

Research Paper :

Televiwing and academic activities of children

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ABSTRACT

This study was taken up to find out the duration of televiwing and study hours of children in relation to their academic activities. A sample of 500 children between the age groups of 9-12 years (termed as younger age group) and 12-15 years (termed as older age group) was selected for the study using a questionnaire and a diary as a tool for collecting the data. The data were analysed using frequency and percentage, mean, t-test and correlation coefficient. The study revealed that most of the variables of academic activities considered under the study were highly significant and positively correlated with duration of T.V. viewing. When the duration of T.V. viewing and study hours were evaluated, it revealed that frequency of T.V. viewing and study were more on weekdays than weekends. There was significant difference at the beginning and end of the academic session, between duration of T.V. viewing and study hours of children, on weekdays and weekends.

Key words : Televiwing pattern, Academic activities. Gender difference 9-15 yearsm, Academic sessions.

Television viewing is very common in all age groups *i.e.* children, adolescents, adults and aged people, but there are children who spend much of their time in India, many Indian homes have their television sets either linked with National Television Network or cable Network which decide the degree of TV watching by children which has also been rapidly increasing. The number of hours a child or youngster spends daily before TV is increasing and television environment is becoming the ruling environment in their lives.

Television has a number of beneficial influences upon children. Shukla and Kumar (1997) concluded that as a result of TV viewing, school children particularly younger ones, showed more inquisitiveness especially during classes related to general science. As a result of TV viewing, the general understanding and information seeking behaviour of the children did change, other effects include gains in cognitive development. Television presents child with a world that is often different from one he or she lives in. This means that though television, the child is exposed to a wider variety of viewing and knowledge which may differ from those provided by parents, teachers and peers.

Another study from the school of Public Health revealed that access to television has a direct association with children's hours of viewing and school-related activity. Children who do not have a television set in their bedroom spend about 40 minutes less per day watching TV or playing video and computer games than children who do and they read or do homework about 20 minutes more per day if their parents also set limits on television

viewing. The study, which was analysed data from nearly 1,200 sixth and seventh graders from 10 Boston- area middle schools, found that the students averaged approximately three hours and 20 minutes per day of viewing time, including playing computer/video games and spent an average of one hour and 36 minutes per day reading or doing homework (Harvard Gazette, 2001).

Television has radically altered the way we live exerting both positive and negative influence in our lives. Excessive television viewing has reduced one's attention span *i.e.* people cannot concentrate or hold attention for a long span of time. Channel surfing and shifting the focus of attention with a click on the remote control, affect the young and old alike. Children cannot sit long to study or to read serious matter, they read less, they play less and they socialize less, they cannot concentrate on any activity for too long. People prefer fast foods, want instant gratification and are becoming increasingly impatient and rest less (Plathottam in Assam Tribune, Media and Family, 2000). The present study is an attempt to study the televiwing pattern in relation academic activities of children.

METHODOLOGY

Study was conducted in Jorhat town of the state of Assam. Five hundred samples from five Assamese medium co-educational schools were selected including boys and girls between 9 to 12 years termed as younger age group and 12-15 years termed as older age group ever. For data collection, survey was conducted with the help of questionnaire. A diary was also prepared to collect