

“World Television Day Nov 21”



Weekly Learnings 46 / 2023

Tomorrow is World Television Day. Television along with the mobile phone and the aircraft are three technologies termed the 'death of distance'. Here's my learnings on Television.

1. Television innovation was first demonstrated on September 7, 1927, in America. There were Russian examples before this but 1927 is taken as the official date. A Russian scientist Constantin Perskyi coined the term Television RCA invested \$50 million then and the screen size was 5 inches by 12 inches. TV broadcasting started in 1928 and BBC started in 1930.
2. BBC established itself as a quality and trusted player. BBC was funded by a tax on sales of Television sets.
3. Television was introduced in every country by the government to be a mouthpiece for government propaganda.
4. Television was opposed when it began because citizens felt that people would stop reading books. Television was called "the idol box" for two reasons - its non-interactive nature and the early broadcast content quality.
5. Brands recognised the power of Television and 'a soap opera' is called so because Procter and Gamble was the sponsor of drama serials on TV in the 1950s.
6. Big money came into TV with the Big Money Quiz in the 1950s (precursor to KBC).
7. Politicians recognised the power of TV when Kennedy won the debates vs Nixon on TV but on Radio, Nixon won! Reagan was a master at using TV to project himself as a patriot. Color TV started in 1964 and sports events were a big hit on Color TV.
8. With political coverage came the first 'anchorman' That was Walter Cronkite in 1952 and he left a legacy. TRPs introduced in the West in the 1960s and in India in 1993 are a double-edged sword. There is a nuclear arms race for TRPs now, especially in India.
9. The Gulf War in 1991 and the CNN coverage of the Gulf War gave birth to the concept of non-stop 24/7 news (we have a new Indian concept - the breathless breaking news concept)

10. Television came to Delhi in 1959, but it was the 1984 Asian Games that took it to a new level and then the second low-power transmission station in 1991. All categories grew more than 50% in 1984 and 1991 as consumers took to brands in a big way in India and the unorganised or commodity or retailer brand gave way to national brands. The three early brand winners on TV in India were Nirma, Vicks, and Vice Vajradanti.

The Indian Television Industry is big. Television on mobiles started in India in 2010 when Nokia (Pawan Gandhi) demonstrated a few channels. I remember the then FM saying after the demo "Please do not introduce this in India as no work will be done in the office on the day of any cricket match".

There are many studies on the harmful/ intrusive/cultural effects of Television, its programs, and anchors in India. The government pushed for rating/grading content, will they go beyond that now as we see fights and fisticuffs on national Television?

Enjoy

Shiv

www.shivshivakumar.com

20 November 2023