

Pakistani Serials Captivate Indian Women

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ABSTRACT

With the launch of "Zindagi" channel in India, Pakistani serials have become very popular among the viewers of different age groups. The channel airs Pakistani shows in India. The serials are intelligently and beautifully scripted and elegantly placed in different time slots. Pakistani cultural values are displayed at their best in these stories and they have a universal appeal. Zindagi's realistic portrayal of Pakistani society does not shy away from showing both sides of the coin. The people we see are real, their aspirations, acting and dialogue delivery etc are very much convincing. This is one of the greatest triumphs of the Zindagi channel. The sweetness of Urdu dialogues and effortless performances from a supremely gifted cast, seduce viewers of all age groups. This study tries to explore and investigate the "Impact of Pakistani serials on language and dressing of females residing in Hyderabad", and it had 100 women respondents chosen from different communities in the 14-32 year age group as well as older group on the basis of snowball sampling, and viewing of the Zindagi television channel for a minimum of three months. For the collection of data, survey method is used as a tool for primary data collection. Results show that Indian viewers like the language and Pakistani culture that is portrayed in these serials. Indian viewers fell head over heels in love with the characters portrayed in these serials. Women of different age groups and communities like

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Pakistani dresses and use Urdu words in their day to day life and their liking towards the Pakistani serials and the characters portrayed in these serials is increasing day by day.

INTRODUCTION

We live in the world of media which influence the audience. Since the advent of various new channels public consumption of the media has increased. The audience has multiple choices. The electronic media is bombarding different kinds of contents on the audience. Viewers learn behaviors, social and moral principles from the mass media which are the sources of social learning. TV is the most effective source of sharing images and messages. As the most effective means of communication, TV has altered our activities, family and social interaction patterns, cultural practices, domestic and personal spending habits, and greatly influences our decision making process. Television influences the minds and changes the people's perception about life style. The social structure plays a great role in television watching. Every religion has a particular culture and culture is an identity of an individual, a nation and religion. Culture rules virtually every aspect of our life such as literature, visual arts, architecture, language and living style. In fact, the things produced by a culture which we perceive with our five senses are simply manifestations of the deeper meaning of culture- what we do, think and feel. Culture is taught, learned and shared with every member of society (CIL, Canada 2005). Indeed, like any other mass media, Television has cultural repercussions on its viewers. Culture is defined as a way of life (Williams, 1977:35) that an individual leads in society. Culture is essential for socialization and it is a tool for socialization. Culture or civilization is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Lane and Ersson, 2007).

The information dissemination policy of the government has ensured the growth of the media landscape with new opportunities in different sectors, including TV channels. In the last ten years, the number of TV channels in the country has increased from 130 in 2004 to 786 in 2014. Currently, India is one of the largest broadcasting industries in the world. The country has the third largest TV market

with close to 154 million TV households, next only to China and the USA. Viewers have access to a variety of channels from local to foreign, which provide them an opportunity to watch all types of programmers. Zia (2003) stated that the reasons for this rapid growth of cable television include easy access, low cost, access to satellite channels and a huge television viewer-ship interested in entertainment only.

According to TAM Media Research, an audience measurement company, the number of cable and satellite TV-owning households in the country ballooned from 90 million to 126 million between 2009 and 2012. This number is expected to reach nearly 150 million by 2014, a study done by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and KPMG this year estimated. The expanding footprint of direct-to-home (DTH) networks also helped media penetrate deeper into the rural market. Dish TV India Ltd has 11 million connections, of which nearly half are in rural India. Similarly, half of Tata Sky's 11.5 million subscribers are in rural India. Overall, DTH connections in the country have gone up from about 13 million in 2009 to more than 54 million in 2013. According to a recent survey conducted by FICCI KPMG of the Indian Television Industry the penetration of paid Cable and Satellite (C&S) television households in India is expected to grow to 173 million by 2017, representing 91 per cent of TV households. The number of C&S households in India increased by 11 million in 2012 to reach 130 million.

Table 1: Indicators for Availability of Urdu Language Channels on DTH Platforms

Name Of The Channel	Dish Tv	Tata Sky	Reliance Digital	Airtel	Videocon
Zindagi	107	115	213	113	116

Source: Satellite & Cable TV, CHANNEL GUIDE

Table 2: Indian DTH Market Shares

DTH PROVIDER	Total STBs Seeded (Million)	Actual Subscriber (Million)
Dish TV	15.7	11.5
Tata Sky	11.9	8.4
Airtel Digital TV	11.1	3
Videocon DTH	9	4
Sun Direct	9.2	5.6
Reliance Digital TV	4.1	1.7
Total	61	34.2

Source: Satellite & Cable TV, CHANNEL GUIDE

The Oxford dictionary defines impact as an effect or influence. The objective of this paper is to study the impact of the airing of serials on Zindagi channel on women of different communities, with respect to language and dress. With the entry of Zindagi channel, people are excited by the fact that after a long time, a drama is respecting their intelligence, and thinks of them as capable enough to appreciate complex plots. Zindagi channel programmes seem to be a modern updated version of the old DD serials. The channel was launched by Zee TV to air syndicated shows from Pakistani. The channel is owned by the Zee Entertainment Enterprises and was launched on 23 June 2014, with the multi-faceted vision of bringing fresh content to Indian television from international markets, and for an alternative way of building goodwill between two countries (the tag line reads "Jodey Dilon ko"). The very reason that these dramas are working and catching maximum eyeballs and gaining popularity day by day is because there is an urge in every human being to understand human relationships. Viewers relate to it, cry with it, and also try to evolve through it. What makes Zindagi even cooler is its tight script, crisp screenplay, well delivered dialogues, subtle acting, and the rich language of delivery i.e., Urdu. Urdu is India's very own language that has a long and deep legacy in the country. It is a language that has superfine etiquettes and has influenced the Indian entertainment industry in a very big way. There are around 60 million Urdu speaking people in the country. The language is culturally very rich and has contributed in many ways to the Indian literary, religious, cultural, social, entertainment and musical segments. Urdu language and literature have a deep impact on our culture. During the freedom

struggle, famous Urdu slogans motivated and inspired the youth. Urdu is a pan Indian language and a symbol of rich, cultural and literary mosaic of our country. Urdu had brought about a new culture and promoted the concept of unity in diversity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of technological development is changing the present world very fast. Changes are taking place in all spheres of life and thus ultimately changing the social and cultural belief systems. Media impact on various social, economic, political and cultural areas is one of the concerns and sensitivities of society. Identity, beliefs and values of a community have been affected by various sources including group media such as T.V, internet and especially satellite in recent years. Satellite is a means for global communication. It has become the origin of community variations and has led to transnational culture (Thompson, 2000), changing the concept of publicity in public domain (Habermas, 1989). An issue which has attracted attention of many scholars, pundits and politicians around the world is the negative and positive effect of satellite programme contents on the social life. Some people believe that using satellite is an opportunity for cultural-social communications, political participation, creativity and innovation etc. and some others emphasize the disadvantages and negative points of the satellite. There are some concerns about invasion into religious and national culture in Iran due to increasing use of satellite and increasing reach of direct broadcast satellite programs (Larijani, and Malekitabar, 2007).

A study on the effect of dish antenna on PTV dramas by Noreen Shafiq (1995) concluded that the number of private satellite channels was increasing. PTV was not producing new and interesting programs for the public. The standard of its programs was falling. With the arrival of dish antenna people liked to watch Zee TV and the BBC. Anthony, Z (2011) found that much stronger culture was being presented in a vivid, adoptable and often admirable way on Indian tele-serials. The majority of women viewers was attracted by the hair style and the dress worn Indian models and tried to look the same way. With the arrival of dish antenna the society was adopting new

ways, trends and lifestyles. Morshed M (2012) was of the view that the serials affect people's mentality to a great extent. They instill the notions shown in the serials in our own lives, which is really a dangerous phenomenon. We are moving away from our traditional beliefs and values and so every now and then we are facing numerous problems in our family and society

Shahbaz (2004) emphasizes the influence or impact of daily night transmission of Star Plus family dramas on social and cultural values and norms of Pakistani youth of the middle class. The survey research concludes that the social-cultural thinking of Pakistani youth is under the foreign cultural values through these Star Plus dramas. They are also affecting the language, fashion, food and architect, social behavior and daily life style of Pakistani society. These dramas have increased the generation gap. And through these dramas, Pakistani youths have become more money oriented. They have created an impact on the lifestyle of the middle class Pakistani youth and influenced the thoughts of modernist and traditionalist thinkers. Star plus is mingling the eastern and western culture, resulting in the formation of an "International Culture" and promoting more liberalism and modernism in Pakistani society and youth. They have an impact on social interactions and on norms and values of youngsters and have increased the desires, demands and idealism in Pakistani youth. According to Meyrowitz (1986) for any particular country, culture is the representation of the country's identity. He demonstrates how television undermines the national identity and overrides the local traditions through the various transnational communications and media networks (Shamsher and Abdullah, 2012). According to Zia (2007), satellite television viewership is no more restricted to the upper-middle class; with the availability of low-priced television and cable connection, it has become a common household facility for the lower classes as well.

Decades of studies on the consequences of mass media exposure demonstrate that effects are varied and reciprocal the media impact audiences and audiences also impact media by the intensity and frequency of their usage. The results of mass media for promoting social change, especially in developing countries, have become important for public health. Finnegan, Viswanath, (1997) have identified

three effects or functions, of media: (1) the knowledge gap, (2) agenda setting, and (3) cultivation of shared public perceptions. Like other countries in the world, the emergence of satellite television brings significant impact on the country, society and particularly on cultural mores and values (Fahmy, 1997 and Amin, 2001). In this regard, Harbi (1996) suggested that there is a positive correlation between satellite exposure and adoption of Western values and that satellite viewing causes superficiality, distortion, and ambiguity. Labib(2001) stated that there is no solid evidence yet to prove the influence of satellite television, but he does not deny the anecdotal evidence to suggest an influence on women and girls in fields such as fashion and clothing as well as fast food consumption. The Cultivation Theory asserts that heavy viewers' attitudes are cultivated primarily by what they watch on television. Gerbner views this television world as "not a window on or a reflection of the world, but a world in itself" (McQuail, 1993: 100). Cultivation Theory, suggests that television is responsible for shaping or cultivating viewers' conceptions of social reality. The combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately, for our culture as a whole. Thus, cultivation research is in the effects tradition. Cultivation theorists argue that television has long-term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant. The Cultivation Theory began with the cultivation hypothesis, created by George Gerbner, which attempts to understand how "heavy exposure to cultural imagery will shape a viewer's concept of reality" (Pierce, 2007).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This is an empirical research, studying "Impact of Pakistani serials on language and dressing of females residing in Hyderabad". The main purpose of this study is to gain an insight on how women in India make use of the Zindagi Channel as one of the most indispensable TV channels and how they perceive the impact according to their TV viewing habits. The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. How the Pakistani serials affect the viewers in India.
2. Identifying and understanding the impact of Zindagi channel among the target group and how these serials lead to adoption

of language and dressing style among the viewers.

3. To explore the perception of viewers for Pakistani serials and how viewing these serials affects them.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Survey method is used to collect the primary data to carry out the research. The survey is the technique of gathering data by asking questions to people who are thought to have desired information. The target population is the women of the Hyderabad city residing in different localities and 100 sample sizes are taken to investigate this study. Snowball sampling was used in the research in which the researcher defined different groups of women according to age. The age groups are 14 to 20 years, 21 to 24 years, 24 to 32 years and 32 and above. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate. The chain referral process allows the researcher to reach populations that are difficult to sample when using other sampling methods. The process is cheap, simple and cost-efficient. This sampling technique needs little planning and fewer workforce compared to other sampling techniques. A list of 10 structured questions was prepared by the researcher. A well-trained group of friends and students had approached the respondents to fill the questionnaire and the average time taken to complete the questionnaire was 10 to 15 minutes. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software. The software name stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and it is widely used for statistical analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
14-20	13	13
21-24	32	32
24-32	18	18
32 and Above	37	37

According to table no.3, it can be seen that the age group of the majority (37 or 37%) of respondents is between 32 years and above, followed by the group of 21-24 years (32%), the 24-32 group

(18%) and the 14-20 years group (13 %).

Table 4: Religion of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Muslim	52	52
Hindu	34	34
Christian	10	10
Others	4	4

The data in table no. 4 clearly indicates that the majority comprised of Muslim respondents 52 (52 %) followed by 34 respondents (34%) Hindus, 10 Christian respondents (10 %) and a small proportion belong to others (4%).

Table 5: How Long Ago Respondents Had TV Connection

No. of Years	Count	Percentage
2 years	21	21
3 years	20	20
4 years	33	33
5 years and more	26	26

According to table no.5, 33 % respondents had a cable connection in their homes for four years, followed by 26% respondents who had the connection for five years and more, 21% for two years and 20% for three years.

Table 6: Frequency of Watching TV

Time	Count	Percentage
Daily	62	62
3 -4 days	13	13
On weekends	18	18
Rarely	7	7

According to table no.6, 62 % respondents watch TV daily followed by 18% who watch on weekends, 13% watch 3-4 days a week and 7% respondents watch TV rarely.

Table 7: Period of Watching Zindagi Channel

Period	Count	Percentage
Since launch	13	13
3 months	23	23
2 months	47	47
1 month	17	17

Table 7 shows that 47 % respondents are watching Zindagi Channel since two months after its launch followed by 23% who are watching it since three months, 17% respondents since last one month and 13% respondents are watching it since its launch.

Table 8: Zindagi Channel Content Quality

Quality	Count	Percentage
Very Good	63	63
Good	20	20
Average	10	10
Poor	7	7

Table 8 shows that 63 % respondents say that the content of the Zindagi channel is very good, followed by 20% who find it good, 10% find it average and only 7% poor

Table 9: Learning Urdu Words from Zindagi Channel Serials

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	34
Agree	55	55
Strongly Disagree	7	7
Disagree	4	4

Table 9 shows that 55 % the respondents agree that they have learned Urdu words from Pakistani serials on Zindagi channel followed by 34% who strongly agree with it. On the other hand, only 7% respondents strongly disagree that they have not learned Urdu words from the Pakistani serials, followed by 4% respondents who disagree with it.

Table 10: Adopting Fashion and Dress Styles from Serials on Zindagi Channel

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	48	48
Agree	39	39
Strongly Disagree	5	5
Disagree	8	8

Table 10 shows that 48 % respondents strongly agree that Pakistani serials are the best source of information on adopting fashion trends and dress designs followed by 39% who agree on this point. 8% respondents disagree that the Pakistani serials are the

best source for adopting fashion trends and dress designs, followed by 5% respondents who strongly disagree.

Table 11: Is the Zindagi Channel Creating a Sense of Connecting Indians with the People and Traditions of Pakistan" Will it Help in Cultural Exchange?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	73	73
No	27	23

Table 11 shows that 73 % respondents say that the channel is helping in creating a sense of connectedness with the people of Pakistan and their traditions and the contents in the Zindagi channel would undoubtedly mark a new beginning in cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan, and this channel would initiate a direction towards peace between the two nations while 27 % respondents disagree on this.

Table 12: Will it Break the Muslim Stereotype as Conservative?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	81	81
No	19	19

Table 12 shows that 81% respondents say yes, that the Zindagi contents will break the stereotype that Muslims are "conservative". One of the most common stereotypes about Muslim women is that they will always wear a burqa or at least a hijab. The representation of women in sarees will break this popularly-held stereotype. It also shows how Indians and Pakistanis share a similar culture even in terms of their dress. Only 19% respondents say that it will break the stereotype that Muslims are conservative.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The majority of the respondents who watch the serials on Zindagi channel are of 32 years and above. An interesting fact is that people across different communities are watching the Zindagi channel launched by the Zee group. Majority of the respondents watch TV regularly while a small group watches it on weekends. Majority of respondent have been watching the channel for the last two months and a small percentage has been watching the channel since its

launch. The survey research concludes that the Pakistani serials have a great impact on female viewers. The programmes on the channel are leaving an impact on the language, fashion, cultural values, daily lifestyle, food and social behavior of Indian society. "Jodey Dilon ko" or "Connect Hearts", the channel theme and its tagline, clearly indicates that the mission of the channel is clear and it is trying to use the medium of TV to create a culture of peace and national integration. The channel proposition 'Jodey Dilon Ko' is based on the fact that even if people across the globe are culturally different, the stories of their lives are universal. The Zindagi channel has offered a refreshing change to Indian viewers by giving daily dose of Pakistani shows. These shows have opened a window to the Pakistani culture, society and their values that were so far unexplored in India. The channel that airs the Pakistani syndicated shows has ably served a distinct taste to the Indian audience. It has established itself as the platform through which people will know about the other side of the border. A Times of India report dated 1 July 2014 had argued that not only the channel has received good response from the public but even Bollywood and television celebrities are welcoming the new channel. The impact was such that in a short span the channel already has more than 4500 followers on Twitter and approximately 2.2 lakh likes on Facebook. The same was reflected in the TAM TV ratings, which were finally released after several weeks of waiting, as the newbie took over even the 14 year old channel, Sahara One. The channel witnessed 28,700 GVTs in week 29 and 27,013 in week 28.

By presenting the struggles of day to day life, the everyday stories of pain and social stigma the Zindagi channel is able to portray in an interesting way that we, Indians and Pakistanis, are not only similar in our language, culture, values but also in our problems and issues. There is a serial called "Kitni Girhain Baaki Hai". The stories in this serial are as relevant to Indian audience and most of the stories pertain to the struggle of women, the changing society and human nature. The serial is anchored by Kiron Khare. The representation of women in sarees in different serials will break the stereotype in the Indian media that Muslims are "conservative" and they always wear a burqa or hijab.

CONCLUSION

With the entry of Zindagi Channel, people in India are excited about the fact that after a long time they are enjoying serials with tight script, crisp screenplay, well delivered dialogues, subtle acting, and the rich language of delivery i.e., Urdu. The channel has restored legitimacy to the electronic media by bringing us stories close to our experience, that have far reaching impact on family, relationships, gender equations and that bare an entire network of emotions. By breaking stereotypes and emphasizing on similarities in terms of language, culture and challenges that people of India and Pakistan share, it will become an important contribution to creating a culture of mutual peace and understanding among the people of India and Pakistan. We can say that the channel is important initiative that has been taken by the Zee network. Zindagi TV channel seems to be a modern updated version of good old Doordarshan serials and surely must be sending shock waves in the Indian television industry these days.

Viewers across all age groups in India are identifying the shows on Zindagi and are looking forward to viewing their forthcoming ones. The content shown on the channel to Indian audience is received with open arms. This phenomenon is not restricted to the middle-aged women, who love to watch "saas bahu serials", but has spread across a section of the youth, and is slowly trickling into the male population. The reason behind this fact is that its meaningful content has a great appeal. The very reason that serials work and we want to see them is because there is an urge in us to understand human relationships. We relate to it, cry with it, and also try to evolve through it. Dim-witted scripts are the mother of all issues that the Indian television industry faces today, and the entry of Zindagi only made it more obvious.

In the years to come, Zindagi channel will continue to entertain masses across the nation and keep up the momentum it started with. The Indian audience has evolved and this is proven by the phenomenal response that the shows and the artists are getting. It time to think and introspect for the television serial industry in India, It has to awake up to improve standards and stop over-simplifying

plots, serving half-baked personalities as characters in their serials. Zindagi's content would undoubtedly mark a new beginning for encouraging cultural exchanges between India and other countries. Given the situation between India and Pakistan, this channel would initiate moves towards peace between the two nations. The people we in Zindagi serials are real, their aspirations and frustrations very convincing. This is one of the greatest triumphs of the Zindagi channel.

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