Chapter Six. Fashion, Caste and Consumption
In the West status competition had given rise to fashion trends. Those in the upper echelons set the fashion standard. Following the fashion trends enabled the intermediate classes to feel part of the social group from which they were excluded and to which they aspired. ‘Fashion and other lifestyles pursuits [were] used as bridges and doors to unite and exclude’\textsuperscript{1}. But in India, ‘social constancy’ was the watch word. Corresponding to stagnancy in the social and material sphere was the stagnation in the world of social habits or fashion and lifestyle. And let’s not forget advertising is all about encouraging consumption, and changes in social habits.

Since social customs were derivatives of caste, and social habits were guided by allegiance to caste identity. In such a society, fashion trends will be circumscribed by caste consideration and adoption of new social practices would be limited by prescriptions and prohibitions of the stratum. Again since social practices are guided by customs and traditions of the preceding generation, changes will be hard to fashion out of the existing condition. In this ‘empire of customs’ if social mores of the superior castes are adopted by the lower caste, the need for differentiation will force the upper castes to either innovate and or introduce new social practices.
But since new social practices will mean the formulation of customs ‘not handed
down’ through generations, they will run the risk of being considered ‘illegitimate’.

Therefore social differentiation can be done through two means: either a
continuous method of evolving new social practices or fashion trend to maintain
social practices different from the lower castes (which will put tremendous
pressure on the upper castes to innovate); or alternatively to prevent the imitation
of the social mores of upper caste practices by others. Given the condition where
the upper-caste wields power, preventing the lower caste from imitating the social
customs may sound illiberal but more practical. This may lead to a society in which
social customs will stabilize and not be subjected to the pressures of change. They
will come to acquire permanency, and fashion trends will be more stable albeit
frozen in time. In such a society changes will take place, but agonizingly slowly,
being affected through changes in economic fortunes and not social practices.

Fashion trends and social changes will hinge on the way social differences will be
maintained. If violence and societal boycott are the means of enforcing caste codes,
then imitation will become difficult to imitate. In such a social system, group
identities would be more prominently marked out and become distinct. Such a
system by preventing reproduction of social conventions through imitation habits
would impinge upon the democratization of fashion, and keep it restricted to a few.

Consumption and fashion will then be tied down intricately to the pattern of distribution of power in a given society. The caste that wields power will prescribe consumption patterns for others castes that don’t. Fashion and consumption, therefore will be functional on caste practices. In India’s case, caste regulations were not always rigid and unwieldy and were often subjected to the vicissitudes of affairs of state. The hierarchical order visualized in the scriptural literature wasn’t always realized in actual practice. And India’s history is replete with instances where caste consideration came under strain through the Bhakti cult movement that sought to de-emphasize caste hierarchy and through the various fringe sects that practiced their essentially non-casteist faith but remained marginalized as a whole, their marginality endowing them with an essentially non-threatening character and therefore allowing them a fair degree of degree of independence and freedom within medieval society. But manifestations like these were, in essence temporary in nature, being brought into existence by local exigencies. But what if the upper caste didn’t wield power? The upper caste didn’t always wield political power. What prevented people from adopting new social practices if the upper castes were
unable to prevent them from doing so? What maintains the ordained social order in the absence of coercion? For Louis Dumont, 'the force that holds together the different castes within the whole of the caste system is the ideological force of dharma'\(^2\). Dharma was thus able to unite the different castes with different social habits and consumption patterns into a single whole through the projection of its ideality. This idealized construction of dharma maintained the Order, the much larger and more stable Order; one that offered predictability instead of the fluid identity that was on sale by the various sects that thrived on the margins. Independence ushered in the constitutionally guaranteed bourgeois democratic rights and equality, but they have not be able to replace the comforts that caste identity continues to provide to millions in India, if not for esoteric principles, than for the positive discrimination in matters on public employment and reservation it brings for some castes.

Social customs guided everything from birth to rituals of death. Sumptuary laws were derivatives of caste. India didn’t see public spaces that could have been accessed by all. Caste affiliations regulated access to public space as well. Castes themselves evolved around ‘things’. People were what they produced.
Occupational specialization led to exclusive caste identities, to which no other caste could lay claim. As Raychaudhuri points out, 'the dagbar who made leather bags for holding ghee and sugar cane juice was socially and occupationally distinct from chamar manufacturing shoes, leather ropes and drumheads'. Even in the textile industry ‘the fantastic degree of specialization’ was linked to the fact that each variety of cloth was the specialty of a particular sub-caste. Caste based system of production and distribution prevailed.

During the Mughal era, possessing unique items (pots, pans, and other paraphernalia) was one of the ways for the nobility to connote their individuality, self-expression, uniqueness, and a sense of separateness from others. Fashion and lifestyles held their stead because the means of expressing them (clothes, leisure activities, eating and drinking preferences) were hard to be mass produced, hugely expensive, difficult to attain, or took a long time to come into existence. Embroidered clothes were hugely high-priced and took months if not weeks to be made. Poor connectivity of roads restricted free movements of people and goods. Eating and drinking habits were guided by moral orders and well defined taboos. Limited number of artisanal goods circulated in the market. Since acculturation got
tied down to the way things were used and produced in society, fashion remained static because the means of their manifestation remained tied down to a moribund production technology. Yet it doesn’t mean that attempts at attaining higher social status were never attempted. One of the ways of cultural appropriation by the lower castes was through the process of *sanskritization* ‘the deliberate appropriation of upper caste practices by lower caste groups as a means of elevating themselves in the castes hierarchy’. Examples of *sanskritization* included a shift to a vegetarian diet, yoga practice, and meditation. Consumerism of the late 20th century allowed social groups to lay claim to the habits and wants of the upper class through the possession of goods and commodities.

Changes did come, albeit slowly, and a slow social transformation could take place only in the 18th and the 19th century onwards. New consumption habits could be adopted only when the old customary sumptuary habits had been discarded. Since consumption is a social practice a consumer is embedded in a highly structured world with fixed and definite meanings, new identities could be adopted only at enormous social costs. As a member of a social group or caste an individual can experience the world only through his or her fixed station with the ordained social
order. The act of consumption can’t be sealed off from the society, nor can it be performed in a social vacuum. Consumption itself is measured in relative terms. We compare what we possess in terms of what others do not possess.

A change in the consumption habits could be affected only when a new social order has been affected. The English didn’t bring just goods and commodities. They also brought their ideas, and supported by the Industrial Revolution introduced Indians to borrow words from Aldous Huxley a ‘brave new world’. If all acts of consumption are profoundly cultural, then the most over-the-counter readymade commodity will be idea (of modernity of change). The first profoundly mass produced thing that was on offer was their ‘idea of modernity’. Again if consumption is described as ‘an area of behaviour which explicitly demonstrates that neither commerce nor force is being applied to a free relationship’ 6, then Indians became the largest consumers of English ideas of modernity, east of Suez. This consumption change inaugurated the Consumer Age society in India, though the objects on sale were ‘abstract ideas’ and not material objects.

In the 18th and the 19th century onwards the imperfect marketplace of ideas began
to give way to an emergent seemingly perfect marketplace of ideas. Ideas could be peddled, hawked and people in general as consumers began to have choice to choose from. Since this ‘marketplace of ideas’ was introduced by the English in their area of operation, not surprisingly these ideas found a market in the Bengal Presidency, with the Bengali middle class becoming the first consumer class. The conquest of Bengal ushered not only a political revolution but also a social revolution in thoughts and ideas and the way in which they were practiced. This modernity for Lucian Pye ‘based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, on a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feelings for justice in public affairs’ elicited two fold reaction from Indians: Fear and Revulsion on one hand; Awe and Veneration on the other. Modernity, reviled and vilified at first was later grudgingly accepted as being materially superior to what the Indians had to offer. Eventually this modernity went on to inform ‘attitudes and practices’ and a whole range of social and every day observances including universal rights, gender relations, and most importantly from the point of view of consumption habits also invoked far reaching changes in religious beliefs engendering social reforms, weakening the hold castes and customs had on sumptuary habits. Modernity created the conditions in which later on, the goods
being spewed forth by the churning wheels of the Industrial Revolution, found receptivity and greater social acceptance. Openness to modernity increased receptivity to a new culture one that didn’t consider luxury and fashion as immoral.

But this acceptance of modernity was not without its critics. While native reaction was to accept the material superiority of the English in the realm of the world, it led to the creation of duality of sorts. “In the world, imitation of and adaptation to Western norms was a necessity; at home, they were tantamount to annihilation of one’s very identity”, therefore the home was to ‘remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world’8. The urge to ‘enact ideas’ bought off English shelves and to offer better indigenous alternatives set off the Bengal Renaissance led by the Derozians, the Reformation under Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Humanism of Tagore and Gandhi, and India’s own Industrial Revolution pioneered by the likes of JRD Tata, Birla, and Homi Bhabha.

In some quarters, and through certain social movements, most notable in Bengal attempts to affect changes engendered a backlash from the traditionalists for whom everything traditional and customary was well ordained and established and needed

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no reform or regeneration. The Swadeshi and the Boycott movement in Bengal started as a response to the themes of industrial devastation, economic drain, decline of traditional handicrafts and laissez faire that privileged English goods and put Indian goods at a disadvantage. English goods were to be shunned, and ‘indigenous goods [to] be preferred by consumers even if they were more expensive and inferior in quality to their imported substitutes’. And on the 1st of February 1906 a firm proudly announced the introduction of ‘Swadeshi teacups, saucers, teapots, a real novelty’. What is interesting to note here is that the teacups, saucers, had by now, been sufficiently adopted into local habits to warrant their replacement into the scheme of things through indigenous production means not requiring imports.

And though there were calls for a complete break from the West, including a boycott of English educational system, these calls remained marginal to the movement. Contrary to expectations, cheap imported foreign substitutes remained popular with the poor. Sumit Sarkar mentions that the boycott phenomena didn’t involve the shunning of English machinery or German and Japanese goods. All through the movement ‘the growing influx of cheap German and Japanese articles
remained a serious problem. But it did spark off indigenous attempt at manufacturing.

India experienced in 200 years what Europe did in 400 years. The emergence of a strong middle class that is currently the backbone of the economy and to which most of these advertisements are targeted is often traced to the colonial period and is measured in terms of its access material resources and household incomes. While scholars like Prashant Kidambi have pointed out that 'simple economic indicators of income and occupation were integral to this process' of the emergence of the middle class, others outlines the growth of the middle class to the 'cultural entrepreneurs'. What is important is that when the various socio-political movements sought to loosen up caste grips on the organization of the society, consumption emerged as an essential means of maintaining and creating social status in a rapidly emerging modernizing society. Advertising chipped in.

Gandhi identified advertising as creating negative aspirations amongst people, and not very surprisingly his publications didn't accept advertisements, which he deemed to be totally useless. 'If there were no system of advertisements, we are
surely to save at least half the price [of any article'] 14. He continued to believe that ‘a machine dominated industrial society’ would ‘suck India’s villagers’ into urban slums, sever all their ‘contact with the social unit that was their natural environment’, and leave them firmly trapped in a ‘faceless, miserable existence of an industrial complex’ that would keep on ‘spewing out goods men didn’t really need’ 15. Grinding poverty could be produce moral degradation and violence, but so could ‘full refrigerators, stuffed clothes cupboards, a car in every garage, and a radio in every room’ 16. The excesses of Nazism and Fascism, products of Western precision and industrialization ‘plenty’ were too recent in memory to escape a mention. What Gandhi wanted was a halfway between ‘debasing poverty and heedless consumption of goods’ 17. We have no way to find out how the Mahatma would have reacted to the policy of industrialization, big dams and the mechanization of agriculture introduced by his ideological heir Jawaharlal Nehru.

But nonetheless big dams came to be looked upon as ‘temples of modern India’ in which an impoverished India could hope to find its salvation, materials, if not spiritual. The government felt that what Indians needed were industrial goods and not consumer knickknacks. Consumer sector industries were probably the last item
on the list of Nehruvian priorities. Whatever goods Indian needed could be produced at home. If not, they were not essential and therefore luxuries. Nehruvian development model “hinged on binge” of large river valley projects. A nation emerging from the dearth of food didn’t have need for entertainment, and TV and radio were luxuries which Indians didn’t need. Their role could be appreciated only if they could accelerate development goals of an agriculture society, and not promote conspicuous consumption or wastage thorough consumer goods. Starving population had no need for washing machines and hair dryers. Indian needs were to be meticulously planned and investments in the different sectors of the Indian economy became the domain of bureaucratic bargains in the Planning Commission.

For Nehru, consumer goods might have led to de-prioritization of development goals and waste of scare resources in an India that had been amputated and was limping back from the traumatic experiences of Partition. “Advertising”, Nehru once remarked to the Indian Society of Advertisers, “is essentially a thing to induce consumption, to make people buy things they do not want”\(^\text{18}\). Big newspapers could be tools of manipulation and advertisers could manipulate the manipulators. Though considered as an ideologue and a natural heir to Gandhi, Nehru understood that the salvation of India lay not in esoterical rhetoric but in state sponsored
development projects, the visible manifestations of this ontogenesis being the river valley projects, the IITs and the IIMs most of whose foundational stones were laid by Nehru himself.

During the period of the colonial rule in India, newspapers were the medium of advertising, which itself was the outcome of capitalism. Both were therefore suspects. Capitalism worked through manipulation and exploitation and advertising was one of its tools. The First Press Commission therefore sought to put a limit on the space that could be used commercially for printing advertisements. Either for want of other suitable means, or because of improper knowledge of the market, and perhaps because of popular perceptions of being the only mass medium that could claim a semblance of an all India reach, newspapers were the vehicle that carried on advertisements. And right till the 70s major advertisers in India believed that the only way to reach potential customers was 'exclusively through English language newspapers' 19.

The Indian state took over a highly centralized bureaucratic media in 1947. And the 1885 Telegraph Act empowered the government to maintain an exclusive
privilege over the establishment, maintenance, and working of telegraphs. The constitution itself awarded the Union with exclusive rights over telecommunications and its means. Therefore as Victoria L. Farmer observes, quite unlike the print media, ‘electronic media came under the direct purview of the centre’ 20.

The state’s intrusion into the Indian economy in a role that wasn’t just supervisory was the culmination of a number of influential factors. Socialism permeated the environment of the times so much that in 1944, even leading the industrialists conceded that economic organization based on private ownership wouldn’t be able to organize an equitable distribution of wealth, and ‘only the state could help diminish inequalities of income’21. Their plans known as the ‘Bombay Plan’, also claimed that

During the greater part of the planning period …in order to prevent the inequitable distribution of the burden between different classes …practically every aspect of the economic life will have to be so rigorously controlled by the government that individual liberty and

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freedom of enterprise will suffer a temporary eclipse.

Capitalism and Industrialization introduced by the abusive colonial regime, had disturbed the idyllic social balance of the Indian society, by created new social classes, alleviating some, impoverishing others. Capitalism and Industrialization were already stigmatized as being exploitative, unfair and manipulative, and could not be expected to make much inroad into the deeper recess of India if not legitimized by the Indian state’s paternity. Indian policymakers were much impressed by the Soviet model which had transformed a rural agricultural society into a giant industrial nation, which had crippled and finally defeated the mighty German war machine, and where industries working without the profit motive were able to offset the periodic cycle of over-production, glut, and shortage and scarcity. The directive principles that had been adopted by the Indian constitution called upon the Indian state to ‘secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people, and to strive ‘to promote the welfare of the people’, and to ‘minimize the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people’. (Article 38).
The role of private enterprise was to be limited, as the state took upon itself the
task of manufacturing and managing possibly everything. This was to done
exercise complete control over the production process so that prices could be kept
in check and goods could be made available to the 'ubiquitous' common man at
affordable costs. Public sector manufacturing units came up, and operated in an
environment in which they faced little competition, if any at all. In such a
competition-less monopolistic environment, there would be no incentive to
improve goods and services. Indian consumers went on to be saddled with sub-
standard goods and services. Advertising played a limited role. Brands were stable,
and advertising became static, since publicizing would not be required to play its
energetic and persuasive role. A closed economy would entail limited number of
goods and correspondingly the advertising industry itself would have limited
functionality.

Public sectors units were allowed to functions with little fiscal control. Bloated and
insufficiently managed PSUs functioned in a relatively competition free
environment, producing goods whose quality steadily declined, since monopolistic
condition had removed the incentive for better quality and a fairer price for
products. Governments refrained from restructuring the PSUs for fear of
antagonizing electorally powerful social group: the salaried and employed middle class. The 70s saw further nationalization of financial institutions and banks initiated with much fanfare by Mrs. Gandhi. Private banks were taken over to control the flow of money on the ground that access to private capital had hitherto been the sole privilege of urban industrialists, and credit was needed by the self-employed and the agriculturalists. The rump of India’s princely class also lost their ‘privy purse’ and their exemptions from paying central taxes and import duties.

With a policy of import substitution in place, India was cut off from global trade. And though it protected India from the vicissitudes of global trade, it prevented Indian manufacturing industry from becoming global players and cocooned them up in protective layers of import duties and tariffs. In the absence of any substantial private initiative, what India had to offer as exports was what the poorly managed, technologically deficit PSUs were manufacturing. Indian exports and international demand for Indian goods and services didn’t exactly fire up the Indian economy.

In 1991 India had no foreign reserve to pay for its imports. Deficit spending led to inflation and a non-existent export threatened a miniscule foreign reserve. Bad planning, not socialist rhetoric brought Indian economy on the verge of meltdown.
Deliverance came in the form of opening up of the Indian economy. Finance minister Man Mohan Singh, sought to instill financial prudence in the Indian economy by opening up sectors of the Indian economy that had hitherto been the sole prerogative of the PSU. This trend towards de-licensing the Indian economy was being witnessed from 1980s onwards, but they fell short of even the half way mark. To improve fiscal fitness, and reorient the PSUs away from their sluggishness, competition was introduced and monopolistic tendencies were curbed. Foreign investors wanting to do business in India which boasted of a sizeable middle class brought in the much needed capital that could offset the balance of payment crisis. The multinational companies also needed collaborators to manage their business ventures and suddenly the demand for technical degree holders shot up. Campus recruitments in technical institutions became the norm. Unheard of salaries were on offer. Increased competition amongst manufacturers; Indian, foreign and joint collaborations between them brought down prices and improved quality directly benefiting the Indian consumers. But above all it offered a commodity hitherto not available: choice. Coca Cola and IBM which had been expelled in the 70s made a re-entry. This opening up of the Indian economy directly impacted upon the advertising industry. With the open skies policy in
place, Indian television soon became a cacophony of games shows, sitcom serials, countdown programmes, exclusive music channels, dial-in shows, day and night cricket matches, business, sports and entertainment news, all sponsored by a variety of products that ranged from cooking oils, and shampoos to cars and conditioners to air-tickets and unit linked insurance policies. TV channels in regional languages came up, adding to the reach of the advertisers. Per capita spending increased as people tried to live to the world they saw on TV, re-fashioning social habits and consumption patterns. Affluence, the dirty word in Gandhian India, became fashionable. *Flaunt* became the new watchword.

Television, when it was introduced in 1959 came with strings attached. The 50s was the era of Wilbur Schramm, and mass communication theories that envisaged a powerful role for the media hinging on the belief that media messages worked directly on the audiences. Most development models being pedalled sought to integrate and appropriate TV and radio into development roles. So unlike the other mediums available, radio and TV went under state control. The government sought to justify its monopoly over the airwaves by claiming that they were the ‘bare essentials’ in promoting socio-economic goals.
That TV and Radio could help achieve development goals were reiterated later on again when the Indira Gandhi constituted Chanda Committee observed, ‘broadcasting could promote compliance with government led development schemes, including the Five Years Plans’ 23. But the explicit goals that TV and radio were expected to fulfilled were left unanswered. The success and failure in achieving development goals were tied to TV and radio. When they failed to make any headway in the pursuits so envisioned, cultural nationalism came to the rescue. TV and radio were to be used to promote national integration and counter fissiparous tendencies through programmes that were available only in select cities and only for a few hours! Such envisioning could hardly make headroom when most programming was done in Hindi, a language that was confined mostly to northern Indian states. Government controlled All India Radio wasn’t open to commercial broadcasts and the first public promotion was only aired as late as 1967. The State owned broadcast Doordarshan that functioned out of the AIR offices was able to air its first still with voice-over advert in 1976.

With radio, advertising had crossed over the artificial barrier which literacy had created and communicated directly with a hitherto unreachable audience. Radio reached out to that sizeable population living in villages, and small towns where
TV signals were yet to reach. Radio programmes like Binaca Geetmala, Ovaltine,
Phulwari, became immensely success. Government control and apathy and
regulation prevented commercialization of the radio. And the first broadcast of an
advertisement on radio was allowed as late as 1967 by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who as
the Information & Broadcasting minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Lal
Bahadur Shastri had realized the true potential of the radio and its overwhelming
reach.

In 1983 the reach of Doordarshan in terms of network coverage was available to
only one-quarter of the population. But as broadcast hours increased so did the
pressure to create software and Doordarshan's limited capacity to produce TV
content came under severe strain. P.C. Joshi, the chairman of the Committee for
software planning for Doordarshan set up in 1983 by the Ministry of Information &
Broadcasting, Government of India noted, that though, 'India is so rich both in
traditional and contemporary art forms, in scenic beauty and people's creativity.
Why then the television programming is still so poor, so inadequate in its grasp of
this richness of India!' 24. He also noted that any attempt to run Doordarshan as
personal fiefdom will eventually 'lead to the ossification of the medium' 25.
But TV was still being looked upon as a medium that could bring in developmental aims to their fruition. TV could convert ‘idle or underutilized labour into productive economic resource’, enhance ‘material output and enrich the life of millions by giving them a sense of participation’ 26.

TV entertainment was to acquire an Indian sensibility, and its content had to be Indianized. The need was to create a Doordarshan that was problem-oriented, and people centric. Unlike his predecessors assigned to study communications, PC Joshi had a more tangible vision of what was required of Doordarshan. As he noted many in India wouldn’t be cripple or blind if they had had elementary information about healthcare, sanitation and nutrition. This was the role to be assigned to Doordarshan; of public service.

Therefore Doordarshan had to be opened to an ‘outside pool of artists, producers, directors and technicians’27. If American TV serials are popularly referred to as soap opera because they were sponsored by soap manufacturers, then Indian TV serials may preferably be called as ‘noodle opera’ as, Hum Log, the first TV serial that eventually gained massive popularity in 1983 was advertised by the newly launched Maggi 2 Minutes noodles. Hum Log dealt with the travails of the average
urban Indian family. ‘Woven into its lengthy narrative were various threads of
women’s empowerment. The show attacked the dowry system, encouraged women
to get educated, decide for themselves how many children they would have, and
promoted gender equality in the workplace’.28

Its success paved the way for commercialization of Doordarshan. *Hum Log* and its
resounding success was matched by *Buniyaad* (Foundation) made by Ramesh
Sippy a very successful Hindi film director. Later the serialization of epics like
*Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were able to garner hitherto unheard of viewership
ratings, but these serials, on the whole ‘projected an India that was overwhelmingly
north Indian, Hindi speaking, middle class, and Hindu’.29 Doordarshan’s
advertising revenue that was $0.18 million in 1975-76 touched $15 million in
1985-86. As of now of the Rs 20,000 crore plus advertising industry, television
advertising alone accounts for 45-47 per cent. The rest of the advertising pie is
shared between radio, the print media and the Internet among others.

The Gulf war and its live broadcast to affluent Indian homes heralded the satellite

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TV age. Its ease of intrusion into Indian drawing rooms was first decried as an invasion of the cultural kind. This anti-invasion brigade predicated itself on the ‘rhetoric of cultural nationalism, which called for the protection of Indian airwaves, and thus Indian culture, from foreign broadcast’. To regulate the various cable network system that mushroomed all over India, the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act was passed in 1995 seeking to regulate the traffic of the airwaves, and clarified the legal responsibilities of the local cablewallah. The Act made it essential on cable operators to re-transmit at least two Doordarshan channels to audiences that were increasingly hooked onto the TV serials of ZEE TV. The cable operators were required to get themselves registered, follow the advertising code, and pay a 40% entertainment tax on their sales. Most of these regulations were honoured in the breach. Attempts to regulate the airwaves through the cable operators were being matched by viewers who were increasingly turning towards satellite TV for their entertainment. Doordarshan’s revenue that had reached an all-time high of $133 million in 1995-96 began to steadily decline as viewers turned to showbiz and glamour saturated satellite TV serials that introduced them to a new glamour soaked world. And in 1998-99, Doordarshan’s advertising revenue touched just $92 million, a decline of $41 million in a span of just 3 years. With
choices in entertainment available to them, Indian viewers began turning to other channels, and advertisers turned to Satellite TV to reach out to a mobile, suave, fashion conscious middle class that had turned increasingly disoriented towards a state-managed economy, marked by a paucity of choices when it came to consumer goods. With the de-regularization of the Indian skies, it was boom time for the TV viewers. Channels and TV serials that could garner revenue from advertisers went on to make history. Star Plus, Zee, Sony, Colors, NDTV beamed in a new world; one to which the ordinary Indian had never been privy to. By 1999, about 900 million people in India had access to a TV set. TV audience which was 1.7 million in 1973 reached 500 million. In the same year there were about 65 million TV sets in India. While Doordarshan lost its monopoly over entertainment and infotainment, channels like Zee TV, SONY. The popularity of the cable TV/Satellite channels could be measured by the revenue generated by these channels. In 1996-97 the advertising revenue collected by Doordarshan stood at $133 million and its closest rival Zee TV stood at $49 million. Within two years, ZEE TV Ad revenue stood at $90 million, while Doordarshan’s had plummeted to about $92 million. Cable TV introduced a consumerism, a conservative form of nationalism and concerns about gender images among Indian audiences.
References:
4. Ibid. Pg.24
10. Ibid. Pg. 125
11. Ibid. Pg. 123
12. Ibid. Pg. 125
16. Ibid. Pg. 197
17. Ibid .Pg. 197
19. Ibid. Pg. 52.
25. Ibid. Pg. 193
26. Ibid. Pg. 193
30. Ibid Pg. 274
32. Ibid. Pg. 124.