Chapter - 8

Research Finding and Conclusion

The study aimed at exploring the Television viewing pattern among viewers in Aizawl and investigates the socio-cultural implications of Cable Television programmes on Audiences. Specifically, the study looked at the Television use habits and attitudes of audiences and based on that an attempt was made to find out the relation between viewing of Cable Television Programmes and acceptance of Western Lifestyles and Western sexual norms. Moreover, keeping in mind the popularity of local originated programmes among Audiences, an effort was made to examine what factors contributed to their popularity. Even though, demographic variables such as age, gender, education, socio-economic level, occupation and sense of community are accepted as good determining factors of Media use and exposure, the study did not specify any particular Age group as ‘subject’ but target Cable Television viewers as a whole. The study also looked at the contents of Local Cable Television channels and Doordarshan Kendra Aizawl stressing on Local newscasts. This was done mainly to understand
better the nature of Cable Television contents disseminated to the viewers and what kind of implications can be drawn from it.

The finding of the study have been categorised under three head as under:

1) Findings on Audience study emphasized on demographic informations of respondent, relations between level of viewing and demographic variables such as Gender and Occupation, level of Education, preferences of channels and programme genre, viewing pattern of Local Cable Television programmes, reason for watching Local TV programmes, usages of Television, impact of cable television on social activities - whether live coverage make them sit at home, Whether respondents have ever cancelled meeting with friends or other activities due to T.V Programme, discussion of T.V programmes at home, How long respondents think they will be able to stay without T.V set and also impact of Television Ads on Audiences.
2) Results of Hypotheses testing

3) Findings on Contents Analysis study pertain to comparative distribution of Local Cable Television programme genre, topic-wise distribution of Local Cable and Doordarshan Kendra Aizawl Newcasts, news sourcing and placement of stories within Newcasts.

8:1 Findings of Audience study

The finding on Audience study may be cited as under:

In this study, the respondent in terms of gender was similar. However, a majority of the respondents i.e. 64.8% considered themselves as low viewers of Television while only 3.4% and 4.0% claimed themselves as very heavy and heavy viewers of Television respectively. From this study, it is evident that the hectic social life of majority of the Mizo's seemed to determine the viewing pattern of Television to some extent. Apart from their daily toil, community activities and Church services are very much part of majority of the Mizos, it can be deduced that they do not have sufficient leisure time to sit in front of Television set for many hours and as such usually watch Television for 3 to four hours a day. Similarly, in terms of Occupation, Monthly Income, Qualification and
Age Group distribution, the respondents were widely diverged. The Analysis of samples on the basis of Level of viewing and Gender shows that among the male viewers, 3.6% were found to be very heavy viewers, 4% were heavy viewers, moderate viewers were 25.2% and 67.2% regard themselves as Low viewers. In the female category, very heavy viewers were 3.2%, 4% were found to be heavy viewers, moderate viewers were 30.4% and low viewers were 62.4%. Among male and female samples, low viewers were enormously higher than Very heavy and heavy viewers. It can, therefore, be inferred that Gender does not have any determining role to play in viewers’ level of viewing Television.

Analysis of relations between educational qualification and level of viewing demonstrated that among School-goers, 64.61 percent (126 out of 195) marked themselves as low viewer of Television. In other categories as well, majority of respondents are low viewers of Television. In terms of monthly income, among the Income group of Rs.16000 – Rs.20000 and Above Rs.21000, there were no ‘very heavy’ and ‘heavy’ viewers and at the same time majority of them were low viewer of Cable Television. In fact, only small percentages of the respondents were ‘very heavy’ and ‘heavy’ viewers of Cable Television. Majority of respondents were either
moderate or low viewers. Only among the Income group of below 2000, the lowest percentage of respondents belonged to the category of ‘low’ viewers.

Among the Mizos, Sports disciplines such as Football, Basketball and ‘contact’ sports like Teakwoondo, Karate, and Boxing etc are very popular especially among males. The love for sports and games seem to determine their channel and programme preferences to a certain extent. Among male viewers, the most preferred channels and programmes are sports channels like ESPN and Star sports while among female viewers Movies and ‘Serial’, Sitcom and Soap Operas oriented channels like Star Movies, HBO, Star Plus and Star Sports are the most preferred channels. Eventhough, majority of the Mizos are regular church-goers, and could be considered as ‘religious’, however, one interesting finding is the low viewership of a religious based channel called God’s Channel which constituted only 1.4 percent of viewership.

In terms of viewing of Local Channels, majority of people are regular viewers of Local Cable channels. Specifically, however, among the Age group of 15-19 years only 40.74 percent said that they are regular viewer of Local Cable channels. On the other hand, 68.05 percent among the Age group of 25 to 29 years
consider themselves as regular viewers. ‘Local Flavours’, ‘Access to local news’, ‘Language familiarity’ and ‘Self Identification’ are all cited by regular viewers of Local cable Channels are their main reason for watch local programmes.

As evident from the study, majority of the Mizos use Television mainly for Information and Entertainment. But among very heavy viewers, the usage for Television for entertainment alone is quite high in comparison with other categories. Overall, only a small portion of viewers use Television for Education alone. In terms of occupation-wise and level of viewing-wise distributions of usage of Television as well, the trend is more or less similar in all groups with the usage for Information and Entertainment occupying the highest percentage and usage for Education at the bottom.

On the impact of Television on audiences’ habits and social life, majority of Mizo viewers could be broadly categorised under ‘those who never spent a day without glancing at Television’ and ‘those who occasionally spent a day without glancing at Television. Moreover, only 5.6 percent of respondents said that they’ve always spent their days without Television. It can, therefore, be inferred that bulk of the people are very much attached to the Television set whether or not they are heavy viewers.
An attempt was also made to find out whether Television has an impact on the social activities of viewers. They were asked whether they have ever cancelled meeting with friends or other activities due to T.V Programme, majority of respondents said that they have never done such thing while a small fraction of 1.8 percent said that they have always cancelled meeting with friends or other activities due to T.V programme. Apart from the impact of Television programme on social activities, the researcher was interested to find out the level of impact of Television Advertisements on individuals. Among the female respondents, 53.2 percent said that they’ve brought a product because of a television advertisement; and the other 46.8 percent said that they’ve never been compelled to buy a product because of an attractive Television Advertisement. In contrast, among the male respondents, 56.4 percent said that they’ve never been felt compelled to buy a product because of Television advertisements. Among the male respondents, only 43.6 % said that they’ve been prompted by Television Advertisements to buy a product. Thus, it can be assumed that Television advertisements’ have more impact on female in comparison with male.
Moreover, the largest number of Cable Television audiences claimed that they'll be able to adjust themselves without T.V set depending on the condition. At the same time, 14 percent of respondents said that they will not be able to stay without Television even for one day. In terms of Income group distribution, among ‘No income’ group, 23.91% (55 respondents) said that they will not be able to do without Television set even for one day. On the other hand, only 1.92% among the Rs.11000 - Rs.15000 group said that they will not be able to do without Television even for one day. What can be inferred from this finding is that un-employed, students and ‘Stay-home mom’ who are categorised under ‘No income’ group have more leisure time to watch T.V and they may have T.V shows which they regularly view and as a result find it harder to do without Television.

In Aizawl, Local Cable T.V networks regularly telecast live coverage of big events and Functions. The researcher was interested to find out the impact of such live coverage on audiences. As evident from the study, among the age group of 25-30 years, the highest number of people said that live coverage will not stop them from attending a function; while among the Age group of 35 & Above, higher number of respondents said that they would rather
watch live coverage at home than attending the function. Thus, it can be assumed that live coverage has lesser impact on younger people who are more active and energetic; while for older generation, live coverage are convenient way of witnessing an events. Nevertheless, irrespective of Age groups, majority of people would attend or sit at home depending on the event.

8:2 Findings of Hypotheses Testing

The findings of Hypotheses testing are as follows:

8.2:1 Evaluation of relationship between Gender and Channel and programme preferences:

In order to find out whether gender plays a role in channels preference, the data were analysed using Chi² test. The statistical test shows that gender does play a significant role in channels preference.

Moreover, an attempt was made to find out which channel is mostly preferred by Male viewers. Using the population proportion test called Z test, the data were analysed. The Z-test indicates that there is a significance difference in the population
proportion of Male to Female viewers with respect to preference for sports programmes. Thus, the research question- “The preference for sports programmes is greater among Male viewers than female viewers” is statistically supported.

Furthermore, an attempt was also made to find out which channel is mostly preferred by Female viewers. Using the same population proportion test called Z test, the Hypothesis “The preference for serial is greater among Male viewers than Female viewers” was analysed. The Z test indicates a significant difference in the population proportion between Female and Male viewers in terms of preference for serials. Hence, the research question is statistically supported.

8.2:2 Evaluation of the relationship between acceptance of Western lifestyles and Level of viewing:

The population proportion of Very heavy (and Heavy) viewers and Moderate (and Low) viewers were tested separately using the Z-test based on the six(6) dependent variables of Western lifestyles such as Identifying oneself with characters, Imitate behaviour and mannerism, Imitate dress designs and fashion, imitate
accent and programmes jargon, wish to try foreign recipes and aspiring to travel abroad. The test shows that Very heavy and heavy viewers tend to show acceptance of Western lifestyles in all areas such as ‘Identify oneself with Characters’, ‘imitating behaviour and mannerism’, ‘imitating dress designs and fashion’, ‘imitating accent and programmes jargon’, ‘wish to try foreign recipes’ and ‘aspiring to travel abroad’. On the other hand, moderate and low viewers tend to show acceptance of Western lifestyles only in terms of ‘imitating dress designs and fashion’. In areas such as ‘Identify oneself with Characters’, ‘Imitate behaviour and mannerism’, ‘Imitate accent and programmes jargon’, ‘wish to try foreign recipes’ and ‘aspiring to travel abroad’; they do not show acceptance of Western lifestyles. Hence, the population proportion tests fully supported that Very heavy and heavy viewers of Cable Television programmes tend to show greater degree of acceptance of Western lifestyles than Moderate and Low viewers.

Moreover, the researcher was interested to find out whether Female viewers tend to show a great degree of acceptance of Western lifestyles than Male viewers among the Very heavy and heavy viewers. The result shows that there was no significance difference between Male and Female population proportion in any of the dependent variables such as ‘Identify oneself with Characters’, ‘Imitate behaviour and mannerism’, ‘Imitate dress designs’ and
fashion’, ‘Imitate accent and programmes jargon’, ‘wish to try foreign recipes’ and ‘aspiring to travel abroad’. Thus, the Ho was accepted in all the dependent variables at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the research question – “Among very heavy and heavy viewers of Cable Television programmes, Female viewers tend to show a great degree of acceptance of Western lifestyles than Male viewers” is not statistically supported.

8.2:3 Evaluation of the relationship between acceptance of Western sexual norms and Level of viewing:

The population proportion of Very heavy (and Heavy) viewers and Moderate (and Low) viewers were tested separately using the Z-test based on the four (4) dependent variables of Western sexual norms such as ‘Programmes arouse interest in sex’, ‘Programmes encourage free thinking of sex’, ‘Programmes encourage indulgence in casual sex’ and ‘Programmes encourage pre/extra marital status’. The statistical tests result show that Very heavy and heavy viewers tend to show acceptance of Western Sexual norms in three areas – ‘interest in sex’, ‘free thinking of sex’ and ‘indulgence in casual sex’. On the other hand, programmes do not encourage ‘indulgence in pre/extra marital status.’
Moreover, moderate and low viewers do not show any acceptance of Western sexual norms based on the dependent variables such as ‘Programmes arouse interest in sex’, ‘Programmes encourage free thinking of sex’, ‘Programmes encourage indulgence in casual sex’ and ‘Programmes encourage pre/extra marital status.’

Thus, it may be inferred that the Hypothesis – “‘Very heavy and heavy viewers of Cable Television programmes tend to show greater degree of acceptance of Western sexual norms than moderate and low viewers’” is partially supported by the statistical test. Because among very heavy and heavy viewers, there is a significant difference in the population proportion of three dependent variables such as ‘interest in sex’, ‘Freethinking of sex’ and ‘indulgence in casual sex’. And the Null hypothesis is rejected in one area i.e. ‘encourage pre/extra-marital status.’ On the other hand, moderate and low viewers do not show any significant difference in terms of acceptance of Western sexual norms based on the four dependent variables. Therefore, the research question is not fully supported nor rejected completely.

Furthermore, in an attempt to find out whether male viewers tend to show a great degree of acceptance of Western
sexual norms than Female viewers, the population proportion of male and female viewers were tested using Z-test based on the four (4) dependent variables of Western sexual norms such as 'Programmes arouse interest in sex', 'Programmes encourage free thinking of sex', 'Programmes encourage indulgence in casual sex' and 'Programmes encourage pre/extra marital status', there is no significant difference in the population proportion of male and female viewers. Thus, it can be deduced that among very heavy and heavy viewers of Cable Television programmes, Male viewers do not necessarily show greater degree of acceptance of Western sexual norms than Female viewers.

8.2:4 Findings of Contents study of Local Cable Television networks and Doordarshan Kendra, Aizawl:

As evident from textual Analysis of Cable Television channels’ contents and interviewes with audiences and TV Producers, the contents of Local Cable channels have been dominated by Reality based Live shows and Korean serial dubbed in Mizo. These channels have popularised live television shows to an unprecedented degree. In terms of DDK Aizawl, the programming
uphold, to a great extent, the status of being an official Media, as such programming of DDK Aizawl is often perceive by younger generation as ‘dull’ and serious. However among older people, DDK Aizawl programming is observe as informative and reliable.

A study of the local news contents collected over a specified period shows that their main emphasis is on local concern and issues. In the three Local Cable channels and Doordarshan Kendra Aizawl taken together, Reports on local political and social events, which make up the bulk of the news programmes (28.43%), cover areas such as development, agriculture, economy, environment, activities of Non-Governmental Organisations, charity work, activities of government, festivals, state events, celebrations of national and international days, army and police activities, activities of local political groups, natural disasters, funerals and accidents.

The pattern of news distribution in the stories scanned in the newscast of all channels was broadly similar. All the three cable channels tend to cover a narrower range of topics. Topics such as lifestyle, entertainment and celebrity are virtually nonexistent in all the three cable news which are categorised together under ‘Others’. Over all, Local channel news stories have few sources, reveal little about those sources, and, even if the story involves a
dispute, they contain few conflicting points of views. High
dependence on press releases and ‘write-up’ prepared by news
stories contributors is one reason cable reporting is thinner and at
the same time less transparent. Atleast 70% of News stories
extracted from Press releases were based on only a single source
that audiences could fully identify.

In DDK Aizawl news Bulletin, high precedence is given to
Government activities such as Chief Minister’s speech, Proceedings
in Legislative Assembly etc. This limits coverage of local social and
cultural concerns. The emphasis on state news has led audiences to
dismiss the channel as a “mouthpiece of the government” and often
turn to privately produced local newscasts. On the other hand, many
viewers’ interviewed alleged that in an attempt to sensationalize
stories and hook the viewers, the local channels often display
disturbing images and video footages. In terms of news reporting
and in particular in case of conflict Reporting, it appears that the
Newsrooms often espouse public interest position rather than taking
satisfactory impartial stand.

Both field observation and the results of a study
conducted on the three Local Cable Television and Doordarshan
Kendra News Telecasts shows some of the negative aspects of
extensive coverage of political news. The number of sources is
limited and those events which can be easily covered are preferred
as newsrooms have felt obliged to constantly provide more news and stay ahead of their rivals. The study also found that the news correspondent reporting from the field is marginally low as newsreaders resort to mere verbal reportage avoiding live commentary and footage from the spot. In this area, Doordarshan fared much better than Local Cable Channels.

As mentioned earlier, there is high dependence on press releases rather than on independent investigation in the Local Cable channels which led to abundant presence of Government and Political related stories in the News Bulletins. It was also observed through the study that all the three major cable networks relied mainly on 'engagement book' (that is stories about pre-scheduled events such as hearings, trials, meetings, exhibitions and press conferences) for their News stories.

8:3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion it must be cited that the study on Viewing pattern, Preferences and Responses to Cable Television programmes among Cable Television viewers in Aizawl do not provide any strong evidence to support the argument that demographic Variables such as age, gender, education, socio-economic level, occupation and sense of community have significant influence on the amount or
level of viewing of the respondents. Nonetheless, it must be noted that gender appears to be an excellent predictor of exposure to different kinds of content within Cable Television. For example, among the Male respondents, the larger numbers of them prefer Sports channels while larger numbers of female respondents prefer film and drama based programmes and channels. Furthermore, Age does play some amount of role in determining whether people will stay at home watching Live coverage of an event or attend the event. Moreover, as evident from the study, language/dialect familiarity, access to local news and the presence of local flavours programmes are all together a strong factor for the popularity of local based channels. The study also proved that advertisements on Television have greater affect over female than male viewers.

The Majority of the Mizos led a hectic social life, activities at community level as well as church functions keep them relatively busy and as such they do not have much of a leisure time to devote themselves to Television, and this factor may be attributed to some extent as the reason for low level of Television viewing among the majority of the Mizos. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the number of households having Television set with cable connection, it is observable that Cable Television is very popular among the Mizos.

In the area of Local Cable channels, the study has explored that the popularity of Cable Television among the Mizo
audiences, to a great extent, is boosted by the Local originated Mizo channels. The Local channels not only serve audiences with entertainment but also perform an important function of information through News Bulletins, interviews, discussions and documentary features. However, the Local channels' contents are largely dominated by entertainment programmes. It seems that the profuse presence of entertainment programmes is the result of the Local Cable channels' attempt to stay ahead of their rivals. In terms of Local newscasts, high dependence on Government Agencies and press releases for News stories prevents the Local Newsrooms from providing more transparent stories with respect to sources and coverage of broader topics. Despite certain limitations in the production of the Local Newscasts, 35.31% of Audiences said that Local News telecast is their main reason for viewing Local channel (as evident from the Audience study).

Eventhough, there is evidence to support that Local Cable channels are being invaded by Western Culture through the imitation of Western programmes. The fact that such imitated programmes and dubbed materials are highly popular among viewers and that viewers often prefer them seemed to have compelled Local producers to imitate them. Apart from such programmes, satellite channels depicting western culture are also very popular among viewers. Since such materials are being
imported more cheaply than they can be produced at the local level, it is tempting for Local producers to imitate them than creating works more consistent with the traditional culture. Moreover, in the absence of strong motivation to protect the indigenous culture and to nurture local talent, the pressure towards imitation appears to be stronger.

On the impact of Cable Television in general, acceptance of Western Lifestyles to a large extent is related to excessive exposure to Western originated programmes. However, irrespective of level of viewing, the influence of Western Lifestyles is comparatively high in the area of imitating dress designs and fashions than in other areas like imitating behavior and mannerism, imitating programmes’ jargon, identifying oneself with characters etc. Moreover, it is evident from the study that the level of acceptance of western lifestyle between female and male viewers (among very heavy and heavy viewers) is broadly similar.

Similarly, acceptance of Western sexual norms to some extent is related to level of viewing. Heavy viewing of Television could arouse interest in sex, free thinking of sex and could encourage indulgence in casual sex. However, as observable from the study, western originated programmes do not inevitably encourage acceptance of Western sexual norms among general audiences. And that the level of acceptance of western sexual
norms between female and male viewers (among very heavy and heavy viewers) is broadly similar.

Lastly, this study, to some extent, vindicates the theory of cultural imperialism through Cable Television. However, it must be noted that Christianity is deeply rooted in the Mizo society, the social life mainly revolves around religious activities and little else. In fact, it can be said that Christianity made them look to the West (which is a pre-dominantly Christian society) more than mainland Indian culture; and as such, are more adaptable to western culture. Nevertheless, the availability of Cable Television channels depicting western ways of life seems to be a strong accelerating force for the diffusion of Western culture among the Mizos.