

Effects Of Indian TV Dramas On Pakistani Women: An Empirical Study Of Cultural Imperialism In South Asia

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Abstract

In every society, culture represents a unique identity that defines the way of life for individuals within that community. Pakistan's culture, in particular, is heavily influenced by Islam, which is the religion practiced by the majority of its people. As such, Islamic teachings form a comprehensive code of ethics that guides Muslims on how to lead their lives and interact with others.

The cohabitation of Hindu and Muslim communities in the subcontinent has also significantly impacted Pakistani society. However, Pakistani culture remains rooted in Islamic teachings, with all cultural norms and values based on these beliefs.

A recent study titled "Effects of Indian TV Dramas on Pakistani Women: An Empirical Study of Cultural Imperialism in South Asia" examined the impact of Indian cable television dramas on the living standards of women in Lahore, Pakistan. The study surveyed 50 women aged between 18 and 35 years who regularly watched Indian dramas, dividing them into two equal parts: young unmarried university students and mature housewives. The study

recorded their consumption pattern, level of viewing, favorite dramas and channels, and viewing time, cross-checking these factors to obtain a comparative result of influence on both segments.

The study's primary hypothesis was that greater exposure to cable television would result in more significant impacts on women's lives. Statistical analysis of the data revealed that cable television, particularly Indian dramas, is gaining popularity in Lahore city as a source of entertainment. However, excessive exposure to Indian dramas can lead to negative impacts on daily lives and living standards due to the lack of psychological guidance, weakened ties with cultural and religious beliefs, language barriers, captivating presentations of dramas, and compromised mental well-being. These disruptions can have adverse effects on family systems, cultural practices, spending habits, and overall behavior. Therefore, while cable TV is a notable outlet for entertainment and relaxation, it is essential to be mindful of the potential negative impacts.

Keywords: Indian TV Dramas, Cultural Effects, Pakistani Women, Well-being

Introduction:

A community's identity is often shaped by its unique culture, which varies across societies worldwide. In Pakistan, the majority religion of Islam strongly influences its culture. However, the availability of foreign TV channels in Pakistan has led to the promotion of modernization, replacing some Islamic cultural aspects. Indian entertainment channels are popular among Pakistani viewers and have been promoting Hindu customs, which are now practiced during local festivals. (Batool, 2007).

In the globalized world we live in today, cultural imperialism, which refers to a dominant country or organization's influence on a less powerful one, has become even more significant. This mainly focuses on the adaptation of media, such as literature, television, music, film, and internet content, amongst other forms. This concept, known as media imperialism, occurs when customs are predominantly exposed to the media interests of another society rather than their own. This results in a one-way street, as the

affected country or culture's media is not exported in turn to the influencing country. (Ketchum &Media, 2016).

The standard objective of cultural imperialism is the biased and monetary exploitation of youth. Imperial entertainment and advertisement targeted mostly young people. Youth symbolizes a major market for Indian and foreign cultural exports. The mass media manipulates youth disloyalty by appropriating the channelling dissatisfaction into consumer extravagances. Cultural imperialism focuses on youth not only as a marketplace but also for supporting reasons: to destabilize a political threat in which personal revolt could become a political riot against economic as well as cultural forms of control. Cultural imperialism and the standards it promotes have played a key role in preventing oppressed individuals from responding communally to their deteriorating conditions. The great triumph of imperialism is not only the object proceeds, but its take-over of the inner freedom of awareness of the oppressed directly through the mass media and indirectly through the capture [or surrender]. In so far as a reinforcement of mass innovatory politics is possible, it must commence with open combat not only with the situation of exploitation but with a culture that subjects its sufferers. (Kraidy, 2002)

The impact of modernization in Pakistan has brought changes in the social structures due to new technology. This has affected the behavioural patterns, cultural values, and traditional prototypes among the Pakistani people. Women have also been affected in terms of their attitudes towards family size, marriage patterns, and dressing styles. Unfortunately, religious education regarding socialization and the Islamic dress code has been ignored by some women. (Aftab, 2011).

Pakistan and India are two countries with different religions and cultures. Despite this, Indian movies, dramas, and music have penetrated Pakistani culture. This has caused some concern among Pakistanis who feel that these things are ruining their traditions and customs. Girls want to wear dresses like those worn by Indian stars, and boys have started wearing lipstick. Hindi words are being used by children, and some people even use Hindi words that have no meaning behind them. (Khan, 2012)

The media plays a vital role in promoting the Hindi language in Pakistan, as people mostly watch Indian programs and adopt many Hindi words. However, this has contributed to the Sanskritisation of Urdu in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the media also presents Westernization and modernization, which has a negative impact on the original Islamic and Pakistani cultures. However, people have still adopted some Indian styles of dressing, such as sleeveless dresses, short shirts, and wearing off-saris. Overall, the relationship between nature and human civilization has become a matter of life or death. It is important to preserve one's culture and traditions, but it is equally important to embrace change and modernization in a way that does not compromise one's values. . (Zia, 2010)

In Pakistan, it is traditionally taught to children to use polite language and avoid being abusive. However, the easy access to Hollywood movies and TV shows has led teenagers to adopt and use such language openly in their communities and families. While this may help improve their learning and reading skills, it also affects their national language and identity. The society and elders often blame the parents, especially the mother, for not instilling better values in their children. (Batool, 2007).

Media plays a crucial role in shaping our society, but with the influx of foreign media, Pakistani society is at risk. The accessibility of low-cost cable TV has made it accessible for all classes, providing them with a variety of channels to watch. This has led to the cultural variance and identity crisis at a large scale. Pakistani youth now prefer Indian songs as their ringtone, and Indian TV programs have played a significant role in integrating Pakistani national language Urdu into Hindi. The Pakistani culture is being replaced by Indian customs and traditions, which is a concern for many. Cable operators play a vital role in promoting Indian culture in society by airing Indian movies and shows. (Murtaza, 2007).

Afzal (2010) Culture is the backbone of any society, and in Pakistan, it is highly influenced by the religion of Islam. However, the Western and Indian culture has impacted Pakistani culture, leading to the adoption of Western clothing and Indian customs. The impact of Indian dressing culture is evident in Pakistan, where people now wear Sarhi, Chori Pajama, sleeveless dresses, short shirts, Patiala Shalwar, and less use of chadar (veil). Cultural imperialism takes both traditional and modern forms, with

institutions like the media and entertainment industry playing a major role today. The use of intermediaries, or cultural collaborators, is key to this domination. Cable television makes it easy for viewers to be exposed to different cultures, leading to the adoption of new traditions. In Pakistan, exposure to Indian media has led to the celebration of Indian festivals and the viewing of vulgar content. Cable operators play a vital role in promoting Indian culture in Pakistani society. (Lane & Ersson, 2007)

Invalid source specified. The cultural turn has resulted in a more searching assessment of the limits and utility of the concept of culture. Cultures characterize modern societies at different levels of uniformity or conflict; they have diverse relations to social structure; and they are more or less pervasive and constraining. The problem of the relationship of culture to practice also remains important. Culture remains an indispensable though ambiguous concept in the discourse of the social sciences.

Invalid source specified. One cannot become an insider in a linguistic ethnic group merely by learning the language nor does one cease to be a member even if one were to give up speaking the language. Language as a means of communication and language as a mark of identification is a different matter. Therefore as far as cultural policy is concerned, the focus should be more on ethnicity than on culture per se and it is important to keep in view the non-voluntary nature of membership of the cultural or ethnic group.

Invalid source specified. In his article "Media Framing" explains the agenda-setting theory which states that the media have a large influence on audiences. News companies and journalists have the ability to dictate what stories are considered newsworthy and how much prominence and space they are allocated. Coupling this theory with that of framing, researchers have been able to study the influence of mass media in the formation of public opinion. With an understanding of these theories, it becomes apparent that media sources with economic support and influence could have an effect on the opinions of their readers. The formation of words used in a news article creates a vehicle for persuasion that has the opportunity to form stereotypes and generalizations among the minds of its readers"

Statement of Problem

The study is related to the Indian TV drama's cultural effects on women in Pakistan. Culture is the icon of a society and media channels are the agents of culture among the people. They have the capability to improve the cultural customs, standards, beliefs and structure in any society. Celebration of other cultural events is just through viewer ship of Indian dramas like Diwali, Holi, wedding celebrations, and Valentine's Day. All these celebrations lead audiences away from Pakistani Values. The culture of a country is not reserved for a state barrier in the present situation of the world. Due to international media, people of one country accept another culture. It might be a shocking situation for them because culture means the base or backbone of a nation and a group of people living in a specific area. But it is an awful fact that our culture is now under the effect of the Indian or Western culture. There is no negating that TV dramas are a great source of enjoyment and entertainment but Indian dramas are persistently disturbing our society values and culture. They are inculcating their culture in our youth and distracting them from their own. So it is a very alarming situation for us. Mothers are trying to practice what they see in Indian dramas. Our Urdu dramas are becoming a threat rather than a source of enjoyment.

Indian entertainment and commercial channels are in easy excess of household females, housewives and student youth. Continuous viewership of these channels is affecting the mindset and living style of viewers by changing their language, speaking style, dresses, and social and domestic output and even has an intense impact on brought up of new generation. Here the purpose of the study is to examine the changing effects on youth, especially females because they have more time at home and the entertainment provided by channels is targeting females.

Research Methodology:

The government of Pakistan tranquilized the electronic media policy in 2000 and permitted cable operators to work officially. Consequently, the cable industry has grown quickly and started communicating local and foreign satellite television channels through their networks. The number of subscribers increased rapidly and opened to the western and Indian societies. This has not only broken the domination of the state-owned electronic media in the country and provided diversity in channels and

programs but also raised concern over its effects on viewers. Hence, this study was carried out to review the effects of cable television in Pakistan. The fundamental aim of this study was to determine the effects of cable television on women (Housewives) and youth in Lahore, Pakistan, and suggest some endorsements for policy-makers and broadcasters. This intends to record the demographic features of cable television subscribers (women aged 18-35 years only), their intake patterns and measures their level of viewing. It also investigated how the viewing of cable television is affecting the lives of women residing in Lahore. The study was conducted during 2015-16 and data was collected by using a survey method in which a questionnaire was used as a data tool. An interview was also done to get more explanation where needed after reading each questionnaire on the spot. To get the results, SPSS-13 was used and a T-test was applied to get the table's demographical explanation.

Research Design and Plan

The survey method has been applied to obtain data that is quantitative in nature from large representatives. The survey has supported collecting information directly from cable television viewers so that a proper analysis could be made by comparing their views. Preference was given to this age group of women for the study because it is the most vibrant, active and dynamic part of their lives.

Lahore is considered the core of the media industry. Almost all national dailies have their offices here. The established and oldest set up of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) located in Lahore has been working efficiently since the creation of the country. Besides PBC, various FM radio channels are effectively working here. All television channels have their bureau offices in Lahore. Every cable operator runs more than 100 channels to the connection holder. The main cause of fame of Indian channels among the public in Pakistan is the resemblances of Urdu and Hindi languages. These two languages are closer to each other and people know them without having any extra effort and thus feel comfortable watching Indian channels. A total of 50 women cable television viewers belonging to Lahore were selected as a sample of the study and they were divided into two parts i.e. young viewers and they were selected from the Universities of Lahore

and mature ladies (Housewives) and were selected from Lahore city including Eden Villas, Cantt, DHA, and Mian Mir Area, Punjab University Lahore, Lahore University of Management Sciences, National University of Modern Languages (Lahore Campus).

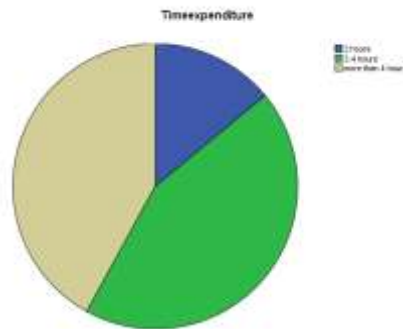
Analysis:

The current study aimed to explore the effect of Indian dramas on the life standards of Pakistani females in Lahore city. The data strategy involved performing, (i) descriptive analysis; (ii) An Independent sample t-test was used for finding the differences in life standards of housewives and young girls and to find out the heavy and light viewers among females. In graphics, Pie charts were used to describe the data.

It was hypothesized that Indian TV dramas have a great impact on changing the living standards and daily activities of housewives and young girls in Pakistani society. Independent sample t-test was used to find out the differences between housewives and young girls. Results are shown in the following tables:

Table 1: Independent sample t-test between house wives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) time spending on watching TV

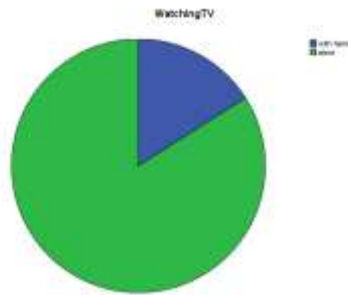
Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD	SD	MSD	SD			LLUL	ULUL
Time spend on watching TV	2.52	.58	2.04	.734	-2.55	.014	-.857	-.102



According to results, 44 percent females were viewers of Indian Cable Television programs from 2 to 4 hours and 42 percent were viewer more than 4 hours and just 14 percent of women watched 2 hours on daily basis. Results clearly indicate that Indian drama’s viewership has high a score and it is common practice for females to watch Indian dramas. It was also clear that housewives spent more time on Indian drams than young girls because social and family issues were being discussed in dramas, especially in soap series and house wives preferred to watch these dramas because of common interests whereas young girls may also watch songs channels, Pakistani drama channels and movies channel.

Table 2: Females prefer to watch TV

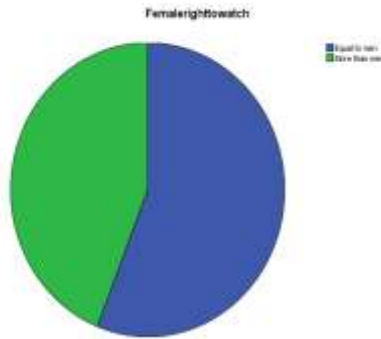
Variables	F	%
Alone	8	16
With family	42	84
Total	50	100



In this figure, results show that mostly women were prefer to watch TV with her family members which is 84 % of total respondent and just 16 % watch TV alone. This mean that there was a common trend of family gathering at night. Actually, there was a minor difference in results but they indicated that now with the shift of time, people can also watch TV alone mainly due to availability of more than one TV set in home and initial practices are changed now when an entire family was sit together to watch only available TV channel PTV.

Table 3: Females’ right to watch TV

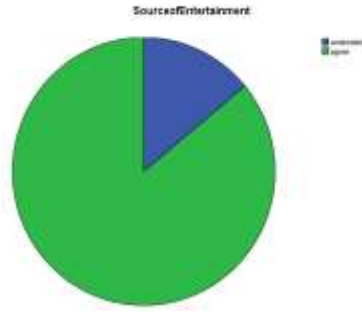
Variables	F	%
Less than Men	0	0
Equal to Men	28	56
More than Men	22	44
Total	50	100



This figure shows that more than half respondent females had equal right to watch TV channel and almost all remaining females had more right than men. No single woman had less right of watching TV then men. This result clearly illustrate that women were more rightful then men in domestic matters. Moreover it may also suggest that in those houses where men and women have equal right, there they watch TV by sitting together in prime time.

Table 4: Females reported TV as a source of Entertainment

Variables	F	%
Disagree	0	0
Undecided	7	14
Agree	43	86
Total	50	100



According to this figure, 86 % women were agree that TV is a source of entertainment and remaining 14 % were neither agree nor disagree but they were confused and undecided about this question. Here, it may suggest that more than half responding women first choice of entertainment was TV and very minor females thought that TV is not always a source of entertainment and those were young students who preferred other activities on TV for entertainment like music, social media, Whatsapp, movie in cinema, hoteling, window shopping and other activities.

Table 5: Females favourite Cable TV Channels for Indian Dramas

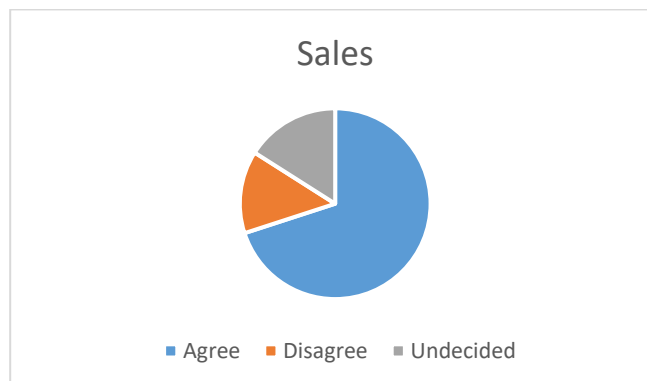
Variables	F	%
Star Plus	23	40
Color TV	15	30
Sony TV	6	15
Zee TV	4	10
B4U	2	05
Total	50	100



Results indicates that Star Plus was most popular and favorite TV Channels of Pakistani females and 40 % females watch Star Plus whereas 30 % viewership was for Color TV, 15 % was for Sony TV, 10 % was for Zee TV and just 05 % was for DD India. Main reason of Star Plus viewer ship was that it is the major channel for Indian dramas whereas Color TV is also comparing it. Sony TV was preferred due to CID and remaining other channels were due to some one or two dramas.

Table 6: Females thinking about impact of Indian dramas on Pakistani women

Variables	F	%
Disagree	7	14
Undecided	8	16
Agree	35	70
Total	50	100



Results indicated that when females was asked general opinion about impact of Indian dramas on Pakistani society then 70 % females were agree that Indian dramas are changing Pakistan women’s lives and 14 % were disagree while 16 % could not give satisfactory answer in this regard. This opinion has cleared that Indian dramas have strong effect on Pakistani females and their living style. They agreed that these dramas are changing all segments of their lives i.e. living standard, social setup, domestic activities, cultural standards, interaction pattern, daily expenditure, thinking style, efforts for rights, family disturbance (Mother-in-law and daughter –in-law matters).

Table 7: Independent sample t-test between house wives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on change in life standards

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD		MSD				LLUL	
Change in Life Standard	77	3.24	74	2.65	-3.72	.001	-4.80	-1.43

Note.CI= Class Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit

The results indicated that house wives have high score on change in life standards than young student girls. The main reason may be that they more time of viewership of Cable TV than Young girls because girls may remain out of the home during the daytime and also remain busy at night with their studies while housewives' only entertainment after household work is just Television. So, the Influence rate is high on women than girls.

Table 8: Independent sample t-test between housewives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on subscale (Social life and Interaction Pattern)

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD		MSD				LLUL	

Social Life and Interaction Pattern	10.8	1.54	9.92	1.22	-2.33	.024	-1.71	-.12
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The result shows that housewives’ interaction with other people and social life were much influenced then young girls by Indian dramas but both type of respondents took change in interaction style. Most women and girls accepted that their interaction with family members, friends and neighbours is decreasing due to watching Indian dramas at that time. They also said that they did not like to interfere with family members and friends while watching Indian dramas. Housewives’ numbers are high than young girls.

Table 9: Independent sample t-test between housewives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on appearance and style

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD		MSD				LLUL	
Appearance and Style	14.08	2.01	14.32	1.72	.452	.653	-.82	1.30

Table results show that young girls’ appearance and style have high score than housewives and they adopted Indian culture more than housewives in their lives. Girls’ argument was that because they are students and not limited to walls of the house so they prefer to adopt English dress mostly and other outlooks and appearances while housewives’ stance was that they just adopt a modern outlook while going to any function. Some women stated that they just take Indian dramas as an entertainment source and do not let them inculcate their effects on their personal lives. Some young girls accepted that they also adopt Indian dressing style but to limited extent and their views were that young girls in Indian dramas also show English dressing and just elder women portrayed typical Indian dress “Sari” so it can’t said that Whether young girls adopt Indian dressing or style or not?

Table 10: Independent sample t-test between housewives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on Culture (food, dress, language)

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD	SD	MSD	SD			LLUL	ULUL
Culture (Food, Dress, Language)	27.12	2.22	26.60	1.70	-.927	.358	-1.64	.60

According to results, Housewives and young Girls cultural change was almost same and both took effect about culture from Indian dramas. The majority's stance was that they adopted new dishes in their dines from Indian dramas and try new tastes in common lives. Moreover, nearly half of the respondents agreed that they prefer to dine in front of the TV and discuss drama stories with their family members instead of personal matters. Young girls' number was high than housewives who prefer to watch TV during their dining. Whereas, housewives number was high than young girls who try new dishes in their meals.

Table 11: Independent sample t-test between house wives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on religion

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD	SD	MSD	SD			LLUL	ULUL
Religion	5.28	.737	4.76	.96	-2.13	.038	-1.00	-.030

According to results score, housewives religion beliefs and emotions were get more influence than young girls by Indian dramas

Table 12: Independent sample t-test between housewives (n=25) and young girls students (n=25) on personal and domestic change

Variable	Housewives		Young Girls		t(48)	p	95% CI	
	MSD		MSD				LLUL	
Personal and domestic change	9.72	.89	8.76	1.36	-2.94	.005	-1.61	-.305

Table results clearly shows that Indian dramas had effected both house wives and young girls personal and domestic life but there was a minor difference in numbers i.e. house housewives' change was higher than young girls. Housewives explained about change that their cooking habits, time for husbands and children, book book-reading habits were affected. Some women also explained that their outing routine, evening walk and time for neighbours, and friends was affected. Whereas, young girls point was that the major things that disturbed them were their study time, other entertainment sources like listening to music, outings with friends, window shopping, time for social media, time for parents and siblings and sleeping hours. Due to late-night viewing of TV, they could not wake up early in next morning and so their University classes and study were affected.

Results:

Pakistani society is male dominant society and all decision are pending till their approval. As the matter of remote device concerned, level of viewing and remote control relationship shows that females were the remote controller while watching television whether they were the house wives or young girls. This factors gives more explanation that females not only had high independence while watching television but they were on driving seats. This factor gives another prove that females had all rights in domestic lives and they were enjoyed sole power in domestic activities. So it may be said that with the passage of time family trends and living styles are getting change and revolt.

The level of viewing and right-to-watch relationship reveals that women were equal rights to watch television in comparison to men and in some houses, females were enjoying more rights than

men. So, this relationship also clear that females had no ban or restrictions by the male community on watching television. If talk about some years ago, then Cable television was considered prohibited in most families with the logic that it creates vulgarity and is a threat to our social system and religious norms but now trends are changing and some females who accepted restrictions towards watching cable television claim this restriction is just for stage dramas and sometimes English movies. It is also revealed that men are equally interested in TV dramas because family gatherings were the main part of TV dramas viewership and women had equal rights to watch TV dramas with men. The level of viewing and impact of dramas on Pakistani female relationships reveals that more than half per cent of respondents agreed that Indian dramas are affecting Pakistani society and changing their living standards, norms, language, dresses, family matters, interaction styles and basic patterns. Here it can be said that females are aware of their personal change but still prefer Indian dramas for their entertainment.

Resulting of the data it can be said that cable television has become an important household use and a significant part of women's daily life in Lahore. Moreover, if women carry on following this unhealthy activity (excessively watching cable television), then we can say that the young generation would certainly follow in their routes and thus young girls also follow the same direction as watching TV and Cable TV was their first preference in their leisure time.

Conclusion:

The research conducted reveals a concerning trend of Pakistani citizens increasingly adopting Indian culture. This adoption is fueled by the widespread availability of cable TV networks and Indian channels/movies, which are gradually eroding our social, cultural, religious, and familial values and norms. Pakistani media is also mimicking Indian and Western media, disregarding our own identity and culture. The negative impact of these media influences is seen in the social, spiritual, and psychological development of young people, promoting vulgarity and sexual behaviour. Most respondents expressed concern about the negative effects of Indian channels/movies on their personalities. It is also becoming more common to see people adopting Indian

dressing styles and using Hindi words in their everyday conversations. The study found that lower and middle-class families are facing psychological and financial difficulties due to extravagant spending on anti-Islamic and Hindu traditions. Urgent attention is needed to address the adverse effects of Indian culture on Pakistani society to prevent the risk of losing our identity.

According to Pakistani traditions, families are an important unit of our domestic and social lives. Guests, neighbours, friends, relatives and other people in the social circle are having importance and preference. But with the rise of cable television, many concerns are getting raised in our society and one of them is “social life and interaction pattern”. This study also targets how our socialization patterns are changing.

Recommendations:

1. In Pakistani society, men have the freedom to choose the media they consume, just like in any other field. However, it is important to consider the impact of Indian dramas on men and examine gender discrimination in media usage. To gain a better understanding of this issue, it is necessary to interview men and learn about their perspectives
2. The study's findings recommend that channels actively promote Pakistani culture. To portray a positive image of modernization within the context of Pakistani culture, it is important for all channels to showcase it in a favourable light.
3. Prioritizing the promotion of Pakistani norms and traditions above those of other nations is essential for TV channels.
4. To ensure that drama scripts align with Pakistani cultural values and societal taboos, it is highly advised that PEMRA carefully censor them. This will help maintain the cultural integrity of Pakistani media and prevent any cultural insensitivity.

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