

FOREIGN ELECTRONIC MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF CULTURAL DIFFUSION: A THEMATIC STUDY OF ITS IMPACTS ON CULTURE OF SINDH, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, customs and treasure of knowledge that shapes the personalities and way of behaving of the members of the society is called culture. Culture is the mirror of the traditions of a society. Media, especially the electronic Media on the other end are the entity which plays a very vital role in impacting and changing the nation's culture throughout times. With the passage of the time the influence of the Media is increasing over the cultures. This study aims to determine the role of foreign electronic media in brining cultural diffusion and influences over the culture of Sindh, Pakistan. This is a qualitative study wherein thematic method has been adopted. A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared for the data collection and ten in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted. The study identified various impacts of foreign electronic media on Pakistani culture especially in the province of Sindh. It observed that electronic media has great influence on the routine life of the people of Pakistan, who have been continuously impressed by the glamour of this kind of media. It was identified that in Pakistani Society cultural diffusion occurs due to the easy availability of foreign T.V channels thorough different sources such as cable T.V, Social networking and many other websites. This consequently has brought enormous changes in the lifestyles and thinking patterns of the common citizens.

Key words: Culture, Cultural diffusion, Media, Electronic Media, Foreign Electronic Media

Introduction

The social nature of human being compels him/her to interact with his fellow members of the society and such communication in the result creates understanding and co-ordination, eventually a basic set up evolves that is called society. For the growing process of evolution of culture there are numerous factors which creates impacts on society and its' culture. Media is recognized as one of these influential factors. In affecting the Pakistani culture, the media in the electronic form has been proved and playing a significant role. It is has left impacts almost all the aspects of the social life and has facilitated to bring about the social change. The people of Pakistan living both in urban and rural areas has been overshadowed by the different websites (especially social networking), FM Radio channels and Television programs. Currently, owing to the satellite channels and due to other mediums the influence on the

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country's culture has constantly risen. Besides to this the access to these channels has become easier and we frequently remain in touch with the foreign media at our homes and at the places of work. Khan (2010) realizes the impact of the electronic media and also relates this influence of media with the development of technology because before this we were only relying on telegraph, radio, newspapers, magazines and television.

We are living in society which is established on communication and information and in order to do our daily activities and to keep moving in the right direction we totally rely on this technology. Our decisions, beliefs and values forming the core of the culture are depending upon what we know about the fact, our presumptions and our experiences. Shaikh (2007) reporting to a survey which was conducted in 1996 for the Daily Dawn's Tuesday Review among the satellite television viewers, results of this survey revealed that impact of the Zee TV and Star TV was growing strong due to their news and entertainment programs.

Electronic Media

The medium of communication based on electromechanical and electronic means of production and usually differ from the print version of media are known as the Electronic Media. Television, Video, Radio, Stream Internet Content, Satellite and Sound recordings are the fundamental electronic media sources and the same are very well known to the general public across the world.

Foreign Electronic Media

The channels which are accessible through cable TV system, satellite, internet and through other modern ways of communication and same may be transmitted from outside the native country are recognized as the foreign electronic Media. Most popular foreign channels watched in Pakistan are English, Indian, Turkish, Japanese and Chinese. Star Gold, BBC World, Cartoon Network live, Zee TV, Star Plus, CNN, Discovery channel etc. are included in the categories of the foreign electronic media in Pakistan. The life of the people of Pakistan is being influenced by these mediums irrespective of the fact they are living in the rural or urban areas.

This sort of the influence of electronic media of other countries almost covers every aspect of social life with great impact over the culture. Pakistani electronic media especially the regional TV channels support the content of these foreign channels. Such content transmitted by the Pakistani channels in Urdu during the prime times. For instances, Turkish Dramas, English Dramas and Movies are translated into local and in national languages and this act increase the understanding of the content and finally influence the behavior and actions of the people.

Electronic Media in Pakistan

In Pakistan the electronic version of Media originated as private sector by an agreement with Nippon Electric Company (NEC) of Japan in 1961. Consequently, first official television station on 26th November, 1964 started its transmission from Lahore. Afterward, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta were selected to start further transmission. Gradually, this trend spread in Pakistan. According to International Media Support Report (July 2009) in 2002, under the Musharraf government licenses to the electronic channels including cable and satellite channels were issued. This

in result proved real growth of electronic media in Pakistan. New media laws of liberal nature were brought into effect and resultantly, these laws broke the state's monopoly on the electronic media. Private outlets through an easy procedure were issued FM radio and TV broadcasting licenses. Ali et al. (2013) presently, 2346 cable operators, 77 satellite TV channels, 46 radio channels, 28 foreign TV channels like BBC, CNN, Sky and more than 129 FM channels are working in Pakistan.

Sindh and Electronic Media

In Sindh first electronic channel is Karachi Television Center. To improve the transmission of Karachi center, other rebroadcasting stations started in Tando Allhyar, Thana Bola Khan, Shekarpur and Noorpur. Whereas, eruption of satellite and cable television network in Sindh occurred in 2002. It is considered that the major Sindhi regional electronic media channels were also established in the eve of this progress. Currently various electronic TV channels in Sindhi language are working such as Awaz TV, Sindh TV and KTN etc.

Culture and Cultural Diffusion

Damen (1987) considers culture as shared and learned ways and model for daily life. Such patterns display all the aspects of human social interaction. Further, culture is primary adaptive mechanism of mankind. Hofstede (1984) also considers culture as the collective programming of the mind and the same distinguish the members of one category of people from another.

The dissemination of cultural traits both material and non-material from one culture to another is known as cultural diffusion. George Murdock and various other thinkers considers that every society acquires about 90% of culture from other societies. The famous anthropologists and social scientists, for example, Kroeher consider the cultural diffusion as an important source of cultural and social change.

Pakistani Culture

Various ethnic groups such as Sindhis, Punjabis, Pashtun, Baloch, Kashmiries, Baltistani, Wakhi and Dardic communities constitutes Pakistani society. Further, Pakistani society is sub-culturally divided into four major cultures such as Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi and Pushtun. Besides to this the culture of people who migrated from India at the time of division of sub-content is also part of the culture of Pakistan. These sub-cultures possess their distinct and prominent life styles, customs, traditions, own way of living, ceremonies, rituals and values etc. Malik (2006) is of view that with regard to the culture, history and location, Pakistan is a place where various pluralistic traditions meet. The people of Pakistan are considered as the descents of Indo-European communities and the same people either lived in the Indus locales since time immemorial or they entered as intruders in this area.

Allana (2010) the federation consists of four main provinces namely Sindh, Punjab, NWFP and Baluchistan is called Pakistan. All of these four federal units and their regions and sub-regions have their particular and distinct culture.

Sindh and its Culture

The official web portal of Government of Sindh “from the times of immemorial Sindh has remained as the seat of human progress and meeting purpose of heterogeneous cultures and depository of diverse cultural values. With the inflow of Muslims from India in August 14, 1947 its culture has reasonably assumed new features. The people of Sindh developed their own absolute artistic customs due to its distinct geographical location. The sports, games, music, craft and art of the people of Sindh is present in the actual essence.

Sindh is prosperous and admirable due to its textile design, hand print making, embroidery, needlework, straw products, leather, lacquer-work and pottery. Allana (2010) Sindh is an area of differentiated cultural effects. As these impacts entered in the Sindh, they were absorbed into rich tradition, which can be characterized as Sindhi culture. Eventually, individuals and culture of Sindh can be thought of as unique presence in which practically every aspect evades basic definition. Agro (2011) Sindhi culture is the creation of Sindhi civilization and this is considered as thousands years old. This civilization is because of the river Indus.

Problem Statement

Culture is dynamic in its nature and being influenced by the number of things including media both in print and electronic forms. The electronic media is a great source of social change and cultural diffusion. The easy availability of the electronic media in the form of regional and foreign channels has proved emerging source of cultural diffusion. This type of diffusion is occurring in the life styles, customs, norms and values of the culture as well as in the material aspect of the culture.

The access and viewership of these foreign electronic channels due to the satellite and cable TV system has been extended to the far-flung areas of Pakistan including the length and breadth of Sindh. Consequently, the culture of Sindh receiving new traits of different cultures of the world. This scenario is causing diffusion of multiple foreign traits and complexes in the Sindhi culture. This study is mostly oriented to search the answers to some questions related to the impact of foreign electronic media on the customs, traditions, life styles, values etc. of Sindhi culture.

Scope of the Study

The study will be helpful to the academicians, students of the Media and Cultural studies. This will also contribute enough literature to the Cultural and Media studies disciplines. In consequences, it will create general awareness among the masses of Pakistan especially the people of province of Sindh that, how their culture is changing owing to the increasing trends of the electronic media both in the urban and rural areas.

Their old and traditional customs, norms, rules, rituals and cherishing values are vanishing and new foreign traits are taking their places. This piece of research work will also assist to the policy makers to evaluate system through which the foreign content of the electronic media may be controlled. The study also will be proved to create

the importance of the local media which in result will promote the indigenous culture. Finally, keeping in view the above mentioned resolve of the researchers it could be hoped that this paper will contribute enough for resolving the issue of the diffusion and the interpenetration of the cultural traits of the other cultures of the world through electronic media.

Research Questions

- How foreign electronic media is influencing the customs, rituals and languages of Pakistani culture in Sindh?
- What are the major impacts of foreign electronic media on the life styles, dressing and fashions of Pakistani culture in Sindh?
- In what manner the norms, rules and values of Pakistani culture in Sindh are affected through the easy availability of the foreign electronic media?

Literature Review

Pervaiz (2004) analyzed that the behavior of the graduates was affected and they were in position to adopt the western customs due to the exposure of Indian movies on VCR. Shaikh (2007) cable television is the greatest source of foreign electronic channels. These TV channels have become popular among the masses because the cable has played a significant role. Due to this process local language channels like Sindhi as well as Urdu channels attracted a large native audience. Chakravarty (2007) discussing the influence of TV observed that TV in the electronic form is a strong platform in illuminating the political fabric of a nation and form public opinion.

While describing the role of electronic media in the popularity of a political leader it was observed that there are more chances of the success of the leader whose speeches and policies goes round the electronic media. This resultantly, changes the voting behavior and increasing the participation of people in the social process. Besides to this, advanced countries of the world have utilized electronic media as the major instrument to resolve various social problems and achieved changes in the long run. Rana and Iqbal (2008) observed that numerous reasons are related to economy, history and sociology of the Pakistani nation that are promoting and giving rise to television as the best leisure activity for the citizens.

The situation of law and order in the country has restricted people to homes and made the citizen more dependent to television programs. Another reason for the popularity of this medium is the scarcity of the outdoor recreational places such as parks etc. While realizing the importance of the TV for our nation the researcher identified that it is acting like a source of catharsis, companion and leader. Hassan and Daniyal (2013) has identified that television shows and animated films has great affect over the children. The physical leisure activities of the children to the great extent have been decreased due to Cartoon watching. Further, language, eating and the way of dressing as a behavior and attitudes of the children has been affected due to this sort of networking.

Datoo (2010) inferred that subtle streaming and blending of the worldwide component in our media with our way of life and society is realizing both, the feeling of nervousness and the inner conflict of personality bringing about

the radical changes occurring in the old cultural traditions. Rajani and Chandio (2004) recognized that people are affecting individually as well as collectively in our society because internet is an effective medium. few People trust we lose all connection with reality holding their virtual relations near their heart because internet causes depression, loneliness and isolation among them. Khan (2010) described that within a limited period electronic media in Pakistan has achieved remarkable growth.

The origin of public opinion on national issues has been both positively and negatively influenced by the electronic media. It is likewise a reality that electronic media is awesome promoter of change, yet the course of this change relies on the reported information. Paul et al. (2013) observed most contrasting influence of the media and this is the modification of life style and patterns of behavior. Such process is directly causing a shift in the public life. The information obtained from the media is influencing the social and cultural existence of a general public both in image of attitude and behavior. Dattoo (2009) states that, sense of disjuncture has been produced among the students due to their interaction with the worldwide media especially through the Bollywood and Hollywood, accordingly, values, attitudes, lifestyles have been affected. Anjum (2012) the films and international information amongst the youngsters are the most popular kind of programs on the cable TV in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

Study is Qualitative approach in nature. Hancock (2002) the study based on the feelings, experiences, and assumptions of individuals, bring forth subjective and explains social experiences in natural essence is called Qualitative.

Method

In order to analysis the human experiences in detail and to understand the process of the cultural diffusion through foreign electronic media 'Thematic method' of qualitative research has been adopted. Thomas and Harden (2008) thematic analysis is a method that is often used to analyze data in primary qualitative research.

Data Collection

Data were collected with help of in-depth interviews (IDIs) of the key informants through Semi-structured questionnaire. Ten Key Informants were contacted telephonically and researchers also visited the offices of few participants for interviews. The prominent media persons with vast experience in the field of the media were selected as respondents. Karachi, Mirpurkhas, Larkana, Naushehro Feroze and Ghotiki districts were selected for data collection. Two respondents from each district (five districts) $n= 2*5=10$ were covered. Therefore, 19.23% districts of Sindh were covered.

The purpose of the study was clearly told to the participants, their privacy and personal information will be treated as anonymous was assured. Their response was recorded with prior consent. The appropriate probes and prompts were used to get the concerned information. The average length of the interviews was 15-20 minutes.

Data Treatment

The data of this study were transcribed and it was verbatim. Whereas, same was treated in the manner mentioned below.

- I Ideas were noted in the initial phase, reading of the data were made along with re-reading.
- II The interesting features of the data were coded.
- III Searching of themes were made.
- IV Searched themes were reviewed.
- V Meaning was given to the themes.
- VI Report was produced.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling technique was used. Only those individual were selected who were the active journalists and media man.

Setting

Before conducting the interviews, the respondents were identified and contacted through different sources. A formal interview of these participants was set-up after fixing meeting time both by visiting to their specified location and telephonically. Semi-structured questionnaire prepared as an instrument of data collection. Interviews were recorded for ready reference with the consent of the respondents.

Data Analysis

Data were tapped and recorded. It was transcribed and verbatim. Important segments of the data were separated and modified as themes and clusters.

Validity and Reliability

The original raw data were compared to the extracted themes, clusters and significant description in the shape of meaning was created. Finally, the results were taken back and also emailed to the respondents to confirm their true account.

Limitations of the study

Study is qualitative in nature hence; the sample size is small. The respondents already having background and knowledge on the subject are the part of study. Due to limited financial, human and time resources the data were collected only from five districts and this is 19.23% districts of Sindh.

Findings

The current thematic study revealed interesting findings and answered the research questions elaborately. The findings have been taken from the respondents' interviews and matched with themes. Below given are the themes which have been taken from the participants account. This situation of cultural diffusion by the foreign electronic media has different views and its percentage changes from participant to participant.

Table 1. Participants' Demographics

Gender	Number of Participants	Profession	Tool of Data Collection	Working Place	Medium of Interview
01 Male 01 Female	02	Media Persons	Semi-structured questionnaire	Karachi	Face to Face
02 Male	02	Media Persons	Semi-structured questionnaire	Mirpurkhas	Telephonic
01 Male 01 Female	02	Media Persons	Semi-structured questionnaire	Larkana	Telephonic
02 Male	02	Media Persons	Semi-structured questionnaire	Naushehro Feroze	Face to Face
02 Male	02	Media Persons	Semi-structured questionnaire	Ghotiki	Telephonic

Numerous descriptions of the participants and their implied and clear experiences showed that the people of Pakistan especially the people of Sindh province are practicing and adopting the traits of the other cultures and the great factor behind this incorporation is the foreign electronic media, which, of course, is a common trend all over the world. Rana and Iqbal (2008) also in the study "Cultural Transformation through Satellite Cable TV in Pakistan" have identified impacts of the electronic media over the life styles of the people of Pakistan.

'This is an important question....my observation of this phenomenon is electronic media has great impact over the life styles and other activities of daily life but due to the increasing cable and satellite channels and easy availability of foreign outlets Pakistani culture has absorbed enough trends of other cultures' (Interview: Participant 2).

Table 2. Foreign electronic media’s influence on the life styles (n=10)

Life Styles	Number of the participants cited this influence	% Participants
Dressing	08	80
Other Fashions	09	90

The response of the majority of the participants revealed that life styles in general and dressing styles in particular in Pakistan has been influenced by the foreign electronic media’s viewership.

Oh! very pertinent, my experience is this, the original Pakistani culture is slowly diluting by the foreign electronic media because it is greatly influencing the behavior of the target audiences. Indian media’s popular characters like ‘Kumkum Sarhi’ etc has influenced the dressing code. Besides to this English and Turkish mediums also have great influence on the dressing behavior of the Pakistani people. (Interview: Participant 7)

Interesting! look at the hair styles like ‘Spikes’ and beard styles like ‘Vane Dyke beard’ usually called here the ‘French beard’ and other such styles are after the Indian film heroes all are the results of electronic media both in rural and urban areas of Pakistan. (Interview: Participant 4)

Table 3. Foreign electronic media’s influence on the behavior of the children (n=10)

Influence on children	Number of the participants cited this influence	% Participants
Indian Channels	09	90
Western Channels	07	70

Participants account under this theme was greatly agreed and they were of the view that children programs in Pakistani electronic media are shown in less proportion.

Very well! in our culture the latest heroes of our children are ‘Chhota Bheem’ and ‘Ben10’ and this is the impact of Indian and Western carton programs. The role models for our little girls in this perspective are the ‘Power Puff Girls’ and ‘Dora’. Whereas, the character of ‘Mr. Bean’ is another popular figure in our culture. (Interview: Participant 1)

One of the participants also depicted this phenomenon in a positive way as children through these cartooning learns speaking English language and their pronunciation is also improved under this process.

Table 4. Internet as an influential electronic medium (n=10)

Internet as an influential electronic medium	Number of the participants cited this influence	% Participants
Facebook	06	60
Twitter	04	40
LinkedIn	02	20

Participant's discussion and support on this theme was low they consider these things as the medium of social media and they are related with political and information purposes. These entities have less influence on the culture.

Table 5. Foreign electronic media's influence on the language (n=10)

Influence on language	Number of the participants cited this influence	% Participants
Hindi words	07	70
Hindi names	07	70
English words	08	80

The respondents in this regard believe that Hindi words through the electronic media have been diffused in the Pakistani languages especially Sindhi language and these are related with names etc. and English words have occupied their place in the all spheres.

'Jejaji, Suvagat, Pariwar, Punar janum, Asan bhasha are the common words uses in the Sindh during the daily discourse. Akash, Sapna, Soraj and Poorab are the famous names which are taken from the Indian dramas and movies. The usage of these words is more common in the rural areas of Sindh as compared to the urban areas'. (Interview: Participant 3 & 5)

'This influence of the Indian film industry and dramas is due to this fact that programs are telecasted in Urdu and Hindi and these both languages are easily understandable in Sindh even in rural areas. (Interview: Participant 6 & 10).

Table 6. Foreign electronic media's influence on customs (n=10)

Influence on Customs	Number of the participants cited this influence	% Participants
Marriage rituals	08	80
General impacts	07	70

The narrative of the participants reveals that traditions like marriages ceremonies also both in rural and urban areas of Sindh are under the influence of foreign electronic media. People whatever watch completely put it into practice.

'People in the rural areas of Sindh used to play very famous Sindhi songs like 'Ho jamalo' and 'Adio munhjo chhalaro pani mein' but today it is due to the availability of foreign electronic media through 'Dish Antenna' (popularly called in rural Sindh as 'Kharo') 'Shiela ki Jawani and Balma' is being played in the marriage ceremonies and we use to dance over it. (Interview: Participant 8 & 9)

In addition to these above mentioned facts it was also found that among the masses in Pakistan Turkish dramas are also famous. Such Turkish content is different from the religious and moral values of Pakistani culture. Popular dramas 'Mera Sultan and Ishq e Mamnoo' have great viewership in Pakistan and especially in Sindh, still many people consider it as the impact of foreign media over the values of Pakistan.

Discussion and Conclusion

Findings reveal that Pakistani culture is greatly diffused and the behavior of the target audience is influenced by the foreign electronic media. Foreign electronic media has enough impact on language, dress and character of the people of Pakistan.

Turkish dramas are watched because of their liberal character and culture, places and people of other country. Women like this Turkish content because it portrays women, as a sign of respect in Turkish society. Due to the more liberal culture of these Turkish dramas also disliked in Pakistan and people express unhappiness about certain scenes presented from time to time. It is suggested that the content of these dramas be censored before telecast.

The impact of this foreign electronic media over the children of the Pakistan as per this study is they learn English words by watching the western cartoons. This has proved beneficial in improving pronunciation and vocabulary of English. Additionally, internet also proved as a source of watching foreign media.

Research identified that in daily vocal communication people of Sindh use Hindhi words. Urdu and Hindi languages are almost same therefore, Indian movies being watched both in urban as well as rural areas and have influence over the culture. Now people in the rural areas in their marriage ceremonies dance over the Indian or English songs instead of old and traditional Sindh music. The findings of the study also exposed that in Sindh foreign electronic media through cable and satellite channels has great influence over the behavior and life styles of the individuals. The

language, dressing, rituals and old customs of the rural and urban areas of the Sindh has been affected by this impact of foreign electronic media.

Therefore, the study concludes that in Pakistan foreign electronic media has created cultural diffusion. Mostly, the impacts of this media are obvious over the attitudes, behavior, fashion, custom and language of the masses. This whole scenario is because world keeps on shrinking into a global village and bringing all the citizens of this universe closer to each other.

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