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TELEVISION PROGRAMME PRODUCTION

Have you ever thought what goes behind any television programme production? Or, have you ever noticed the names of the people involved in production process that appear on television after the programme ends? You may not have bothered to look at all the names which appear on the television screen at the end of the programme. But you must know that a whole range of personnel and equipments are involved in making a television programme.

While watching television, as viewers, we are largely unaware of the production complexities. But professional television production, regardless of whether it is done in a television studio or in the field is a complex creative process in which many people and machines interact to bring a variety of messages and information to a large audience.

In this lesson, you will learn about the different stages of television programme production, various equipment required for production of television programmes and the work profiles of key professionals involved in the production process.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- classify the three stages of television programme production;
- explain the production process of a television programme;
- identify the equipment required for television production;
- describe the work profile of key professionals involved in programme production.

16.1 PROGRAMME PRODUCTION STAGES

Let us consider a situation in which you are expecting some guests for dinner. What preparations will you do? First of all, you need to decide the menu. Then

**Notes**

you will arrange for all the vegetables and such other ingredients required for the preparation of food items. You may have to go to the market for buying the ingredients. Now after arranging for everything, you will start preparing the food. This again involves all the key ingredients to be mixed at the right time in the right quantity. Once the food is prepared, comes the presentation stage wherein you will put the various items prepared in different utensils and after garnishing, they will be ready to be served on the dining table.

So you have seen that there were three stages in the making of various food items. In stage one, you arranged for everything required for preparing the food items. In stage two, you actually prepared the food items and in the third stage, you presented them on the dining table.

**Fig. 16.1 (a)****Fig.16.1 (b)**



Fig. 16.1 (c)

Now imagine you have to produce a television programme. In a similar manner as above, you will first arrange everything required for the programme production. In the second stage you will actually carry on the production process, and thirdly you will polish the product for the final presentation on television. Thus, we can divide the entire production process into three major stages.

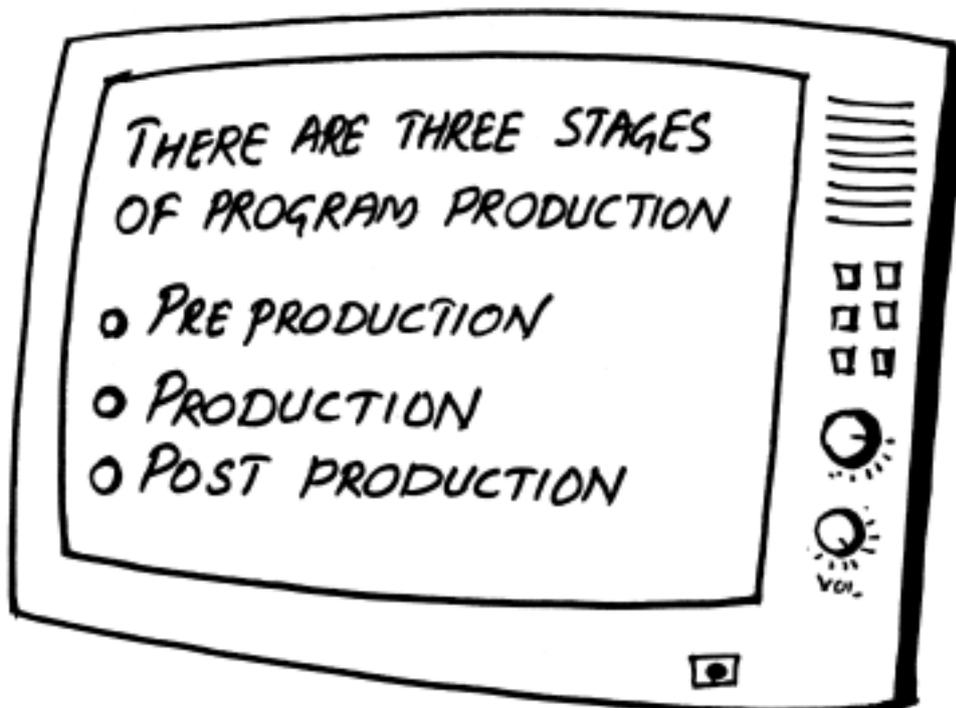


Fig. 16.2



Notes



There are three stages of programme production

1. Pre production
2. Production
3. Post production

Pre-Production

This stage includes everything you do before entering the studio or reaching the shooting location. It involves idea generation, research, scripting, discussions with all the crew members and talents (actors), arranging equipment, video / audio tapes, properties, costumes, sets designing or location hunting and booking of editing shifts.

The first thing to know about any and every production is what you want the programme to look like, just like you need to know what you want to cook. This is the pre production stage. You need a clear idea of what you want to make. Only then will you be able to make a good programme, understandable by the audience. Once the idea is clear, the next stage is how to get from the idea to the television image. To translate an idea on screen effectively you need a good and detailed script.

In all it involves planning everything in advance. This is very essential to get desired results. If you have all the raw ingredients ready in your kitchen, you can easily cook the food. Similarly, if you have worked well in this stage of programme production, the other two stages become easy and workable.



Fig. 16.3: Pre-production stage – getting ideas clear



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Production

This is the stage when you are on the studio floor or on location and are ready to shoot or are actually shooting. (You can compare this to the situation when you were in the kitchen carrying out the process of cooking food). It includes managing all the facilities, handling of talent and crew members, controlling the crowd, shooting without hurdles and solving any problem related on the spot at that time.

Post-Production

This is the third stage of programme production. It is the stage when you get the final shape of the programme, just like the way you garnished every food item to be presented on the dining table. It includes cutting the recorded visuals into appropriate length, arranging the visuals in a proper sequence, use of desired effects for the visuals or text / captions, commentary recording, music/song recording, and final assembly of the entire programme.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1

1. Tick mark (✓) the appropriate answer
 - (i) The production process can be divided into
 - (a) Two stages
 - (b) Four stages
 - (c) Three stages
 - (d) Five stages
 - (ii) Idea generation is a part of
 - (a) Pre production
 - (b) Production
 - (c) Post production
 - (d) None of the above
2. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/s:
 - (i) Pre production stage involves everything in advance.
 - (ii) The most important element of the pre-production process is the
 - (iii) includes cutting the visuals into appropriate length.



3. Arrange the following steps in the right order, by putting 1, 2 and 3 against each of them :
- i) Post Production
 - ii) Pre Production
 - iii) Production

16.2 TELEVISION PRODUCTION PROCESS

We all know that in order to make a food item we need different materials like vegetables, utensils, knives, spoons, spices, water, oil etc. Similarly, in order to make a television programme we need various equipments and people required to operate them for the production of a specific kind of programme.

Let us now discuss the equipments required for the production process.

Machinery and Equipment required for Production

Imagine you had to paint something on a canvas. Essentially, you will need a brush, colours and a palette. Similarly, if you want to make a good programme on television, you need some essential equipment like camera, lights, sound recorder etc. We can categorise the basic production elements as follows:

Camera

The most basic equipment in any and every production is the camera. In our lives also, many of us or our friends must have used the camera for capturing various events.

If you carefully look at any camera, you will see a lens in it. This lens selects a part of the visible environment and produces a small optical image. The camera is principally designed to convert the optical image, as projected by the lens, into an electrical signal, often called the video signal.



Fig. 16.4: Camera



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Lights

Have you ever tried to see something in dim light? It's difficult to see. Isn't it? Now imagine seeing in the dark. You must be wondering how it is possible to see in the dark? Just like the human eye, the camera also cannot see without a certain amount of light. There comes the role of lights in television production. Lighting any object or individual has three main purposes:

1. To provide the television camera with adequate illumination for technically acceptable pictures.
2. To show the viewers what the objects shown on screen actually look like, say, for instance, if there was no light in the room, we would not have been able to see how the chair, table or anything else for that matter would look like. Lights also help us know when the event is taking place, in terms of the season and the time of the day.
3. To establish the general mood of the event.



Fig. 16.5: Lights

Microphone

You may have seen a microphone being used by people to talk on various occasions. Have you ever wondered why we actually use microphones?

Just as you have learnt that the camera converts what it sees into electrical signals, similarly the microphone converts sound waves into electrical energy or the audio signals. But the sounds that we produce are very feeble in nature and, therefore, cannot be sent to larger distances. Therefore it is amplified and sent to the loudspeaker which reconverts them into audible sound.

**Notes**

There are different types of microphones available for different purposes. Picking up a news anchor's voice, capturing the sounds of a tennis match, and recording a rock concert - all these require different types of microphones or a set of microphones.



Fig. 16.6: Microphone

Sound Recorder

In one of your earlier lessons, you have learnt that radio is an aural medium where as print relies on visual content. However, television combines compelling visuals with the personal immediacy of the radio. This audio visual character gives it great power in conveying realism in a convincing way.

Television sound/audio not only communicates information, but also contributes greatly to the mood and atmosphere of the visuals that come along with the audio on screen. The sound recorder essentially records the sound picked up by the microphone.

With a sound recorder, you can:

1. select a specific microphone or other sound input
2. amplify a weak signal from a microphone or other audio source for further processing
3. Control the volume and ensure the quality of sound
4. mix or combine two or more incoming sound sources

Videotape recorder

As we all know that television is an audio-visual medium, we need to record both audio and visual components. While the sound i.e. audio is recorded on sound recorders, visuals are recorded on video tape in a videotape recorder.



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Most of the television programmes that we see are recorded on videotape or computer disk before they are actually telecast.

Post production editing Machine

As we have discussed earlier, before we present any food item on the dining table, we need to garnish it. Likewise in television programmes also, before we actually telecast a programme on television, we need to do the post production.

In the post production stage, you select from the recorded material, those visuals which seem to be most relevant and copy them onto another videotape in a specific order. This is called editing.

The post production editing equipment/machine helps to edit the programme after it is recorded. While many of the elaborate editing systems may help you to obtain the desired results, most of them cannot make the creative decisions for you. It is therefore important for you to know the desired result and shoot accordingly. Again, the better the pre production and production stages of the programme are, the more easier becomes the post production stage.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2

1. Tick mark (✓) the appropriate answer from the choices given.
 - (i) What converts sound waves into electrical energy or the audio signals
 - (a) Lights
 - (b) Camera
 - (c) Microphone
 - (d) Switcher
2. Fill in the blanks :
 - (i) Television camera converts image intosignals
 - (ii) Most television programmes are recorded on or computer disk
3. List any five equipments used for production

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16.3 KEY PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN TELEVISION PRODUCTION

You know that your mother can cook tasty food and that too alone. Your sister can also do the same thing without any help. But in television programme production, this is not the case. Television production is a team effort. The team consists of creative talent as core members and there are other support staff also. The members may be required to perform more than one role and that depends on the type of organisation or a production house, and the type and scale of the production. Regardless of the specific job functions of the various members, they all have to interact as a team. Just like you know in every sport, say like cricket, each member of the team is very important; similarly in television production also, every member plays a crucial role.

Television production is a team effort.

Let us now discuss the key roles that the team members in a television production need to play.

Producer

In television programme production, the head of the production who is called a producer is in charge of the entire production. The producer manages the budget and coordinates with the advertising agencies, actors and writers. The producer is also responsible for all the people working on the production front and for coordinating technical and non technical production elements.

Director

Who is a Director? In a television production, the Director is in-charge of directing the actors and technical operations. The Director is ultimately responsible for transforming a script into effective audio and video messages. Where the camera will be placed, what type of visuals need to be taken, where the actors will stand, all these are controlled by the director.



Fig. 16.7: Director



Production Assistant

The Production Assistant facilitates all that is required for the smooth execution of the television production. Both the producer and director are assisted by the production assistant.

Script Writer

One of the basic requirements of television production is the script. The script gives all the details of the programme such as the dialogues, the list of actors, details of the costumes, the mood required to be created for each scene and their respective locations. A script writer is the person who writes the script for the programme. In smaller productions, this task is generally done by the director and script writers are hired, if required.

Actors

Actors are the personnel who perform different roles according to the requirement of the script.

Anchor

An anchor is a person who presents a programme formally on television. For example, news anchors present news on television while there are also anchors who present reality shows like Sa re Ga Ma Pa and Indian Idol.

Who is your favourite anchor? Which programme does he/ she anchor?



Fig. 16.8: Anchor

Cameraperson

Camerapersons operate the cameras. They often do the lighting also for smaller productions. They are also called videographers.



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Fig. 16.9 (a) : Cameraperson



Fig. 16.9 (b) : Cameraperson

Sound Recordist

A Sound recordist records the complete sound track (dialogue and sound



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effects) of the programme. The sound recordist is also responsible for background music involved throughout the programme.

Art Director

The Art Director is in charge of the creative design aspects, which includes set design, location and graphics of the show.

Property Manager

The property manager maintains and manages the use of various set and properties. It is found in large productions only, otherwise the props are managed by the floor manager only.

Floor Manager

A Floor Manager is in charge of all the activities on the studio floor. He coordinates talents, conveys the director's instructions and supervises floor personnel. He is also called *floor director* or *stage manager*.

Costume Designer

The costume designer designs and sometimes even constructs various costumes for dramas, dance numbers and children's shows.



Activity 16.1

Prepare a list of all the names that come on screen at the beginning or end of any television programme that you watch.

16.4 STUDIO AND OUTDOOR RECORDING

You may have noticed that the programmes which you see on television are either shot inside the rooms i.e. closed areas, or are shot in open spaces, or as we call outdoor areas. Thus, the recording of all the programmes that we see on television can be done, in broadly two ways, either inside the studio or an outdoor location.

The recording done essentially within the four walls of the studio for the production of television programmes is known as *studio recording*. Whereas, any recording that involves shooting outside the studio is known as *outdoor recording*.



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Fig. 16.10 : (a) Studio recording



Fig. 16.10 : (b) Outdoor recording

Live television programmes and Recorded Television Programmes

Have you ever seen a cricket match on television which was actually being played at the same time in some other country? Or may be the Republic Day Parade which takes place in New Delhi? All these programmes are telecast ‘live’ on television.



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The success of a live programme entirely depends upon the performance of the talents and the crew members involved. Recorded programmes have a better chance for success as there is scope to go for retakes to get desired visuals with greater satisfaction. But on the other hand, live programmes can be made speedily. Live programmes generate a lot of excitement in the minds of viewers.

Recorded programmes have a better chance of marketing as such programmes can be polished and edited later, but they generally lack the excitement of live programmes. No matter what the programme format may be, live or recorded, the pre-production research and paper work is a must in television programme production.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.3

From the list given below, pick only the key professionals involved in television programme production .

- i) flower designer
- ii) costume designer
- iii) playback singer
- iv) producer
- v) orchestra players
- vi) stage decorator
- vii) director
- viii) dance master
- ix) production assistant
- x) cameraperson



16.5 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

→ Television Programme Production

Programme Production Stages

- Pre-production
- Production
- Post production



→ Television Production Process

Machinery/ equipment required

- camera
- lights
- microphone
- sound recorder
- videotape recorder
- editing machine

Key Professionals in Television Production

- producer
- director
- script writer
- actors
- cameraperson
- sound recordist
- art director

Studio and outdoor recording

Live television programmes and recorded television programmes



16.6 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What is television production?
2. Describe various stages of television programme production
3. Explain the importance of the pre production stage for any television programme?
4. What is the function of camera, lights and recorder in any television programme?
5. Give a brief account of various equipments required for production
6. Describe the work profile of key professionals in a programme production

**16.8 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 16.1** 1. (i) c
(ii) a
2. (i) Planning
(ii) Script
(iii) Post Production/Editing
3. Post Production-3
Pre Production-1
Production-2
- 16.2** 1. (i) c
2. (i) Optical, Electrical
(ii) Videotape
3. Camera
Lights
Microphone
Videotape recorder
Sound recorder
- 16.3** (i) costume designer
(ii) producer
(iii) director
(iv) production assistant
(v) cameraperson

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