CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Until writing was invented, men lived in acoustic space: boundless, directionless, horizonless in the dark of the mind in the world of emotion, by primordial intuition, by terror. Speech is a social chart of this bog. It abolished mystery; it gave architecture and towns; it brought roads, armies and bureaucracy. Television completes the cycle of the human sensorium. With the omnipresent ear and the moving eye, we have abolished writing, the specialised acoustic-visual metaphor that established the dynamics of western civilisation. The environment that man creates becomes his medium for defining his role in it. The invention of type created linear consequential thought, separating thought from action. Now with TV, thought and action are closer and social involvement is greater. We again live in a village.......

These remarks by Marshall McLuhan in his ‘Medium is the Message’ [Harmonis worth; Penguin, 1967] are notable in terms of the effects of the communication in reducing the segregation among the societies. A new cultural wave through mass communication appears to be sending out signals to a new kind of values emerging in the midst of traditional structure.

The social change through communication requires rearticulation of contradictions in cause and effect relationship. For example, TV was once intended as a prime agent of social change. In the Indian situation, development messages squeezed into the entertainment bazaar on the TV have an influence on the viewers, but the ideal of change held up to Indian society by TV is that of a yuppie first world--image of affluence utterly attainable for most of India’s millions. If Mahatma Gandhi meant for us to wipe every tear from every eye, the creed of “neighbour’s envy, owner’s pride” is the new ideal for social change that sweeps the nation through Doordarshan and the satellite foreign TV networks. Today the
mass communication is that communication to which the masses have no access.
A social change without individual involvement and different from the way Mahatma Gandhi picked up a grain of salt at Dandi and moved millions to instant action!

In the modern world system information is termed as power and resource with emphasis on consumerism and individual as the unit of enterprise. Mass communication acts as a social force and have a location in the power-structure, resulting in an interaction between society and media. C. Wright Mills provides a more analytical view in his 'The Power Elite' [1956: 320], "The structural trends of modern society and the manipulative character of its communication technique come to a point of coincidence in the mass society........ segregating men and women into narrowed routines and environments.... masses in metropolitan society know one another only as fractions in a specialised milieux......they do not gain a view of the structure of their society and of their role as a public within it".

Mass communication agencies or 'culture industry'; according to Horkheimer and Adorno, is very repressive [Swingewood, 1977: 13]; criticism of capitalism is stifled, happiness is identified with acquiescence and with the complete integration of the individual into the existing social and political order. The mass communication "downwards, aimed at creating "post decision consensus"; with nothing coming up from the individual in return" [Willett, 1980 : 554]. The state of culture under the circumstances prevailingly a modern industrial society has been critically analysed by Horkheimer. He uses the term "mass culture" and discerns its following features [1972:273-290]: [1] it is homogenised by the prevailing economic system; [2] it is a phenomenon of bureaucratically controlled societies and therefore, can not offer any positive resistance/criticism; [3] it has no scope for providing 'inner life' to the individual; [4] its media educate the masses to
obedience; [5] it does not allow any scope for imagination; [6] it has made man passive, and [7] it has been increasingly reified with the consequence that the objects of man's labour and activity are transformed into independent, autonomous forces beyond human control. Herbert Marcuse, in early 1960s, considering all these aspects of mass culture termed it [1972:58] as the perversion of culture a phenomenon characteristic of the advanced industrial societies.

"Society" implies existence of a common culture shared knowledge and beliefs, patterns of association and custom. On this "globe" one is actually impressed with the diversity and contrast among peoples of the traditional world. Yet an advanced degree of internationalised common culture does extend around the world though most people only observe bits and pieces of it [Glen Fisher, 1970:7]. Technology, commerce and finance provides a common base. Western dress, literature and music are found in most urban centres. English is rapidly becoming the world's lingua franca. Thus many people in many nations participate in an internationalized common culture at least part of the time, or with part of their psyches.

In sharp contrast to the view of the decline or crisis of culture in the advanced industrial societies, there is the progressive evolutionist approach based on cultural pluralism which [Swingewood, 1977: 19] "celebrates the greater scope for human initiative, development and freedom engendered by the emergence of industrialisation" Edward Shils is one of the important upholders of this approach. He criticized the theorists of Frankfurt school [Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, etc.] saying that their views on mass society and culture were influenced by their "frustrated attachment to an impossible ideal of human perfection" [ibid:18].
In a modern society, there are independent or autonomous groups which exercise and influence the democratic control. These groups support liberal democracy by "providing social bases of free and open competition" for leadership, widespread participation in the selection of leaders and self-government in wide areas of social life [Kornhauser, 1960: 230-31]. In such a pluralistic society, Swingewood asserts, the culture is mass culture, but it is a kind of mass culture in which social life is enhanced, not impoverished as the broad mass of the population is for the first time in history allowed to participate in it [Swingewood, 1977: 20].

In some situations the mass culture supplies a satisfying identity-defining functions that goes well beyond the practicalities of international communications itself. It becomes the basic culture for many people. In some developing countries a substantial part of the new urban middle sectors are frustrated because their own national culture has not changed fast enough to meet their own psychological needs. "Their traditional society did not provide for modern middle classes or new industrialists or professional elites, and it does not provide a sense of identity or give satisfaction or status. Even that which is seen from the outside as the finest in traditional cultural expression for example, Baliness dancing or Egyptian archaeological wonders, is still seen as backward or without prestige in establishing oneself in competition with a modern world", says Glen Fisher [1979: 17].

These new groups would rather be renowned for accomplishment in the modern world on its own terms. To them, the international culture is the good life and they want to identify with it and practise it. These people are not nationally trying to prevent the inroads of foreign things; they are the opposite of xenophobic. The more, the better; access to communication with the United States and Europe
is essential. Their reference group include foreign and modern people whom they would emulate. They want to be informed by international news services, be entertained by American movies, watch American television even if it is a bit hard to understand. They want to be up to date on fashions and music and live in modern styles. "In effect, they are in conflict with their own mainstream culture, and are opting for the international and it is their solution to a cultural identity problem" [Glen Fisher; 1979: 18].

Culture is manifested in the technological, mental, moral, social, aesthetic and spiritual achievements of human kind. Culture gives meaning to our relationship with the other, as it also forms our subjective identity. Culture, therefore, enters into the processes of social change in many forms and at the various levels. It defines the quality of social changes as its indicator. By selective adaptations to outside cultural forces, it has a large measure of resilience. With all its institutional pervasiveness, it has a core, which acts as a filter or a moderator to the outside forces of cultural contact and change. This is why in each mainstream culture one may find existence of sub-cultures and counter-cultures.

In recent years following the gigantic leaps in communication technology, the motive forces of culture change are provided by the new nexus between the visible hand of the power elite and the invisible hand of the market. The new middle class thrown up by the development process, with all the inner contradictions of a dualistic structure, provides the stimulus for the new trust for mass production of spiritual goods and services; it also provides the fast expanding market for it.

Major initiative in the field of culture both in public as well as the private sectors are now motivated by the formidable pressures of the burgeoning new
middle class. The growth of this class has spurred the transition to the age of mass production of spiritual and mental goods and services on a grand scale. Further, in the new era one witnesses the new phenomenon of political intervention for mass cultural production in the public sector through a proliferating bureaucracy not yet tempered by democratic and professional norms. The new politics of culture is closely allied to a new commercialism of culture. There has occurred as parallel development of deep penetration in the cultural domain by powerful forces of commercialism; the latter are buttressed by organised money power combined with control over modern technological innovations in the field of communication. The domain hitherto controlled by the masses themselves who were actively involved in the production of spiritual goods and services has now been encroached by these new agencies and forces under the impact of the modernization process.

Thus, a kind of Gresham's Law has begun operating in the sphere of culture with counterfeit cultural coins fast driving out of circulation the more authentic and genuine cultural coins [P.C.Joshi, 1994: 5]. This law is operating with its remorseless logic both at the top and at the grassroots. Culture and cultural producers have now suddenly been transformed into a commodity brought and sold in the market place. The laws of mass production of material goods and services characterizing the era of 'primary accumulation' have taken over the sphere of spiritual and mental production in a big way and forced the transition to an era of mass cultural production. This marks the end of participatory culture of the masses and its replacement by a mass culture which marginalises the masses and reduce them into passive recipients of cultural masses and consumers of cultural products manufactured on a large scale. All this has profoundly altered the cultural universe and has rendered obsolete the traditional categories of understanding the cultural problems.
Community as a unit of cultural studies has given way to the concept of 'systems' which has formed the basis of a new paradigm of cultural study through the notions of modernization. The system's boundary in the theory of cultural modernization was based upon the assumption of its inherent and universal rationality. Its edifice soon fell as the backwash effects of technological and industrial growth such as ecological decay, decline in family values, sharpening edges of the disguised exploitation, feelings of alienation among individuals and the disintegration in the structure and values of community life took alarming forms. This disenchantment from modernization probably added to the rise of the post-modernist debate and its paradigms for the study of culture. Its percussor, the cultural analysis paradigm made innovations by studying culture in its symbolic depth; it focussed upon exploration of its latent codes, structures of meanings and semiotic forms. It does not reject totally the notions of structure or system. It, however, recognises the variations and multiplicity of themes in the cultural space within a single community or a regional group [Singh Y: 1986]. Post-modernism on the other hand, rejects such assumption in totality and seeks to explore culture by breaking the idea of system inside-out, and by the process of deconstruction of a culture's linguistic, spoken or written text.

Many significant cultural changes have taken place in India since independence. Across the nation, the life-style and leisure time activities of the people have changed. The emerging consumption profile of our people, indicate on the one hand, the cultural resilience of the past and the present aspects of our traditions. On the other hand, it also suggests as to how susceptible is our consumption behaviour to temptations of gross and unmindful consumerism [Singh Y: 1994]. Even though relatively small, a substantial section of the upward
mobile population in our society may be a victim of temptations. A movement for balance and temperance is necessary. Notwithstanding this fact, the continuity of a high level of cultural resilience represented by a rising middle class, ensures product and market diversification so necessary for rapid economic growth. Considering its sociological features in our agrarian, industrial and service-sectors of economy, this class may also discourage mindless consumerism having more proclivity towards sayings and investments. The fragile balance between values and disvalues in life style forms an area of continued education and cautious vigilance in the society.

Integrative changes in our culture are also taking place in several other directions. Analysis of cultural values and practice in terms of cultural traits indicates significant commodities particularly within 'micro-regions'. Interestingly, these cultural traits are shaped irrespective of differences in religion, caste and tribe. [Singh K.S.: 1992].

In the industrial phase of capitalist development and consumerism, several new cultural changes are bound to be encountered, and most of these merit formulation of far-sighted analysis. The massive entry of mass-media, the universalisation of communication through radio and television, the proliferation in the number of English and vernacular language newspapers, journals, information system through satellites etc. are bringing about hitherto unknown degree of information-entertainment revolution. Mounted as this 'revolution' is on the chariot of market-capitalism with propensity for endless profit making, it may tend increasingly to convert culture into commodity. The emphasis may shift from content to packaging of culture. Not assimilation or integration of culture, but its marketing is an orientation which may usher culture into an unfamiliar domain, that of cut-throat competition with a market ethos.
The revolution in information and communication technology, together
with increase in the rapid means of transport, extended net-working of markets of
culture industries, such as tourism, inter-cultural meets and exchanges,
institutionalised exchange of cultural objects, etc. contribute to a globalisation of
culture. The process is bound to increase and exert ever new pressures in transition
from industrial to post-industrial phase of development.

The new cultural challenges may augment the real as well as perceived
threats to local and smaller cultural identities due to marketisation of culture. In
this process the de-contextualisation and displacement of meanings and values
of cultural objects may increase. Its impact upon values, cultural practice, ecology
and mental and physical health and quality of life of the people may be disastrous.
The consequent erosion of values, and structures of folk culture and decay in its
creative relationship with the mainstream cultural tradition may be directly related
to the growth in new leisure and cultural markets. If in the meantime the traditional
family system and the community or neighbourhood bonds weaken as it has
happened in many developed societies, the new cultural changes portend major
crisis in the social and cultural system of our society.

Our traditional social institutions such as family, caste, tribe, community
and neighbourhood etc. are able to throw up resilience. The Indian People have
also shown cultural resilience in decodification of cultural meaning of symbols
projected by mass media communication. They have largely behaved like what is
called an “active audience” or as “producers of meanings” [Schiller Habert
E : 1988] from the messages in communication. The long exposure of the Indian
middle classes to Euro-American culture through the uses of the English language,
adds additional resiliences to exposure to the Western cultural institutions. In the words of the Japanese social anthropologist Nakane Chie, "If there is a meeting place of East and West, it is India, not Japan" [Nakane Chie: 1988: 62]. Despite our cultural resilience the quality and institutional organisation of the mass-based, market and commodity oriented new cultural forces are likely to cause dislocations. They may give rise to subcultures directly in conflict with the general cultural values or practices. Moreover, mass culture is backed by a faceless striking power of technology and the massive organisation of market capitalism [Dissanayaka Wimal: 1988: 26-40].

Today the cultural identify problem is considered to occur when cultural change is so drastic as to destroy the sense of continuity. Keeping this in view, the involvement of people, and uses of multi-media approach to communication of culture and value-sensitisation of the market oriented mega-cultural institutions and organisations need to be probed into.

Recognising that transformations undergone by the meaning of the word 'culture' are in themselves highly instructive. The nineteenth century conception of culture consisted of what was essential and authentic in humanity, elevated and expressed in the highest creations of mankind. According to the notion, cultural products are not features of our daily lives as much as there are irregularities in it: moments when inspired individuals are moved to pause in the course of their existence and release some primordial human truth, composed according to eternal aesthetic forms and standards. This a-historical understanding of culture makes it easy to think of cultural forms and products (art, painting, dance, etcetra) as set apart from our normal lives, and also facilitates the rigid
compartmentalization of culture, economics and politics into separate domains of study.

The exploration of the dialectics between modern communication and social change gains significance towards cultural studies. The questions that these inductive inquiries simplicity raise are important too and deserve to be focussed for further deductions. How is 'culture' mediated, how is it popularised? Who are the targetted audiences and what are their perceptions? Should these be an international code of ethics which governs the manner and sorts of information being conveyed to the mass? How does the media determine what counts as fact and what as fiction?

Major occupational and techno-cultural changes have taken place in our society due to the political, social and economic developments. These changes have promoted linkages and interactions among castes, tribes, religious groups and cultural regions. A significant magnitude of the spread effect of these cultural changes across regions and ethnic boundaries is being noticed. These developments have also reinforced people's self consciousness and narrow cultural identities organised on principles of ethnicity, religion, caste, language and region. The process of cultural integration on a national scale has grown but with simultaneous increase in search for cultural autonomy.

The intensity of media exposure, political participation and the competitive outlook towards social mobility have added strength to the process of cultural integration. In the context of overall social change, it is essential to examine the nature of relationships that demands for cultural autonomy or ethnicity have with
the processes of cultural integration in the society. Cultural integration of diverse entities in the Indian society has had a long history in India. Its matrix was that of a civilization. This civilization was not subsumed in, but out acrosed religious, ethnic, linguistic and regional boundaries.

It subsisted upon interdependence among diverse plural social entities established through technology, production processes, trade, market and circulation of products and of personnel engaged in pursuits of crafts, arts, aesthetics, knowledge and learning.

The dispensation of cultural co-existence was founded upon a typical equilibrium established by a pre-industrial technology, mode of production and its social and political institutions. The two revolutions, one industrial and the other republican, have totally altered this traditional equilibrium. Industrial revolution generates demand for nation-building; it is followed by a search for world community or global civilization. In the process of evolution through these two phases, the local and regional cultural identities feel threatened. The political process of nation-building and its economic-industrial correlates sharpen inequalities and there is pressure for confirmity and standardization in institutional relationships, such as economy, power structure, education, recreation, information and a whole range of the services. The more there is pressure for giving legitimacy to these macro institutions, the more there is a sense of unease among localised cultural identities. The passage from industrial to post-industrial phase of social, economic and cultural development is not reassuring in several vital areas of human concerns, such as the well being of the basic institutions such as family and community, the protection of the identity of cultural minorities, the practice of voluntaristic consensus
methods in place of the uses of power or domination in cultural negotiations or
decision-making and preservation of natural habitat of humankind and its quality.
In the Indian society, one witnesses a conjuncture of cultural institutions and
values belonging to the pre-industrial agrarian society with those which coincide
with the cultural values of industrial capitalism.

Objective

The interdependence of socio-economic and cultural reconstruction for
development is crucial for all societies in transition. A study of cultural invasion
invariably requires the examination of the way its universalistic mission seek to
deny all cultural differences and specificities. With the new technologies of
communication, cultural message of modernity are spreading everywhere. In India,
in the past few years, there has been gigantic expansion of new technologies of
communication. As a result, all the words, images and symbols of the metropolitan
West emits are entering the Indian society.

The basic view is that media with its new technology encourage and
help to diffuse a value system which is favourable to innovation, mobility,
achievement and consumption. The electronic media can help to break down the
traditionalism which is an obstacle to modernity by raising expectations and
aspirations, widening horizons, enabling people to imagine and want better
alternatives for themselves and their families. The view is consistent with psycho-
sociological explanations of development and emphasises spontaneous demand-
based change rather than planned change over a period at attitudinal, behavioural
(personal and social) and institutional levels. Electronic media because of the
systematic character of its message and its consistency over time, have powerful
effects. As it is possible to alter social sensibilities, a strategy is imperative to
work out this possibility to find the change in attitudes, behaviour and institutions.

Ever since their establishment, All India Radio (AIR) and the national
television (Doordarshan), have survived by virtue of being government-owned
monopolies. The advent of satellite and cable television in the last four years
completely bypassed all notions of singular control of the waves. The arrival of
satellite TV has led to two things: it has superseded the debate on autonomy in
a fundamental sense. The satellite invasion transcends the idea of any tangible
or terrestrial control. Satellite telecasts can not be prevented as there is no way
such can be jammed or controlled.

A new cultural wave, as it appears to be, is sending out signals to a new
kind of values emerging in the midst of traditional cultural structure. The aim of
study here is not to formulate social theories about electronic media but to correlate
factors responsible for any underlying indications of emergence of cultural
imperialism to influence the socio-cultural norms in view of a transitional dynamics.
The correlate of the view that foreign satellite TV networks can help in
modernisation by introducing western values is that they do so at the cost of a
breakdown of traditional values and the loss of local culture.

The construct of perceptions of television reality is complex and dynamic.
It requires attention to fill out the set of dimensions and also from empirical point
of view to determine how perceptions are generated and shaped as well as how
those perceptions make viewers much more susceptible to the fictional as well as
factual messages of television. In the present study, it is proposed to study the impact of these perceptions as how-things would be shaped in the socio-cultural context resulting out of cross-cultural interactions through programmes on foreign satellite TV networks, beaming into Indian homes.

Area of study

Since the main purpose of the study is to understand the cultural impact of foreign TV programmes, selection of families and persons with varied socio-economic background was purposive. The areas under study in Delhi represented one in which inhabitants are in the upper class category with periodical interactions with Western cultures through local interactions with neighbours comprising foreigners. This urban area, Vasant Vihar, came into existence only three decades back and is one of the posh-colonies of this metropolitan city. Modern value systems are a part of this locality at structural as well behavioural level.

The other area, a village, represents socio-economic dynamics eager for upper social mobility. This village, chhatarpur, is also in Delhi but just before the outskirt of the city and had a history of its own of over 250 years.

These two areas, though part of Delhi, reflects unique distinct dimensions of social and cultural life. A section of both these localities are hooked up with satellite television, hence it made interesting as well comparative observations of the perceptions of foreign TV programmes among the viewers with diverse socio-economic background.
Methodology

The aim of study here is to categories groups as deeply affected, moderately affected and not at all affected, by the impact of foreign programmes. For any attempt to locate inherent as well as visible changes responsible for any change in structural and cultural relationships in the society, it was imperative to opt for an intense participant-observation. For this, this researcher stayed at these two places for nearly five months and then visited periodically at regular intervals for another one year.

A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared. The observation method was supplemented with opinion analysis and certain case studies. Through interview and constant observation, the socio-cultural impact was studied with an 'open-ended analysis' without any serious hypothetical assumptions at two levels, namely social groups as consumers and group-life with impact at primary level (family, conjugal life) and neighbourhood at secondary level; and also at the level of socialisation. At the individual level, certain variables like age, gender, class (which having access to satellite TV) educational background, occupation, rural urban background were given a priori.

A systematic analysis of inferences drawn from observations, interview, questionnaire and case studies was done to trace the impact on the viewers depending on variables like (a) gender dimension (b) age (c) class (d) occupation (e) education (f) status group (g) habitat-location, and (h) other inherent and visible sub-categories.
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