

Impacts of Television on family values and lifestyle in America

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Introduction

Media has been progressing rapidly, grasping every aspect of society in its visual representation and bringing about awareness to the masses, all over. In America, television has become a constant presence ever since it was introduced. It has been keeping devoted to the many hours of its visually enticing content, bringing about a continuous stream of entertainment for people to devote hours upon hours to it. Considering this, it has been researched that television has been competing with other forms of possibly defined human interaction, inclusive of interactions with family, friends, school, church, and work. Television has contributed to educating youth on topics of social values and norms, assisting them in developing an understanding of their surroundings and providing knowledge compromised on diversity. Television, for American households, has influenced their values, social values, and beliefs based on their self-presumed values, as well as those living with them, belonging to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Television shows have undergone many changes throughout the years, evolving based on the changes in preference and viewer selection.

Discussion

Television and its deliverance in the variety of shows for the audience have been a recent topic for researchers. Presently, one of the most common questions that gets looked into is, "What role is Television playing in the well-being of society?" Decade after decade, it has been noticeable that the world around us has advanced with every new development in the field of technology. Our societies develop through means of communication and the effective use of mass media. Regarding the media's role, American citizens rely mostly on the news delivered to them by sports, news, and entertainment. This indicates that every American household deems it an important commodity. However, like most commodities owned by individuals, television also has positive and negative impacts on its viewers. This brings it down to the fact of what kind of influence and information the viewer squeezes out of the content presented via television.

Television and its Racial Impact

In the past, American media mostly presented commercials and shows that featured Caucasian (White) actors and actresses. This continued on until the year 1970 when variations were introduced and diversity was brought around to revolutionize American media. The few minorities that did get to

be featured in commercials and shows, were portrayed negatively. For instance, the African American people who would get parts in shows would get roles of servants. In contrast, a Native American would get the prominent role of being featured as a warrior in a Western setting. This criterion negatively impacted social standards and attracted a lot of criticism towards the depiction of racial values in media.

In the years following 1970, American media companies brought major changes in their representation of media while focusing on households. Media companies started collecting data based on the income, status, age, education, and ethical criteria of American households that view their content. The data collected assisted in tailoring out content specific to accommodate their needs. During this time, another evident fact that came about was the concern that television network companies had shifted their focus from the rural and older audience to the urban and younger viewers (Kellner 1981, 31-62).

Television and Familial Values

During the year 1950, television was perceived as a source for bringing the family together, engaging them with entertaining shows. This was the most essential element that gave a proper meaning to “family entertainment.” It was observed in 1950 that most American households would only have one television set, meaning that many families would gather around to collectively watch the evening shows. Considering this fact enabled the network to create comical television shows that matched the masses’ preferences. Most of the fictional families shown on TV dominated the shaping of the familial values and real lives of many families in America.

Most of the families around the time of 1950 also depicted various forms of diversity in their lifestyle, which is notable for not fully presenting the American lifestyle as a whole. In the late 1950s, network-created sitcoms (Situation Comedy) rapidly gained popularity among various American families. Many of the sitcoms shown on television presented fictional families that displayed the lives of middle-aged, Caucasian families living in the suburbs. Donna Reed’s Shows, Father Knows Best, and Leave It to Beaver are notable shows that impacted familial values and became successful around this time. The start of the 2000s was when things picked up a new trend and many families started to own more than one television set. Around this time, the prior meaning of “family time” evolved and consisted mostly of individual viewing. Surveys indicated that families slowly drifted apart, viewing shows of their preference. This conclusively gave rise to a pattern that harmed the conceptual perception of American families. Individual viewing paved the way for social interaction and collective viewing slowly decayed and distanced children from their parents.

Although television is mostly criticized for adding distances within families, quite noticeably from recent surveys, it portrays that people have been drawn together. Most television shows have allowed friends to come together to watch their favorite shows together. Television shows such as “Game of Thrones”, “The Walking Dead”, and “Breaking Bad” are among a few examples of shows that gained

rapid popularity among the masses and quickly became their most obsessed shows. Some television shows aired today have displayed information based on society. The stories displayed in these television shows are relatable and describe the way individuals view the society around them and the facts they weren't aware of before.

Conclusions

Ever since it was introduced, television has brought positive and negative impacts on family values. It assisted in reshaping cultural and social values and aided in developing an understanding based on racial values and understanding of various diversities in cultural and familial values. 1950 depicted various forms of diversity in their lifestyle, which is notable for not fully presenting the American lifestyle as a whole. Regarding the media's role, American citizens rely mostly on the news delivered to them by sports, news, and entertainment. In the years following 1970, American media companies brought major changes in their media representation while focusing on households (Douglas 2016). Around the start of 2000 was when things picked up a new trend and many families started to own more than one television set. Around this time, the prior meaning of "family time" evolved and consisted mostly of individual viewing. Television has had a dominant impact on families and has played a prominent role in reshaping societies. Some television shows aired today have displayed information based on society. These television shows, based on fictional settings, brought forward suppressed stories, bringing the masses' focus toward educating themselves on different aspects of society. Families now are more engaged in discussing television than they were in the past. Much criticism has been given to the negative impact of television; however, there are positive influences that go unnoticed and are less debated.

Works Cited

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