to 90 per cent by 2002. (Kapil Desai, 2002). The number of TV viewers increased from 408 million in 2002 to 740 million in 2012. The Census 2011 of this second largest populated country reveals that five-sixths of the Indian population owns a transistor, TV, mobile or computer or a combination of these (Indian Express, 2012). Another notable change is the revenues generated through the media industry – an increase from 96 billion rupees in 2002 to 400 billion rupees in 2012 (Kohli-Khandekar, p.xxv).

Amidst all these changes and growth, the communication through mass media performs certain important functions in society through their existence as systems comprising of different components and also through the programmes disseminated to the audience.

Theoretical Framework

The functionalist theories connect the purposes of the media communication and the needs or uses for the society at large (McQuail, 2005, p. 24). Harold Lasswell explained the functions as surveillance of the environment, correlation of different components of society and cultural transmission to generations. His studies of propaganda communications concluded the behavioural changes on soldiers and new recruits due to war time communications and also the changes in food habits of housewives as a result of media communication. (Huff K. W., 2008). C. R. Wright (1974) added 'entertainment' as another key function of mass communication. Mendelsohn (1966) further elaborated this function as the provider of individual reward giving

relaxation and reduction of tension that ultimately result in helping people to effectively deal with real-life problems and thus benefitting societies to avoid breakdown. He also added the function 'mobilisation' indicating the application of media communication by political and commercial propagandists. Summarising all these and explaining in detail, Denis McQuail categorises the functions as information, correlation, continuity, entertainment and mobilization. Information has three aspects: firstly, rendering information about events and conditions in society and the world, secondly, indicating relations of power and thirdly, facilitating innovation, adaptation and progress. Correlation includes explaining, interpreting and clarifying with illustrations on the meaning of events and information, adding support for authority and norms, paving way for interaction, consensus building and socialisation, coordinating separate activities, and, prioritization of topics of discussions and signaling relative status. Continuity refers to that of culture and values through "expressing the dominant culture and recognizing subcultures and new cultural developments and forging and maintaining commonality of values". Lastly, mobilization, points to "campaigning and reviewing for social objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic development, and sometimes religion". (McQuail, pp. 96-99)

Methodology

Television has been existing in India as a mass medium that transmit different types of programme content to the people from 1959 – about 32 years in the pre-liberalisation era and about 25 years as in 2015 in the liberalization era. The research problem that led this study was: how the functions of mass communication through television in India are different in the two periods – the pre-liberalisation (before 1991) and the liberalization era (from 1991) in India. The objectives set for this study were: (i) to examine the growth of television and the programmes broadcasted during specific time periods in India and thereby study the overall changes in the programme content disseminated from time to time (ii) to identify the different policy decisions that paved the way for significant changes in the functioning of television in India and (iii) to analyse and compare the different functions performed by the television media in the pre-liberalisation and liberalization eras as a mass medium that has huge reach. This study is based on the facts and data available on television communication in the pre-liberalisation and liberalization or transnational communication eras. The relevant information for the study was collected from recorded observations and studies on the broadcast television and communication in India including reports, texts and documents, and online materials. Thematic analysis and summary of discussions were used as the methods of analysis. The liberalisation era means the period of deregulated, free market-oriented economy where the government policies allow for the liberalised norms and codes for private media industries and foreign communication content (Seetha, 2012, p. 7)

Television in Pre-Liberalisation and Liberalization Era

The take-off of television era got a delay in India due to economic reasons as well as because of the skeptic attitude of authorities on the impact of such a medium. At last television started in India in 1959 with the aims "to train personnel and partly to discover what TV could achieve in community development and formal education" (Kumar, 2012, p. 296). In independent India, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) form and develop policies and regulations related to information, broadcasting and that of film sector in the country from time to time. Table 1 & 2 provides an overview of the milestones in the growth and development of television broadcasting in India. .

The general classification of television era falls into three periods: (i) 1959–1980: the experimental and developmental period, (ii) 1981-1990: the expansion period and (iii) 1991 onwards: the period of satellite communication and technological revolution. The first two of these periods can be catalogued in the pre-liberalisation era and the third, in the liberalization era.

Television in pre-liberalisation era (1959 – 1982)

Two clearly identifiable stages in the period between 1959 and 1982 marked the growth of Indian television—the experimental stage (1959–1965) and growth or developmental stage (1966–1982). The initial six years were a testing period with an hour telecast per week comprising of three twenty minutes programme from the Delhi AIR station with signal strength to reach 40 kilometers around. Regular programmes were started from 1965 with gradual increase in the duration of telecasts thereafter.

Television carried out its educational function through the following programmes in the first period. (i) The media-oriented school education experimented in collaboration with Ford Foundation in 1961 in 150 schools in Delhi for an audience of 20,000 higher secondary School children which continued till 1965. Understanding the usefulness, it was later resumed after one year as a one hour daily programme based on school curriculum. (ii) Increase in agricultural production was a necessity and 'Krishidarshan' was started in 1967 and has been continuing for educating the farmers on new methods of farming (iii) India experimented with the potentials of television in a biggest manner through the SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) - a one-year plan (1975-76) to carry out transmission of educational programmes for children and instructional programmes for general audience to 2400 villages spread over six States in India viz. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. This huge-scale experiment was materialized in collaboration with NASA, USA using the American Technology Satellite (ATS-6). The formative, process and summative years of this programme spread across a decade (1967 -1977). The sociological and technical criteria used for the selection of the SITE cluster—backwardness, potential to continue the television service, availability of basic infrastructure and size of the population ranging from 500 to 5000 (Rani, 2006, p. 15) and the content of the different programmes transmitted themselves highlight the objectives and functions of TV of the time. The television programmes of four hours duration daily included the themes such as agriculture, health and nutrition, family planning, adult literacy and science education.

Meanwhile, *Doordarshan* performed the function as a disseminator of information in various ways. News bulletins of five minutes duration became an integral part of the regular one-hour telecast from 1965 (Kohli-Khandekar, p. 80). As the hours of broadcast increased, the number of news bulletins and the time allotted for them also increased. 'News' as an account of an event or situation, at the very outset, gives information about the event/situation or updated information on it. In addition, all the educational programmes contained important information in them regarding the subject covered, viz. health, hygiene, agriculture, family planning, benefits of literacy and so on.

Feedback collected from audience about the shows were seriously considered in the production of new programmes and in the decisions taken related to the modification in the transmission system. TV was seen as a medium of instruction and social education. Researches on the agricultural transmissions, although criticized for the adoption model used, revealed that they enhanced the idea of community television for rural development (Agrawal, 2000, pp. 130-32). It also explains the role television communication played in the community building process. The 2011 census data showing the literacy rate of the population in Kheda (the SITE area) as above

70 per cent (more than the national average) can be understood as a long term impact and achievement of the concept planned and conducted forty years ago. However, it has been observed that India could not make profitable utilization of such a crucial and wide use of satellite technology for transmission implemented as early as in 1970s. The reasons cited note that the significant experiment of SITE took place during the time of emergency, a period of relentless political control that imposed strict restrictions for the media which was again succeeded by years which lacked political vision to utilize such huge and efficient medium (Rani, p. 5).

Entertainment programmes got their entry in the television during this period through film songs, nukkad natak, educational dramas etc. Pro-governmental programmes telecasted portraying government as the "chief architect" of development in the country (Sharma A. K., p. 130) and a few election campaigns by political parties during election times can be categorized in the publicity and propaganda functions of mass media (Shodhganga, p. 57). For administrative purposes of a quickly growing medium, the television broadcasting was separated from AIR with the name Doordarshan and thereafter both of them functioned as two wings under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Sharma A. K., 2012, p. 130). Thus the first period was a successful experiment with the technology to find out the potentials of TV as a medium to reach the masses at large, and to prove the effectiveness of employing mass communication and television as tools for nation's development and for achieving desired changes and growth in people's lives. It was also a successful demonstration of the optimisation of media facilities and potentials of media/creative communication through different programmes for bringing out social changes and community building. These years also revealed how people would receive and use the new medium of television, and how the television messages can influence changes in the lifestyles and conduct of the vast number of people. In addition, news bulletins and other publicity contents assisted the government and authorities to be connected with the masses in the process of nation building.

Expansion period (1982 – 1991)

The Delhi Asian Games of 1982 (Asiad) was a landmark in the growth of television communication in India. Two important technological advancements happened: India going for colour television and live telecasting of Asian Games events. The number of houses with colour TV increased hugely providing a viewership of about 12 million to *Doordarshan*. This Large scale expansion was achieved with the help of INSAT (Indian National Satellite) and establishment of 355 terrestrial transmitters, nationwide (Rani, pp. 6, 27). No private enterprises were allowed to enter the sector – either to set up television stations or to transmit television signals.

It can be observed that the need to keep the social agenda, demand for entertainment content and the interest to generate revenue through advertisements were the factors that determined the functions as well as the kind of programmes televised in these years. Although television communication remained as the sole privilege and property of *Doordarsahn*, the authorities tried to cater to the needs of different audience with DD1- the national network, DD2 – the metropolitan entertainment channel and DD-Regional language channels. The first soap opera of 1984, *Hum Log* was a family story with an underlying theme that could educate the viewers with the message of family planning. It is recorded that of the 3.6 million television sets in India at that time, more than eighty percentage used to be tuned to that soap opera every week (Kohli-Khandekar, p. 82). According to Table 6, the number of households with television sets rose from 1.1 million in 1979 to 22.5 million in 1989 and the revenue from advertising on TV alone increased during this period from 61.6 m in 1979 to 1612.6 million rupees in 1989. The gross revenue from commercial advertisements rose to 2538.5 million during 1990-91. The single largest advertisement-earner during the decade was the television serial Mahabharat (574.2m) followed

by Ramayan (244.0 m) and then by serial Buniyad (88.7m). (Agrawal S. , 1993, p. 40) In 1990-91, 70 per cent of *Doordarshan's* annual expenditure was met with the advertisement revenue (Sharma A. K., 2012, p. 131).

The cable television, which was essentially evolved to enhance reception in remote and hilly areas where poor terrestrial signals hindered the reception, heightened the expansion of television communication. The emergence of cable network era in the metropolitan cities granted a new option for enjoying more entertainment schedules with their TV sets. The cable network also flourished with the advertisement sponsored entertainment genres. (Kumar, pp. 301-404)

Surveys revealed that the educational transmission by University Grants Commission, 'Country-Wide Class Room' began in 1984, which targeted students as its primary audience grew into a well accepted programme consumed by a high percentage of housewives and senior citizens. Understanding the high demand for educational schedules, UGC invested enormous amount of money for the production and transmission of academic and tutorial compositions. For example, an amount of one billion rupees was spent for high quality audiovisual production equipment (Rani, 2006). However, the monopoly of the government machineries in broadcasting resulted in *Doordarshan's* position as "an insipid propaganda machine" used by the influential and powerful persons (Mitra and Kaul 1982 quoted in Mehta, p. 7).

The highlights of the second period can be summed up as:

- (i) The first half of 1980s witnessed two important technological advancements, the transition from black and white to colour Television through which a more closer-to-reality representation of the events became possible and the starting of live telecasts bringing national and international events to the drawing rooms as and when it happened.
- (ii) Programmes in regional languages and familiar content of religious serials provided a leap in the popularity of television with heavy rise in connections and viewership. Television became a national phenomenon during this period.
- (iii) The scope and potential of television to take messages to vast number of people invited the attraction of advertisers to use the medium to promote their products.
- (iv) Commercialisation of television escalated the quantity of entertainment genres like soap operas, situational comedies, dramas, musical programmes, quiz shows, feature films etc. Cable network coupled with the video cassette business brought in a unique direction to the television viewing.

In brief, by the beginning of the second period, television had established its role in society as a medium for effective dissemination of messages. Unlike the previous period that was testing the usability of the technology and adaptability of people to the medium from the Government's side, the second period showed a shift of demand from the people's side which resulted in huge increase in number of homes with television sets and adaptation to the medium and its genres. Another transition was that of the 'entertainment' function securing the centre-stage along with the 'information' function. In addition, 'advertising' became an inseparable component of television function as part of the revenue generation approach. Moreover, government, authorities and political party in power could make use of it for publicity and public relations and religious serials helped in uniting people accordingly. Hence television communication played the function of 'mobilization' on the basis of political and ideological grounds. Analysis reveals that this period also saw the efforts taken by *Doordarshan* to balance the original goals and objectives of television communication in India and its commercial compulsions.

Television in Liberalisation Era—Satellite Communication and Technological Revolution

The liberalisation era of television communication in India is alloyed with the “economic, technological and political factors” of the time (Mehta, p. 7). It is the era of transnational communication through cable and satellite television that began with the flow of global content to Indian viewers in 1991. India switched its position from as a State of highly regulated media policies and that with a monopoly of government in the sector, to a deregulated open broadcasting market (Kishan-Thussu, 2011, p. 74) ending the single channel era and entering the multi channel era of “stiff competition” (Vijayalakshmi, 2005, p. 25). This was followed by unforeseen growth of cable network, and availability and accessibility to foreign television programmes and multichannel televisions. While the number of cable operators in India in 1985 was merely 100, the number rose to 10,000 by the end of first quarter of 1991 and to about 70,000 by 1996. The growth of satellite channels rose to a stunning 500 per cent in the first year (Vijayalakshmi, 2005, pp. 53, 19). The magnitude of diversified discussions on news and events has been a peculiarity of Indian channels and by 2010 India had “70 dedicated news networks” (Kishan-Thussu, 2011, p. 74)

The sudden changes emerged in the communication industry got reflected in the broadcasting style, the kind of content made available to the TV viewers and the style of distribution. The media market has changed. The transnational channels that had been already experimenting with and profiting from the media industry prospects in Western and other open-economy countries could utilize the consumer (audience) market with varied and niche contents. Subsequently, there emerged special interest programming channels for sports, movies, news, cartoons like ESPN, Discovery channel, National Geographic channel, Star News, NDTV 24x7 etc. to mention a few. Channels like Star Plus providing syndicated programmes of American shows, regional language channels catering to the language diversity of India and niche programmes of audience of different demography. The highlights of the new era of free communication through satellite channels include the availability of 24 hour News channels that feeds off, and into, India's long dialogic and argumentative tradition of heterogeneous debate (Mehta, 2008, p. 7).

The media scenario witnessed two parallel situations of broadcasting during the post liberalization years – *Doordarshan* as the public broadcasting television in India with specified social objectives regarding its content and working, and the private satellite channels without any such bindings of social development on programme content but need only to follow the general codes of self regulation issued by the government from time to time. *Doordarshan* under Prasar Bharati Corporation is bound to follow the objectives of Prasar Bharati Act 1990 that goes along the same line with those before liberalization era (Prasar Bharati, 2011):

- (i) Upholding the unity and integrity of the country and the value enshrined in the Constitution
- (ii) Promoting national integration, safeguarding citizen's rights and to be informed on all matters and presenting fair and balanced flow of information
- (iii) Paying attention to the fields of education and spread of literacy, rural development, health and family welfare and science and technology
- (iv) Creating awareness about women's issues and taking special steps to protect the interests of children, the aged, and other vulnerable sectors of society
- (v) Providing adequate coverage of the diverse cultures, sports and games and the youth affairs
- (vi) Promoting social justice, safeguarding the rights of working classes, minorities and tribal communities
- (vii) Expanding broadcasting facilities and promoting research and development in broadcast technology

The satellite channels have to regulate their contents in compliance to the general restrictions imposed to all media through statutes, codes or self-regulation and guidelines by the government, and the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. Accordingly, the 'Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards' of the News Broadcasters Association that represents the private news television broadcasters (NBA) and the 'Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News and Current Affairs Television Channels' of Indian Broadcasting Foundation describe their principles and guidelines of self-regulation.

The transmissions from the sky threatened the *Doordarshan* by taking away its audience providing more attractive content and formats. *Doordarshan's* endeavours to handle the situation during 1994-95 included forming one more national channel by networking the second channels of Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta stations, modifying the contents offered and extending the reach to 18 more metro cities, launching a Development Channel and an International Channel (Sinha, 1996, pp. 218-19). As it became mandatory for *Doordarshan* in 1994 to raise revenues through advertisements, the advertisers' interests gained preference in determining the programme content. This led to the situation of reduction in importance to educational and extensional programmes. For example, the well received educational programmes of UGC-CWCR had to be moved to unimportant telecast timings and reduction of duration of the programme. The afternoon slot of UGC programme was sold in 1998 to a soap opera and the former was pushed to the early hours of 5.30 am and the time of one hour to half an hour. That means, the educational programmes got sidelined as they could not compete with the entertainment/infotainment genres like soap operas, news, music videos, reality shows, film-based programmes etc, in attracting advertisers. In order to overcome this, the new idea of telecasting educational programmes in regional languages was launched by AVRC Mysore achieving huge success by attaining a reach of 70.1 per cent and accessibility to 76.2 per cent of population (Rani, pp. 27-31). In 2004 UGC started its 24 hour educational channel, *Vyas*, in order to continue catering its huge audience.

News networks grant a new 'publicness' to older cultures of debate and dissent, mediating them to a larger audience (Mehta, p. 7). Indian audiences' preference for information content and democratic debate accelerated the number of news channels by 2010 to more than seventy incomparably higher than that in any other country. At the same time, proliferation of infotainment trends, as in many other parts of the world, entered all genres including news such as domination of cinema, sports and celebrity culture (Kishan-Thussu, 2011, p. 74).

Moreover, the various programmes offered by the channels incorporate the latest technologies that make the audience active and interactive such as SMS messages, audience polls, live public debates, phone-in-debates etc. (Mehta, p. 7). Audience began more active partakers of television viewing through their participation as 'voters' for finalising the winners of reality shows, phone-in programmes etc. This led to a very important dimension of 'mobilisation' function of media which can be illustrated based on the impact of reality show, *Indian Idol* on the people of Northeast India. In Meghalaya, a region where distrust and rivalry prevailed due to community tensions related to tribal-nontribal divide, the TV programme acted as a catalyst for mobilizing the people for unity. The reality show 'Indian Idol' in which two young men from Northeast India qualifying as the finalists in 2007 exposed the enormous possibility of satellite television for "identity formation and political mobilization in a land divided across various registers: caste, ethnicity, religion, language, and sharp income divides". The national and local politicians used the occasion as an opportunity for unifying people encouraging them to vote for the finalists from their region. Nalin Mehta quotes the study by Jaideep Mazumdar (2007) on Politics of Meghalaya, "When the history of Meghalaya is written, it could well be divided into two distinct phases: one before the third Indian Idol contest and another after it. The agent of change: Amit Paul, the

finalist of the musical talent-hunt on a TV channel.” (p. 2). This brings up another dimension of the mobilization function of mass communication happening through the new types of entertainment programmes broadcasted across cultures and regions. The demand for entertainment content and immense growth of channels followed flourishing of cultural industries and mass media related businesses.

There have been many discourses on the impact of globalised media on people of India. To mention a few: the economic, cultural, moral and identity of the middle class (Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009), the empowering or disempowering of the rise of popular culture on women (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2009), influences of exposure to Foreign Television Programmes (Vijayalakshmi, 2005) and effect of advertisements on Indian youth and children (Veer Kumar & Jaiswal, 2015). If the function of ‘transmission of culture’ through mass media in the pre-liberalisation era meant that of the dominant class, caste, religion or political ideology in the country affecting the smaller cultures and subcultures, the case is different in the satellite communication era. In many studies related to the impact on culture, the main criticism is the possible submersion of local culture and spread of foreign or western culture. Channels like France’s Fashion Channel, MTV etc. and programmes like Big Boss are still subjects of concern and research (Rampal, 2001, pp. 115-16). Holden and Scrase argue that the growing trend of commercialized culture in the everyday life of the people visibly announces the global commercialized media’s influence on them. In addition, exposure to television programmes is culturally significant as it has a ‘globalizing influence’ – the liberal-minded urban and rural middle class accepting the cultural changes and moving to a homogenized ‘modernity’ with the other parts of the modern world. This is followed by a new cultural identity leading to “loss of one’s language, customs and traditions”. (Holden & Scrase, 2006, pp. 56-57)

Another dominant function emerging is the empowering function of television communication. The middleclass sections, women, the sections of society who have been treated as ‘low’ castes are increasingly reconsidering their lifestyles and practices in the contemporary India. The stage for change has been set with opportunities and advancements in education. The exposure obtained through global media is opening doors to the culture of freedom and empowerment to them. The digitization of the consumption-end is providing the power to the audience to select and choose the channels and programmes and watch them at their convenience, though the devices can convert the audience automatically as samples studied by media research companies to check the viewing habits.

Thus it can be summarized that the liberalization era witnessed revolutionary changes in the field of television communication in India with an emphasis to market-driven objectives and functions. The function of providing information took a deviation by intertwining it with the entertainment function in order to get the continuous attraction of the audience leading to the evolution of the new function ‘infotainment’ and more than seventy 24-hour News channels ‘entertain’ the audience with news content using various genres. During this period the media industry flourished as one of the most profit making industries and saw a huge rise in the number of players in the media market. Commercialization led to immense outpour of foreign programmes or their Indian imitations or replicas that are sponsored by advertisements. The television industry played an important role in the expansion of entertainment industry in the country. In turn, gave its part to the economic growth of the country also.

The public service broadcaster *Prasar Barati* and its television *Doordarshan* also had to compete with the private entertainment channels in two ways - providing matching content in quality and formats for capturing the audience and thereby keep the audience rating points high to attract the advertisers. Hence the intended social and educational objectives got sidelined in

many ways. However, the educational channel Vyas and the UGC programmes being broadcasted tried to manage this insufficiency.

Another area of significant change was that of the media ownership. The liberalization period has seen the shift of monopoly of the government in the broadcasting to market of competition with many private and transnational players. The technological developments are yet another area that assists the changes in the functions of mass media. The entire scenario of media production, distribution and consumption patterns also shifted due to the huge advancements in the communication technologies. Digitisation facilitates the growth of individual consumption patterns and media consolidation. Individuals can access and consume specific programmes or genres of their choice on devices such as laptops, smart phones etc.

The pre-liberalisation era focus was on extension and developmental messages. The programmes were hence educational, instructional and informational in nature and the medium performed the same functions. But it can also be seen that with the inclusion of entertainment programmes and commercials, story started changing. During the second stage of pre-liberalisation period (about ten years in the 1980s), the television broadcast system in India passed through certain important changes—technologically, programme-wise and with respect to commercialization and revenue generation.

In the pre-liberalisation era, the functions were determined by the government and the message content was decided, planned and implemented by the government and authorities. Business motives were comparatively lesser in this period than the latter period of liberalization as mass communication and television were viewed as tools for social development and social reforms, although *Doordarshan* got commercialized in the 1980s.

The drastic changes in functions in the liberalization era included providing international content, pattern and quality of programmes. Business and market functions that are inseparable part of industrialization led television communication perform paramount economic functions in the society as revenue generator, provider of job opportunities, and provider of communication content according to the interests of the audience in addition to the historical functions as provider of information, education, entertainment, facilitator of mobilization and as a promotional platform for advertisers. Digitization and availability of television contents on laptops and mobile phones maximize the opportunities for individual consumption, therein leading to the function of satisfying personal needs.

In the liberalization era, the media contents or programmes are conceived, edited and produced with the global ideology of entertainment. The demand/choices of audiences are given preference and programme contents and programme formats are changed from time to time accordingly. Along with that they are also impacted by foreign contents and formats. The period also saw a prominent role of advertisers in determining the media content based on target audience, market, profit etc.

In general can be seen that there have been additions of functions happening in each stage of mass communication and not any removal or replacement of old functions though the order of dominance shifted in different periods. The ownership and objectives have important roles in determining the functions performed by media in society.

Conclusion

The developments and changes in the Indian broadcast media landscape have direct relationships with the government policies from time to time than the technological advancements in the field that happened at the international level. The analysis points towards the peculiarity of Indian history of television – implementation of the technology by the government and bringing policies

along with or before the implementation of every stage of its development. Whereas, in the Western world it was the private companies that initiated the development of technologies first and government intervened with regulations later.

It is brought forth that there has been a progressive development in the functions performed by television communication from the start of television era in India. The functions got added up from time to time in each stage and era and they have been an integral part of the social, political, economic and cultural changes in independent India.

Another important conclusion emerged is the television communication's empowering function performed through providing exposure to other cultures, helping in identity building and providing sense of powerfulness to the audience who belong to different strata of society. Further, niche programmes and option to choose and demand; record and watch/consume at convenience; interact while viewing etc. calls to define another function of need satisfaction through mass media consumption. More exploration and researches are required to assert the extent of these functions by mass media though these have been proved as the power of the active media user in 'Uses and Gratification' studies.

Many questions can be asked with a critical perspective - whether television is creating a cultural crisis by submerging or destructing the rural and minor cultures through bringing the global and dominant cultures, whether the market functions performed such as facilitating economic growth, job opportunities etc. can justify the shifts in the objectives as a mass medium, and what impacts and influences would be there on a country like India with the huge population of youth in the long run and so on. These elaborate the scope for further research.

Table 1. Chronological development of Indian television broadcasting

Year	Important Events
1959	TV introduced in Delhi as part of AIR's services on September 15 as an experimental service
1965	Daily broadcast of an hour was set as a regular service
1966	Verghese Committee recommended autonomous National Broadcast Trust
1968	Increase in the duration of television service
1969	Agreement for SITE experiment with NASA, USA
1972	Second TV Station in Bombay on October 2, 1972
1973	TV Stations in Srinagar and Amritsar on January 26, 1973
1975	New stations named as <i>Doordarshan</i> Kendra in Calcutta (August 9, 1975), Madras (August 15, 1975), and Lucknow (November 27, 1975); SITE was launched in 2400 villages of six States for a year
1976	<i>Doordarshan</i> was constituted and television broadcasting separated from All India Radio
1980	Sponsored programmes began with commercial telecasted
1982	INSAT-1A launched, Beginning of colour TV era, <i>Doordarshan</i> established national network linking all DD stations through INSAT-1A. Satellite stop functioning for a month. National telecast of <i>Asiad</i> games
1983	INSAT-1B launched followed by linking of <i>Doordarshan</i> stations again
1984	<i>Doordarshan</i> with its largest number of transmitters became the public service broadcaster with the largest terrestrial network in the world: First sponsored serial ' <i>Hum Log</i> ' telecast, UGC's educational programme, Country Wide Classroom Project began from August 15, 1984
1985	Limited decentralization of broadcasting with the start of regional television network in Maharashtra; formation of two separate departments for Posts and Telecommunications, Creation of VSNL for running international telecommunications
1987/89	Beginning of morning and afternoon transmission
1990	Prasar Bharati Bill was passed by Indian Parliament after many amendments
1991	CNN's war coverage available through cable networks, STAR beamed its satellite channels to India in May
1992	Zee started Hindi channel as a part of STAR network
1993	Four additional satellite channels and regional channels in 10 languages by <i>Doordarshan</i>
1994	<i>Doordarshan</i> was ordered to raise its own revenues for future expansion
1995	DD launched international channel, Supreme Court's landmark judgment on 'air wave as public property, not the monopoly of the government', Ram Vilas Paswan Committee on National Media Policy, Cable (Television Network) Regulation Act promulgated

1996	Draft Bill for the establishment of an independent authority for broadcasting communication Broadcast Regulatory authority of India, the joint industry body of advertisers, ad agencies and channels chose the television audience measurement as the audience rating method
1997	Broadcast Bill was notified as Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, Prasar Bharati Board (Broadcasting Corporation of India) the statutory autonomous authority was constituted on September 23, 1997 converting AIR and DD as government corporations under the MIB
1999	New Telecom Policy, 1999 – mobile and internet services at low price
2000	Cable TV Networks Amendment Bill making it mandatory to carry three DD channels in the prime band, permission to all broadcasters to uplink from India adhering to the advertising and broadcast codes
2001	Communication Convergence Bill of Department of Telecommunication was introduced in Lok Sabha proposing for an independent Communication Commission of India but being not passed on time, got lapsed, Direct-to-Home (DTH) Broadcasting services launched
2002	<i>Doordarshan</i> has 1242 TV transmitters; 40 million of the 75 million TV households have Cable and Satellite connection.
2004	TRAI becomes broadcast regulator, a map audience rating system was set up
2006	Draft Bill – Broadcasting Service Regulation Bill lapsed as it was not passed by Parliament in 2007
2007	Broadcast Audience Research Council was established
2008	Self regulation guidelines for the broadcasting sector, 2008 by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Ministry amended the downlinking guidelines to enable IPTV (Internet Protocol TV) services and issued policy guidelines for the provision of IPTV services in India
2009	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued policy guidelines for head-end in the sky
2011	Legislation making cable digitization mandatory by the end of 2014
2013	TRAI enforced the Cable Act on advertising time and certain norms of advertising code on TV channels
2014	Digitisation of consumption-end. Set-Top-Boxes became compulsory for cable users

Table 2. Growth of television in India

Year	Total TV Homes (Million)	C & S Homes (Million)	DTH Homes	Revenue Streams (Million Rupees)			Total Revenues (Million Rupees)
				Advertising	Cable/local Advertising	Subscription	
1959	0.000021	None	None	None	NA	None	NA
1969	0.012303	None	None	None	NA	None	NA
1979	1.1	None	None	61.6	NA	None	61.6
1989	22.5	None	None	1612.6	NA	None	1612.6
1992	34.9	1.2	None	3950	NA	1008	4958
1993	40.3	3	None	4960	NA	2520	7480
1994	45.7	11.8	None	8480	NA	9912	18392
1995	52.3	15	None	13450	NA	18000	31450
1996	57.7	18	None	19750	NA	21600	41350
1997	63.2	Na	None	25840	NA	NA	NA
1998	69.1	29	None	33670	NA	34800	68470
2000	70	33	None	44390	NA	39600	83990
2001	79	40	None	47940	NA	48000	95940
2002	81.57	40.49	None	47170	NA	48588	95758
2003	NA	49	NA	50940	5000	88200	144140
2004	100	55	NA	58020	5500	99000	162520
2005	108	61	3.75	67460	6050	111600	185110
2006	112	68	5.2	60500	6655	131760	198915
2007	117	72	8	71100	7320	144000	22420
2008	123	83	15	82000	8052	167400	249400
2009	123	91	20	88000	8857	199800	296657
2010	134	103	24	103000	9742	228600	341342
2011	141	116	40	116000	9742	253800	379542
2012	148	120	51	124800	9742	266400	400942

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