

**TELEVISION VIEWING HABITS OF ADOLESCENTS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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Objectives: There is little information on the television viewing habits and its impact on the adolescents from the developing world particularly India. This study aimed at assessing the extent and nature of television exposure of school going adolescents, its sociodemographic correlates and their psychosocial adjustments. Method: The study used a survey design with a self-report questionnaire administered to 1500 students in 10 schools. The mean age of the subjects was 15 ± 1.67 years and 52.6% were males. A preadolescent adjustment inventory was used to assess the psychosocial adjustment of students. Results: Ninety eight percent adolescents watched television daily and 20% were accustomed to viewing television alone. 68% adolescents had access to satellite channels. 72% of them preferred watching violence oriented shows and males liked them more than females. ($p \leq 0.05$). 57.2% of the children viewed the television for ≥ 2 hours per day and 8% viewed it for ≥ 4 hours. Parental income had no influence on the duration of television viewing whereas maternal education had a negative correlation. Adolescents who viewed television for a longer time (≥ 4 hrs.) had poorer scholastic performance and overall adjustment scores. ($p \leq 0.01$) Those who enjoyed violent shows and had longer viewing hours self reported violent behavior. Conclusions: This study emphasizes that television viewing habits and its negative impact on adolescents in the developing world are not different than those from the West. Thus pediatricians should be knowledgeable about the effects of media and thus play a role in educating parents and adolescents appropriately.

