Research Paper

Effect of Media on Human Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

In this era of technological advancement, media as technologies have dramatically affected the human behaviour and have easily drawn a connection between the virtual world and the real world. Digital technologies are not only the daily tools of communication, information and entertainment for people but have become omnipresent and an integral part of people's lives. In today's digital world, the media can give you ideas, it can inspire you to do certain things and drive you to initiate what you see. The media controls the society and is capable of changing human behaviour, living style and moral thoughts and consequences. Media reflects in two ways i.e. positive as well as negative; as media does not produces the real happening of a world, rather creates a new world. The main aim of this research is to study the impact of media on human behaviour. It also aims to create difference between the virtual and the real world. This study would be able to bring out whether trending mass media does influence the youth's behaviour so as to decide whether to act in a manner parallel to the virtual world or see the practical-real aspect. And also aims to examine the effect of time period of accessing media on the human behaviour. The research design used is 'Survey through Questionnaire' with an accidental sampling of 60 people between the age of 15-24 yrs (youth). The questionnaire includes questions pertaining to the subject's behaviour, influence, preference and thoughts. Everyday incidents relating to recent media trends is visible which leads people to commit acts which have been influenced by popular media and how such behaviour can be disastrous to human life. The newspaper articles shows the changes in human behaviour according to media which is also be studied to lay a base of media's psychological impact and further interpretation has been based according to the replies given to questionnaire as to what extent it can be influencing, harmful and how should media be utilised. The expectations from this research would be that the behavioural changes are brought by media in the youth and that these changes are quite significant which leads them to act accordingly.

Keywords: Media, Human Behaviour, Aim, Design, Media Trends, Virtual and Real World.

Media are considered as the catalyst of change and development, and expected to accelerate the process of social welfare and empowerment of all. The process of communication has created informed citizenry. Playing the role of gatekeeper, media has also contributed in people's empowerment, diffusion of innovations and ideology of progress and modernity. In a democratic country like India media has been perceived as the friend and voice of the

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masses against the odds of power, capital and exploitations. But is media actually performing such functions and has only benefitted the people?

Media is that digital technology which not only becomes the daily tools of communication, information and entertainment for youth but they have become an integral part of their lives. Youths of today have twenty four hours media access; they wake up with an alarm on cell phone, use various technologies during the day and ultimately go to sleep searching on internet either on their smart phones or with laptops in their laps. Large numbers of youths have access to different media technologies like television, computer, internet, and cell phone. This media gives us ideas, inspires us to do certain things and drives us to initiate what we see, thus clearly affects us. Everyone is affected by media who has an access to media. The media controls the society and the ones behind the media are the artists and designers which create a virtual world to be totally relatable with the real world. So that the link between the real world and the virtal world could be easily established and people tend to take the media contents as an integral part of their life, considering as a reality. The media is thus both positive and negative and is capable of changing human behaviour, living style and moral thoughts and consequences. Media is considered to be an ever changing development with whom the generations change as well.

Although media as a technology may have many positive aspects but, if it is in the wrong hands, it can become dangerous. For the youth they may be influenced by the media to do what they feel is good or exciting to them and their friends, and at the same time also avoid adult supervision. "Youth" is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. It is a categorized more fluid than a fixed group for age. However, the easiest way to define this group of youth is through age. The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.

Livingstone (2008) opines that for today's youth, the online world represents their space and may be adopted with great ardour because it visible to the peer group more than to adult surveillance, an exciting yet relatively safe opportunity to conduct the social psychological task of adolescence – to construct, experiment with and present a reflexive project of the self in a social context, and for some, as the refusal to obey communicative norms and also for other risk-taking behaviors. Media has thus become such an integral part of our life that it is unimaginable to live without media, because most of the times we depend upon mass media. Reason for this could be numerous such as health aspects, educational field, and balance of personal life or much more. It has been our necessity to have and involve mass media in our life.

On the other end, however media also affects the human behaviour in negative aspects, i.e., youngsters as well as others are who are misusing the media. Thus, media is also harming the society in many ways. This is *firstly* done by bringing chaos in the mass through misinterpreting the facts and *secondly* the media does not produce the real happenings of a world, rather creates a new world. Thus, my doing so media affects their behaviour which it turns affects the society badly. Media needs to be tolerated by the people as it has both positive as well as negative impact on people, which can be done by understanding the concept of two sides of the same coin, which gives the same value for it. The past studies have also reported both positive and negative impact of the media such as of the Internet on the daily lives of users in modern society. This negative impact caused by media has been a

topic of concern that the Internet has on students concerning the violent and sexual content and a displacement effect in such areas as of social relationships, including interaction with family and friends, physical activity and other leisure-time activities, such as of reading and playing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The evolution of Media was with the view of technological development to enhance knowledge, creativity and innovation. Joseph Klapper (1960) at Colombia University was concerned that average people exaggerated the power of media. He introduced what he called phenominist theory. He further contended with the help of this theory that media are relatively powerless when compared with other social and psychological factors such as group membership, social status, strongly held attitudes, education and so forth and rarely have any direct effects.

However, now it has been evident that a relation between, the media and its impact on the youth's change in behavior exists. Consequently, information can reach every audience and target groups in a real time and they can generate changes and tendencies. A Kaiser Family Foundation Study (2005) mentioned that media play a central role in the lives of the youths. Their homes, indeed their bedrooms, are saturated with media. They typically are among the early adopters of personal computers and are a primary target of much of the content of the World Wide Web.

Tapscott (1998) talks of growing up in a digital environment refers the youth as the - Net Generation. The "N-Gen" culture's main characteristics are: independence, emotional and intellectual openness, free expression and strong views, innovative, pleasure by the investigation, inclusion, preoccupation with maturity, immediacy, and sensitivity to corporate interest, authentication, and trust. (Tapscott, 1998).

This media thus having such a central role in youth's life and the youth themselves being continuously and overly dependent on media adapt to it and thus it creates an impact on their activities and behavior. Youth can be considered as those active agents who can create, manipulate, adapt and disseminate ideas and products through communication technologies (Berson and Berson, 2005).

A child's ability to make life choices is still under development during adolescence. (Berson and Berson, 2005). In fact, youths have especially been often considered as vulnerable to risky behaviours like the consumption of drugs or alcohol. Thus, development of this technology has also resulted in the dangerous online behaviour. The large descriptive and explained exhibition of unwanted material has not only been considered as a serious risk such as those of pornographic ads, but also the participation and the opportunity to become a part of controversial groups. Some youth may identify strongly with this sort of material and they may feel validated and encouraged to practice it. (Wolak, et al., 2003). Other forms of dangerous online behaviour include bullying. Consequently, harassment among peers has become unlimited thanks to the youth's access to the modern technologies. Bullying has occurred in a new territory, online (Li, 2006).

This relates to the Technological Determinism Theory, developed by Marshall Mcluhan in 1962, which states that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how the functioning of the society as we move from one technological age to another (Tribal- Literate- Print- Electronic- Social media). It further explains that through the

current technology that is available, individuals learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages they receive. People then move these developed senses into their everyday lives and they want to use them again.

In relation to our aim, looking more specifically, the intensive or high levels of online participation or internet use has been associated with online risk. But, the simple use of internet cannot predict risk. Harvard University (2008) stated this in its report on Enhancing Child Safety & Online Technologies. It can be argued from the development perspective that in relation to the use of the internet by youth - the multiple sensory inputs can overwhelm children's capacity to engage in thoughtful decision making and are demanding on cognitive resources (Berson and Berson, 2005). Therefore, media has an impact on the youth in various ways.

Hypothesis
1. Media has significant affect on the behaviour of the youth and they are overly dependent, use excessively and are surrounded by it.
2. The duration of accessing media is directly in relation to its affect on human behaviour, i.e., more duration of accessing media leads to more behavioural effect and vice versa.

METHODOLOGY

Sample
Accidental sampling was used to select participants from the population. The sample consisted of 60 people in the age group of 15 to 24 years - both male and female from the city of Ranchi. The participants hailed from different schools and colleges. The participants were selected after following the given inclusion criteria:
1. The participants must be physically and mentally fit.
2. They shall fall under the age group of 15 to 24 years.
3. The participants must be able to read and comprehend English.

Measuring Tool
In order to test the hypothesis, a questionnaire design was administered. The questionnaire has 9 multiple choice questions in which 8 questions (1 to 8) have four options and the 9th question is further sub-divided into 6 parts which has two options each (as shown in Appendix 1). 1st question is about the most watched television programme. 2nd and 3rd question involves the time spend daily by youth on media and the purpose of accessing such media respectively. In the 2nd question if the subject selects the first option (less than 2hrs) he is not at all addictive, if he chose the second option (2-4 hrs) he is less addictive, and if he selects the third option (4-8 hrs) he is addictive or if the last option (more than 8hrs) he is highly addictive. According to hypothesis if the person is addictive or highly addictive the affect of media would be much more. The 4th question asks about the reliability of the subject on the particular television programme. From the 5th to the 8th question, each question asks about the behavioural change brought in the subject by the use of media in different ways. This behavioural change can be answered by four different options of never, seldom, often and always; which means that media has never affected behavioural change in subject or seldom or often or always brings behavioural change. The last question, i.e., the 9th question gives media created situations to the subjects to understand their behaviour when they use media. There are two options for each six parts, i.e. accordingly and differently. Accordingly would mean that behavioral change is visible in the subject and differently would mean just the opposite.

Research Design
The research design of this report is qualitative i.e. using questionnaires. This design has been selected because this study focuses on measuring the behaviour of youth and to analyze the impacts of media on them. Human behavior is highly unpredictable and varies a lot. Thus, it cannot be mathematically calculated.

Procedure
The questionnaire was conducted through Google form which was further sent to the participants through the Google groups, Whatsapp groups and also the hyperlink of the Google form was sent to their personal accounts. The questionnaire was only filled after their implied consent and no force was used. Instructions for filling up the questionnaire were attached along with and also the reason of such survey was conveyed. In addition, they were told that (i) they would have an unlimited amount of time to complete the questionnaire; (ii) they were not to tell any other participant whether they had completed the questionnaire or simply given up; and (iii) they were asked to fill the form according to their own experiences. This procedure was followed to prevent the participants from being influenced of some groups, seeing others give up or answer similarly.

Immediately after each participant completed his/her questinnaire, he/she was thanked for the contribution to this report. The Google form was further analysed to develop a result.

RESULT

Time Spent on Media / Change in Behaviour	Less than 2 hrs	2 – 4 hrs	4 – 8 hrs	More than 8 hrs	Total no. Of Subjects
Not at all	10	09	02	01	22
Very low	02	07	02	00	11
Moderate	05	14	05	00	24
Very high	00	01	00	02	03
Total	17	31	09	03	60

Table 1. Shows the number of subjects whose behavior changes according to the time spend on media. This table has been drawn out of two questions, i.e. 2nd and 5th question from the questionnaire (As shown in Appendix 2). According to this table, when the 17 subjects spend less than 2 hours on media, 10 subjects out of these have no change in their behavior. While 2 subjects have very low change, 5 subjects have moderate change and very high change is not experienced by any subject. Similarly, when the 31 subjects spend 2 to 4 hours on media, 9 subjects out of these have no change in their behavior. While 7 subjects have very low change, 14 subjects have moderate change and very high change is experienced by only one subject. Similarly, when the 9 subjects spend 4 to 8 hours on media, 2 subjects out of these have no change in their behavior. While 2 subjects have very low change, 5 subjects have moderate change and very high change is not experienced by any subject. Similarly, when the other 3 subjects spend more than 8 hours on media, 1 subject out of these has no change in his behavior. While the other 2 subjects experience very high change in their behaviour. The overall change in the behavior caused by media, however high or low, is experienced by 38 (11+24+03) subjects out of the total 60 subjects, i.e. 63.33%. But less subjects are moderately or highly affected by media, i.e. 27 (24+3) out of 60 and less number of subjects access media for long durations, i.e. 12 (9+3) out of 60.

Connecting and applying Media contents into Reality
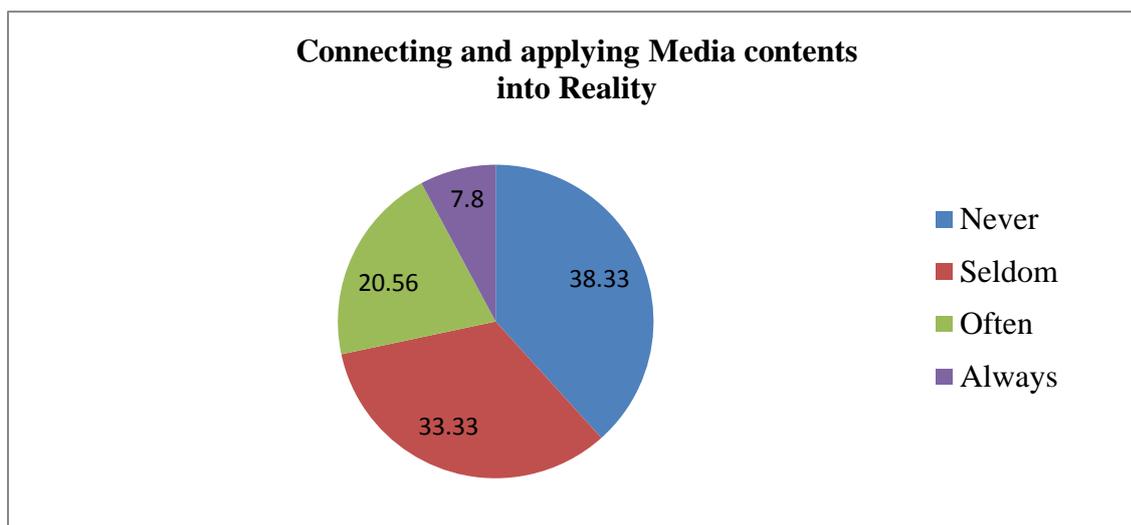
Pie Chart 1. Shows the different levels at which the subjects connect their real world and situations with the media contents or the reel world, and act or behave similarly when a similar situation shown in media occurs in the reality. This pie chart shows the cumulative data drawn out of the three questions, i.e. 6th, 7th and 8th question from the questionnaire (As shown in Appendix 3). According to this pie chart 38.33% of the subjects never connect themselves to the media or the reel world and thus do not behave according to the media contents. 33.33% of the subjects seldom feel a connection between their real world and the virtual world created by media. 20.56% of the subjects often feel this connection and their behavior are changed accordingly. While 7.8% of the subjects always feel a connection with the media. They tend to put their real life situations in accordance with the reel life situations and thus act accordingly. This shows that their behavior is highly affected by the media. They also tackle real life situations according to the similar situation shown in Media contents as cannot differentiate between the real world and the virtual world. This is because their decision making power is under development and are immature. Thus, this virtual world created by media highly influences their behaviour and so they are highly dependent on media.

Change in Behaviour according to or different from Media Created Situations
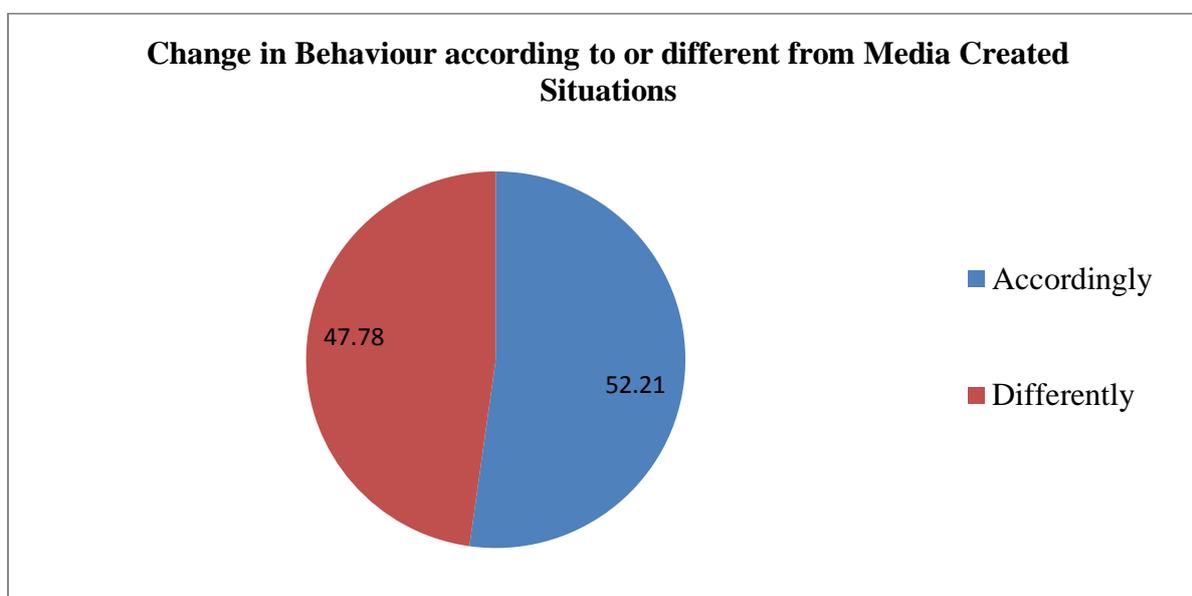
Pie Chart 2. Shows the change in the behavior of the subjects when certain situational media created scenes were given and the actual change in their own behaviour were experienced by the subjects in such situations. This pie chart has a cumulative data drawn out of the six sub-questions of the 9th question of the questionnaire (As shown in Appendix 4). According to this pie chart, 52.21% of subjects have acted or behaved according to the scenes or situations shown in media while 47.78% of subjects have acted differently and their behavior was not affected by media. Thus, more than 50% of subjects had experienced the affect of media and thus agree that behavioural changes were brought by such effect.

Although media caused change in behavior of the subjects, as 63.33% of the subjects were affected by media, but no significant effect of media was thus found on the youth as only 27 out of 60 subjects, i.e. 45% were found to be moderately or highly affected or influenced by media. Also the subjects were not mostly dependent and surrounded by media as only 12 subjects out of 60, i.e. 20% of the subjects used media for long durations. Also, only 28.36% (20.56% + 7.8%) of subjects were found to be mostly connected with media contents and applied them into reality. Also, only 52.21% of the subjects experienced change in behavior from the media created scenes.

DISCUSSION

Findings

The aim of this study was to find out the affect of media on the change in behavior of the youth and that how the time duration of accessing the media could also affect their behaviour. It was predicted that the media had significant affect on the behavior of the youth as they were overly dependent, used it excessively and were surrounded by it. In this study, after complete analysis it was found that the youth have very less influence of media on their behaviour, i.e. 45% of the subjects were only found to be moderately or very highly affected by media and only 28.36% of subjects were found to be mostly connected with media contents and applied them into reality. And also the youth do not spend much time on media as only 12 subjects out of 60, i.e. 20% of the subjects used media for long durations. However, it cannot be denied that media had affected the behaviour of the subjects, whether significant or not, as 63.33% have experienced this change. Thus, after the findings it can be concluded that the first hypothesis was wrong as youth do not have significant effect of media on their behaviour and neither they are overly dependent, use excessively or are surrounded by it. However, the second hypothesis of relation established between the time duration of accessing media and its effect on human behaviour is clearly visible and is correct as 7 out of 12 subjects were highly influenced by media, i.e. 58.33% subjects, due to excess use of media. The findings suggest that since most of the subjects do not use media for long durations and are not or less affected by media, and thus there is no or less significant change in the behaviour of these subjects. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected and the second hypothesis is to be accepted in this research.

Theoretical Implication

The findings of this study are partially consistent with the Technological Determinism Theory, developed by Marshall Mcluhan in 1962. This theory states that that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another. It further explains that we learn, feel and develop senses from these media contents and use it in our life. But an important factor of time was missing in this theory. Even the findings suggest this time factor, that the duration of time we spend on media directly affects our behaviour. This was explained as the intensive or high levels of online participation or internet use has been associated with online

risk. But, the simple use of internet cannot predict risk. Harvard University (2008) stated this in its report on Enhancing Child Safety & Online Technologies. With this high level of participation in media, youth tends to easily learn activities from media. Bandura (1986) argued that much of what you learn is learned vicariously through the media. According to his theory, there are four processes that must occur for vicarious learning to occur: Attention, Representational Process, Behavioural Production and Motivational Process. According to social learning theory, viewers are more likely to act aggressively if they watch media violence, remember it, practice it and somehow motivated to perform the violent behaviours. This can be seen from Table.1 where 5 out of 9 subjects who used media for 4-8 hrs experienced moderate change in behaviour due to media and also 2 out of 3 subjects who used media for more than 8 hrs experienced very high change in their behaviour due to media. According to the findings, the subjects had less participation with media as they used it for less duration of time, and this can be the reason that their behaviour was less likely to be affected by the media.

CONCLUSION

the results of this study provide some fascinating insights into the change in behaviour caused by media. It is clear that media does affect the behaviour of the person. And according to what we predicted, the time is an important factor in influencing the affects of media into the human and thus changing his/her behaviour. It can be seen that the longer is the duration of accessing the media, the higher is such behavioural effect on the person. Because of this, the findings of the research have changed from the first hypothesis. The youth is considered to be overly dependent and surrounded by media but the report suggests the otherwise. Since the duration of accessing media by youth is low, the affect of media on their behaviour resulted out to be low. Also, the media affects those who acknowledges it and is not mature enough to understand the difference between the reality and the virtual world shown by media. It is necessary to understand this difference in order to lessen the affect of media. The youth being more mature and being able to understand this difference than the children and adolescents, may be less affected by this media created world. However, the research may also suffer from certain limitations such as demographic limitation or technological limitation or the sample size was small and this may restrict the generalizability to the entire population of youth. Further investigation encompassing aforementioned limitations may lead to more accurate results.

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<u>Appendix</u>

Appendix 1. The questionnaire used as the measuring tool to test the hypothesis.

Effect of Media on Social Behaviour

Name _____

Age * _____

1. Which Television programme do you prefer to watch most of the time? *
Tick only one option.

    a. News
    b. Movies
    c. Sports
    d. Entertainment Shows

2. What amount of time do you spend on media (Television, Mobiles, Internet, etc.) ? *
Tick only one option.

    a. Less than 2 hrs
    b. 2-4 hrs
    c. 4-8 hrs
    d. More than 8 hrs

3. What is your main purpose of accessing media? *
Tick only one option.

    a. Entertainment
    b. Gather knowledge and information
    c. Mode of earning
    d. Learning

4. Which type of media or television channel do you think is reliable for valid information? *
Tick only one option.

    a. Information provided by News channels/Publishers
    b. Information provided through Movies
    c. Information provided in Social media
    d. Other: _____

5. Does the media or television programme bring any sudden change in your behaviour? *
Tick only one option.

    a. Not at all
    b. Very low
    c. Moderate
    d. Very high

6. Do you feel an internal urge to behave in the same manner the main character or the lead role or the person you are influenced by acts in the Television programme? *
Tick only one option.

    a. Never
    b. Seldom

  c. Often
  d. Always

7. Do you connect your real life incidents with the reel life incidents? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Never
  b. Seldom
  c. Often
  d. Always

8. When the reel life incidents becomes a reality (according to you), do you decide it to tackle in the same manner as it was done in the Television programme? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Never
  b. Seldom
  c. Often
  d. Always

9. Do you feel or behave according to the following scenes or the following news, or is your behaviour different? (i) When you see a superhero fly, fight and save the world, do you dream? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly
  b. Differently

(ii) When you see one hero defeating 10 goons, do you feel powerful? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly
  b. Differently

(iii) When you see the journey of a chaiwala becoming the Prime Minister, do you feel motivated? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly
  b. Differently

(iv) When you see an emotional scene relating to an orphanage, do you feel sympathetic towards orphans? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly
  b. Differently

(v) When you see funny animated shows, do you feel childish? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly
  b. Differently

(vi) When you see a movement, such as of agitation against Padmaavat, would you join it without seeing the movie and following the majority? *

Tick only one option.

  a. Accordingly

b. Differently

Appendix 2. The pie chart of 2nd question and 5th question respectively.

What amount of time do you spend on media (Television, Mobiles, Internet, etc.) ?

60 responses

Legend:
- Less than 2 hrs
- 2-4 hrs
- 4-8 hrs
- More than 8 hrs

(50%, 15%, 30%)
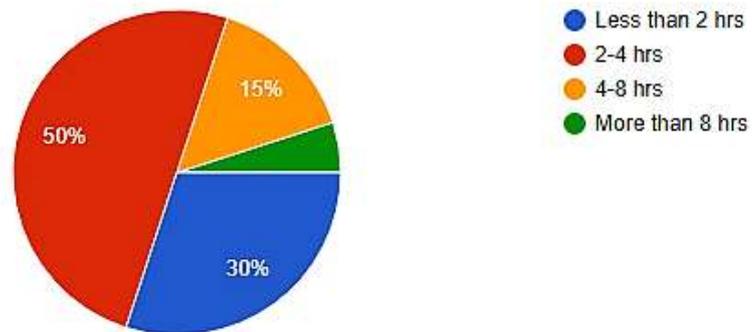
## Does the media or television programme bring any sudden change in your behaviour?

60 responses

Legend:
- Not at all
- Very low
- Moderate
- Very high

(40%, 20%, 36.7%)
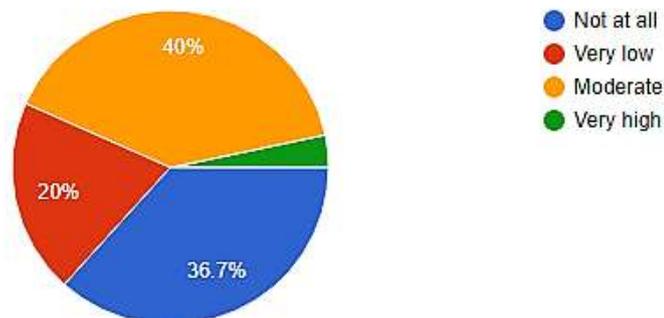
Appendix 3. The pie chart of 6th, 7th and 8th question.

Do you feel an internal urge to behave in the same manner the main character or the lead role or the person you are influenced by acts in the Television programme?
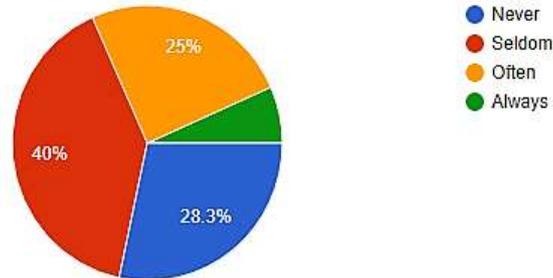
60 responses

Do you connect your real life incidents with the reel life incidents?

60 responses
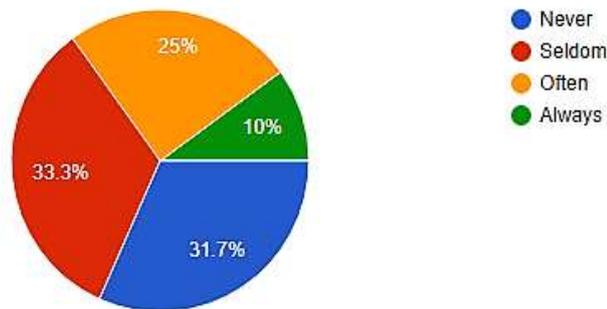
When the reel life incidents becomes a reality (according to you), do you decide it to tackle in the same manner as it was done in the Television programme?

60 responses
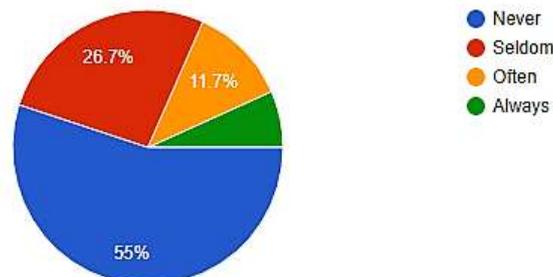
Appendix 4. The pie chart of the six sub-questions of the 9th question.

Do you feel or behave according to the following scenes or the following news, or is your behaviour different? (a) When you see a superhero fly, fight and save the world, do you dream?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

65%

35%
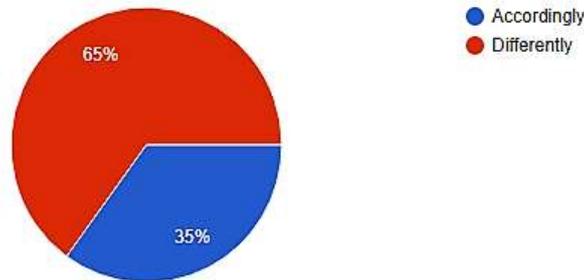
(b) When you see one hero defeating 10 goons, do you feel powerful?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

61.7%

38.3%
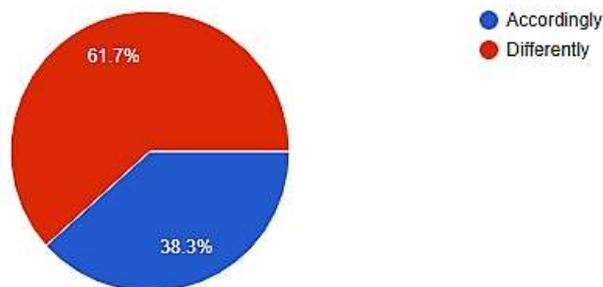
(c) When you see the journey of a chaiwala becoming the Prime Minister, do you feel motivated?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

36.7%

63.3%
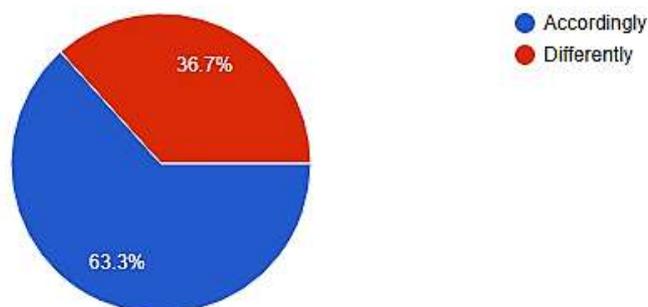
(d) When you see an emotional scene relating to an orphanage, do you feel sympathetic towards orphans?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

20%

80%
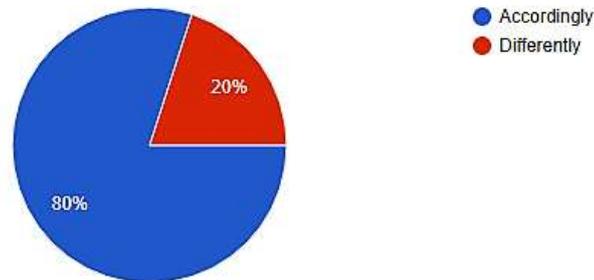
(e) When you see funny animated shows, do you feel childish?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

33.3%

66.7%
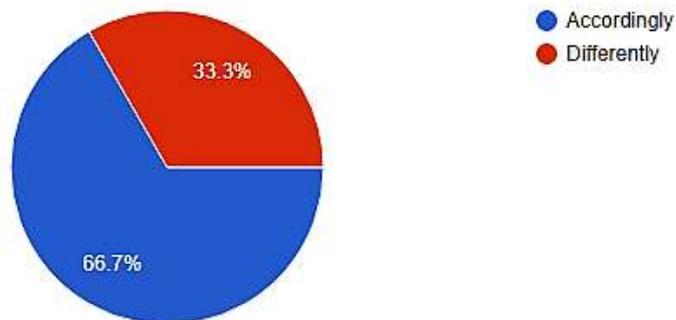
(f) When you see a movement, such as of agitation against Padmaavat, would you join it without seeing the movie and following the majority?

60 responses

- Accordingly
- Differently

70%

30%
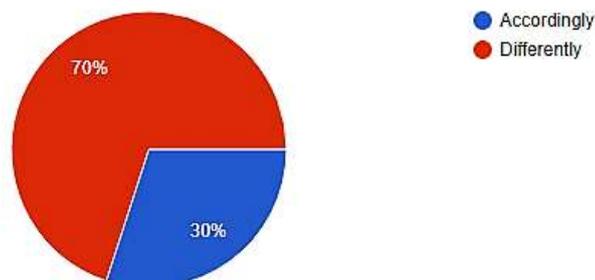
Appendix 5. This bar diagram shows the different age group of youth who participated in the questionnaire.
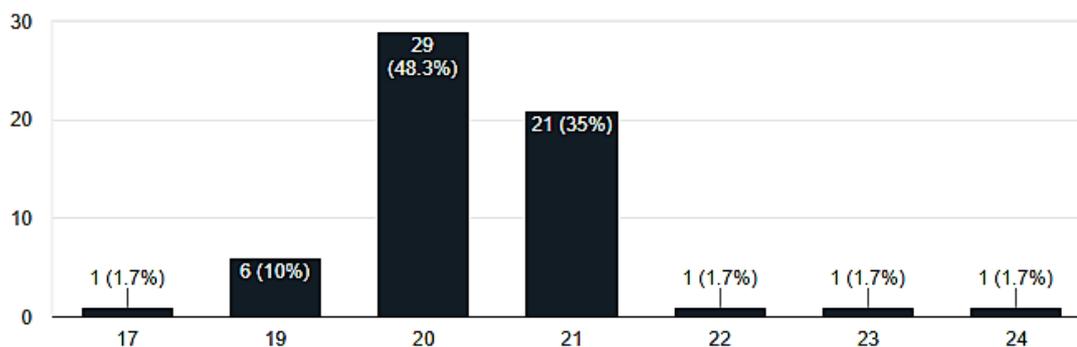
Appendix 6. This pie chart shows the television programmes preferred by the subjects. (1st question)
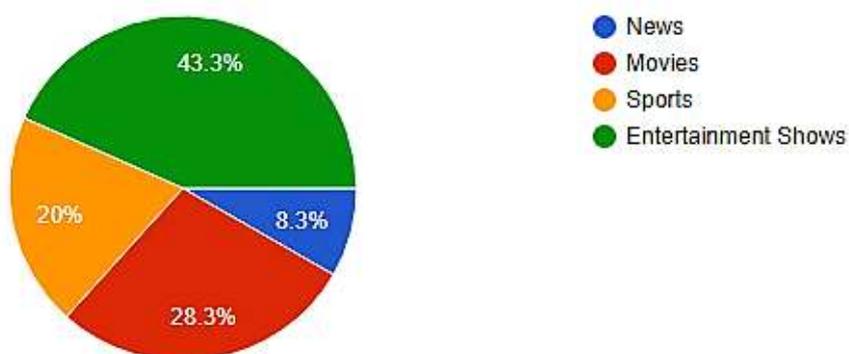
Appendix 7. This pie chart shows the main purpose of the subjects to access media. (3rd Question)

What is your main purpose of accessing media?

60 responses

- Entertainment
- Gather knowledge and information
- Mode of earning
- Learning

36.7%

10%

51.7%
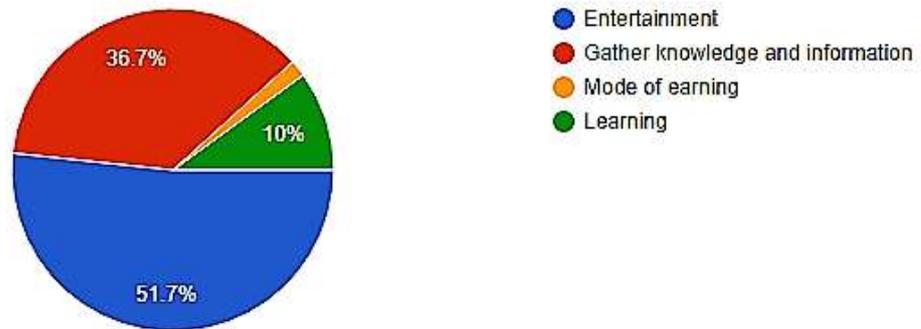
Appendix 8. This pie chart shows the most reliable channel according to the subjects. (4th Question)

Which type of media or television channel do you think is reliable for valid information?

60 responses

- Information provided by News channels/Publishers
- Information provided through Movies
- Information provided in Social media
- None. Research and corelating information received via various me...
- Particular website for that particular...
- Newspaper
- All of these
- national geographic and discovery

26.7%

56.7%