India has lived with cultural pluralism for centuries. In fact, the history of India is based on linkages with other cultures”.

Yogendra Singh in *National Geographic*, Vol. 96, No. 2, August 1999
(Special issue on Global Culture)
Chapter One

Objective, Methodology and Approach to the Study

India has known the concept of mass communication and news from very early times. Hindu mythology refers to Narad Muni who was not merely a news giver but also a newscaster, a journalist. Though supposedly narrating the truth, he could resort to slanting, if it suited the interest of justice. Kautilya, a minister of Chandragupta Maurya, furnished a coherent exposition of a system of dissemination, information and intelligence suited to big monarchical kingdoms. Kautilya's *Arth Shastra* described how news was to be collected through various sources. During the time of Ashoka there was also a system of visual dissemination of the news of the day. These were published in small pictures drawn on temple walls in ink and colour which could be removed easily. Ashoka chose to carve out on rocks the laws of dharma or the moral codes.

The art of cultivated oral communication was continuously practised in Ancient India. Apart from oral communication there were wide range of traditional or folk media which were more meaningful, localised and familiar. In fact more mass communication at the grassroots level occurred through these non-media. These media having roots in regional culture and possessing local identity provided Indian society as indigenous tools of interpersonal communication besides providing mass entertainment. In the course of time, various regions developed specialised regional folk media like *Tamasha* of Maharashtra, *Kabigaan* and *Jatra* of Bengal; *Nautanki* in northern states. These traditional and folk media also acted as vehicles of expression of reform, protest and dissent, the carriers of reform movement and articulators of satire, social comment and thus instrument of social change. During Muslim rule in India dissemination of news that was done
either by proclamations accompanied by the beat of drums or through word-of-mouth in mass meetings or darbars. The earlier media and channels of mass communication at the grassroots level continued to function with a few modifications.

During the early British period, the East India Company's authorities were averse to any indigenous or independent modern communication media functioning as their adversary, critic or exposure. It was in January 29, 1780 that James Augustus Hicky launched the printed English weekly the Bengal Gazette. James Silk Buckingham of the Calcutta Journal followed Hicky within the next four decades. Some of the editors who preferred to follow Hicky sticking to freedom of press became the martyrs of India's Fourth Estate. Their spirit of media independence though actuated for different reasons, became part of a long extended culture of freedom of the press in the country.

However, as far as grassroots mass communication for Indian people espousing their cause and interest is concerned, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian exponent to explain the role and freedom of the Press in India. His newspaper the Brahmin Savadh (English and Bengali), Sambod Kaumdi (Bengali) and Mirat-ul-Akbar (Persian) were started to counter the attacks of the foreign missionaries on Indian culture, philosophical thought and social institutions. They became the vehicles of reform movements and activities of cultural renaissance and reformation in the country. Lokmanya Tilak, editor of Kesari drew the right to free press from the Queen's Declaration of 1858. He exhorted other newspapers to claim their constitutional rights and freedom. Dr. Annie Besant too stood for the British type of press freedom and worked hard to improve qualitatively her paper New India. Gandhiji was averse to all kinds of restrictions and he strongly denounced the obnoxious press curbs, which the British government
imposed during the ‘Quit India’ movement of August 1942. Gandhiji also set an extreme example of running his newspapers without advertisements. He was of the firm opinion that good contents alone could build up good circulation of *Harijan* and other associated journals.

India was amongst the earliest countries in the world to adopt broadcasting. The first form of an experimental broadcast was put out by the Bombay office of the Times of India in collaboration with Post and Telegraph’s Department on August 1921. In addition to Bombay and Calcutta stations, a third station was commissioned in Delhi. Encouraged by the experiment, the government decided to place broadcasting on a permanent footing in 1935. In 1936, the service was redesigned as All India Radio. Initially placed under the Department of Industries and Labour and later transferred to the Department of Communication, the administration of broadcasting was ultimately entrusted to the Department of Information and Broadcasting in 1941. All India Radio, during the early period of its history, operated essentially for entertainment. With the breaking out of World War II All India Radio was recognised as a vital source of news and views, covering events at home and abroad.

With the dawn of freedom, the Indian media were de-linked from the apron strings of British political and cultural imperialism. On January 26, 1950 the Constitution of India granted to every citizen and media the freedom of speech and expression. It was generally agreed that mass media of communication would have a key role in building a democratic polity and illuminating our social fabric. Under Sardar Vallabhai Patel, India’s first and most powerful minister of Information and Broadcasting, All India Radio reshaped into a new nationalist image. There were competitions to select best national songs; Hindi was given pride of place and radio began to play a new and more vigorous political role.
India’s first television station was inaugurated with an all-round development agenda on September 15, 1959, initially for a twice-a-week slot of an hour each. The daily broadcasting began in 1965 and by 1970, there were 22,000 sets in the country—all imported—besides those for community viewing. The rate of growth accelerated in the 1970s with the establishment of a second centre in Mumbai in 1972 followed by those at Srinagar, Amritsar and Calcutta in 1975. The first experiment with satellite technology in India, known as the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), was conducted in 1975-76. This was incidentally, the first attempt anywhere in the world of using the sophisticated technology of satellite broadcasting for social education. The year 1982 witnessed the introduction of regular satellite links between Delhi and other transmitters, the starting of national programmes and also heralded the era of colour television in the country. After 1982, television facilities have been rapidly expanding. Today Doordarshan, India’s national broadcaster, operates 21 channels, has a network of 1090 transmitters, puts out 1,393 hours of programmes every week. The terrestrial signals of Doordarshan can reach 87.9% of the country’s one billion people.¹

1.1 The Present Indian Context

When the debate on developmental communication in India achieved partial fruition, the advent of foreign satellite channel allegedly added a new dimension to the problem. Doordarshan with its phenomenally successful programmes like *Hum Log, Buniyaad, Nukkad, Rajni, Tamas*, and the epic serials *Ramayana, Mahabharata* had united the people as a national community by drawing them to the television with impressive regularity. All that came to an abrupt end when the sky cracked open to let in satellite signals. Panic and exuberance vied with each other: some saw a threat of cultural invasion as the advent of cable and satellite television completely
bypassed all notions of regular control of airwaves, others welcomed this new technology with open arms, seeing it as the opening of the gateways to world media and entertainment.

The global coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 drastically heralded in a new era of international television. What started as a highly publicised trickle with CNN's live news coverage of the war became a wave with the advent of Hutch Vision's STAR-BBC Asian telecasts out of Hong Kong. Under the thematic of globalisation, the success of American television software in Europe and in other parts of the world gave rise to fears of cultural imperialism. In India too, the STAR network's package, initially including the global emblem of youth culture, MTV, gave rise to similar fears of an invasion that would destroy Indian values. At the same time the government found the cultural images carried by satellite TV alien and politically unacceptable, and wanted to keep them out. The initial response of both the public and private sector top satellites TV was thus negative. Popular perception saw satellite TV as a vehicle for numerous cultures mainly alien; there was a danger of being swamped.

The advent of these foreign channels in India has created an atmosphere of confusion and debate amongst academicians, media experts and policy makers. This so-called 'invasion from the skies', the entry of foreign channels after 1991, has provoked a very profound debate revolving around the juxtaposed notions of 'cultural onslaught' and the 'Galaxy of Choices'. The government's initial response to CNNI and STAR TV took the form of an open sky policy. It took no action to restrict the transmission or reception of their signals, nor did it take any step to regulate their content. One of the reasons for the government's laissez-faire attitude regarding these broadcasters was its inability to enforce a ban on terrestrial redistribution services like cable television. But an equally important reason why the government took no action to restrict broadcasting can be found in the
political and economic circumstances in which satellite broadcasting was introduced into the country – viz.: the economic reforms heralded in by the Narasimha Rao Government, which has changed the Indian economy and society drastically.

As foreign investors watched the new economic developments unfolding in the country, the government's attitude towards the new satellite-distributed television services became a barometer of its commitment to the reforms. Any attempt to restrict foreign broadcasters would have been construed as evidence of the government's lack of commitment to opening up the economy. Consequently, the government chose to ignore the foreign television services, despite complaints from the number of political and social organisations of the cultural threat posed by these services. It clearly recognised that television is a highly visible cultural product that functions as the best marketing tool for liberalisation of Indian economy. But, more importantly, once committed to utilising the market as the main engine of economic growth, the Government had no intention of restricting the forces represented by STAR TV and other private broadcasters.

The advent of satellite-based television shook Doordarshan out of its complacency. It responded to the competition on two fronts: by increasing the number of channels and by changing the nature of its programming. The new channels reveal Doordarshan's changed programming strategy. Perhaps the most visible icon of the changing the nature of its programming is MTV (to many Indians the symbol of Western values) which, since the end of 1994, switched for some time from STAR TV to Doordarshan. Doordarshan is today in a process of reinventing itself, co-opting Western television to recapture viewers and advertising revenue lost to Zee TV and STAR TV.
There have also been complaints about the cultural impact of satellite television programmes. In May 1995, for example, a guest on STAR TV used objectionable remarks for Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi’s great-grandson, Tushar Gandhi sued STAR TV, TV 18 (the show’s producer), as well as the participants for Rs. 500 million. An Indian court issued a warrant after the filing of a complaint that STAR TV had defamed Mahatma Gandhi, and Mumbai Chief Metropolitan Judge found that this constituted a prime facie case of insult and defamation. In the mid 1990s, India’s Film Censor Board initiated legal proceedings against satellite delivered STAR TV for showing “indecency” in its movies. The Censor Board objected to the network’s overdosed, explicit scenes on more than 175 programmes shown by the network’s three channel - STAR Movies, STAR Plus, and the Hindi language channel, Zee TV.

The ‘invasion from the skies’ in India has met with various strategies to disengage, offend or re-appropriate, to reconfigure or to switch off. Some of these strategies require a consensus and group consciousness of what Indian culture is in order to defend it. Social, cultural and political initiatives have been instigated to restrict the flow of satellite television in India, including public interest litigation’s (PILs) against STAR TV for the screening of what were perceived as ‘obscene’ movies, and government action in the form of a proposed regulatory Broadcast Bill. For the state, to uphold the impression of national sovereignty, there was no other way than to use classical terms like ‘invasion’. As no other nation-state could be exclusively located as the enemy, anger was focused on STAR TV network and the persona of Rupert Murdoch, identified as the representative of trans-national media imperialism.4

There is a perception amongst individuals and certain sections of Indian society that change over which they have no direct control is coming from ‘outside’; the technology is of the ‘West’, production techniques are of the
st’ and often software is a direct adaptation of popular foreign programming. Associated with foreign programming is a description of a particular genre that is highly commercial and entertainment driven; and which is damaging, in its promotion of consumerism, to the notional perception of individual renunciation as part of Indian culture. Consumerism is becoming the dominant culture, which denies the basic simplicity of life ethos, ability to find joy and meaning not in things and commodities, but in harmonic relationship with communities and nature. 5

Furthermore, there is a perceived attack on the family as the keeper of moral order and the focal point of “Indianness”. For those adopting a critical stance towards the media, particular networks and programmes have become representative of the media’s impact on culture. While the ‘MTV Generation’ is a descriptive of cultural transition, programmes such as Baywatch and The Bold and the Beautiful have become synonymous with cultural degeneration, especially the decay of traditional values. 6 There are other worries too. The market is now so dominant, that commercial pressures are producing only mediocre programmes in theme and content, that artists who have produced quality work are now being forced to compromise their standards. The hybrid populism is eroding the place of traditional Indian culture - dance, theatre, and music and art. 7 What makes these foreign satellite channels so problematic is that, firstly as it is free for all commercial enterprise and secondly there is as yet no means to demand some accountability and social responsibility from foreign channel proprietors.
1.2 Issues in Media Research

Social scientists specialising in media, culture and society have always cautious regarding the impact these have on society. Research efforts began before World War II and, reaching completion in the post-war decade, pointed to the limits of mass media influence. Studies showed that individual responses to particular messages transmitted by mass media were shaped by personal dispositions and competing influences. Mass communication effects always occurred together with a whole host of mediating factors that together helped to reinforce pre-existing tendencies.\textsuperscript{8}

With the onset of film, radio and, television, media and society became a distinct area of sociological inquiry. Sociologists had long been concerned with the ways in which a reasonable consensus of opinion, necessary to the functioning of pluralistic society, could be maintained or achieved. The apparent ease with which images and ideas could be rapidly disseminated to a widely dispersed mass audience both interested and frightened them. While social scientists have focused on the study of media messages, a few scholars in fields outside communication, sociology and psychology have taken a more historical and cross-cultural approach to communication technologies and have tried to call attention to the potential effects of media apart from the content they convey. The best known and most debatable of these scholars are Harold Adam Innis and Herbert Marshall Mcluhan.

A political economist by training, Harold Adam Innis extends the principle of economic monopolies to the study of information monopolies\textsuperscript{9} as a means through which social and political power is wielded. Innis argues that different media have different potentialities for control. A medium that is in short supply or that requires special encoding or decoding skill is more likely to be exploited by an elite class that has the time and resources to
gain access to it. Conversely, a medium that is very accessible to common persons tends to democratise culture. Innis also claims that every medium of communication has a "bias" either towards lasting a long time or towards travelling easily across great distances. He suggests that the bias of the culture's dominant medium affect the degree of culture's stability and conservatism as well as the culture's ability to take over and govern large expense of territory.

Herbert Marshall Mcluhan analyses media as an extension of the human senses or process, and he suggests that use of different technologies affect the organisation of human senses. Mcluhan divides history into three major periods: oral, writing or printing and electronic. Each period, according to Mcluhan, is characterised by its own interplay of the senses and therefore by its own forms of thinking and communicating. According to him the electronic media is like an extension of our nervous system that endorses the planet. Electronic senses return us to village-like encounters, but on a global scale. As a result of the widespread use of electronic media, every one is involved in every one's business and there is decline in print-supported notions of delegated authority, nationalism and linear thinking. Mcluhan claims that electronic media have been "abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned". In the process he argues, we have begun to "live mythically and integrally" in a "global village".

The medium theorists do not suggest that means of communication wholly shape culture and personality, but they argue that changes in communication patterns are one very important contribution to social change and one that has generally been overlooked. These analyses of media and social change also suggest that transformations are not sudden and complete. There is always a "cultural lag" in William Ogburn's words, in which parts of the culture are ahead of the rest. Put simply, the medium theorists are arguing that the form in which people communicate has an
impact beyond the choice of specific messages. They do not deny the significance of message choice within a cultural milieu.

Cultural domination within society has been a major concern in sociological inquiries for a long time. As a result of technological advancement in recent decades, people have interacted with each other via mediated mass communication more than interpersonal means. The possibility of cultural domination on a global scale has drawn attention from government officials, local media industries, and social researchers. Since the early 70's there has been a debate over the extent and nature of media and its impact. Many scholars have contributed to the debate on cultural domination in the international arena. The basic thrust of the debate has been whether or not transmission of Western, especially American media products such as television and films erode traditional values and dominate indigenous cultures of the importing cultures.

Cultural imperialism scholars have for long lamented the dominance by Western multi-national media conglomerates of the international market place of ideas. Criticisms were levelled at television networks on many counts, primarily for seeming to endanger local traditional cultures with a profusion of unwanted foreign programming. The critique, Marxist in orientation, posits that 'authentic, traditional and, local cultures' in many parts of the world are being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial media products, mainly from the United States. The structural thesis of cultural imperialism preceded by the communication revolution hold that Western media and other sources of information create a demonstrative effect in less developed countries, which in time undermines and destroys the indigenous values and culture.
The question of American influence has dominated the literature on international broadcasting. Early theorists saw it as a norm and an imperative. Their mission was to propagate 'Modernising', i.e. American values for 'development'. Influence was then redefined as domination. The country studies focussed on the flow of global television in terms of actual exposure and audience perception of its impact. In other words, how much of what is available is viewed by the people, and how does each society respond to the global television programmes. The study thus attempted to ascertain whether the values, attitudes and styles of behaviour imported by global television were at variance with the values and outlook of the countries receiving such programmes.

Michael G. Elasmar and John F. Hunter have carried out a meta-analysis of the empirical research literature on the effects of cross-border television reception. After reading 117 articles they reported having little regard for much of the writing that had been done on this topic. Michael G. Elasmar and John F. Hunter write:

"Unfortunately, many of these papers... can be characterised as tirades or diatribes." 18

The meta-analysis covered 36 papers, which fit the basic, pre-established criteria of professional acceptability. These spanned a period from 1960 to 1995, and involved audiences in 21 different countries. Most of the foreign programming was from United States. Five categories of the dependent variables were studied: knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and values. This statistical analysis revealed weak, positive correlation between exposure to foreign TV and each of these categories. An significant correlation were found between exposure to foreign TV and purchase of foreign products, holding of values similar to those of the programme originating country, strength of beliefs about the originating country
(positive or negative), and increasing knowledge about the originating country. The authors concluded that “exposure to foreign TV has very little effect on the viewers, but they caution that more research needs to be done which is empirically valid, reliable and replicable.” 19

Communication researchers have also studied the influence and impact of trans-national television programming on viewers around the world from different disciplinary vantage points - political, social, economic and cultural. But only a handful of studies have dealt with television and values. Tsai in a study among Taiwanese children, who watch television, found that they favoured elements of American culture to their own. 20 In Philippines, the frequent viewing of American television programmes among high school students led to an emphasis on non-traditional values (pleasure) rather than traditional values such as salvation, forgiving and, wisdom. 21 On the other hand, Pyne and Peake in their study of viewers in Iceland found that the US television was only minimally effective in generating favourable attitudes about US, 'or in creating attitudes of fear, anger or sadness which Icelanders associated with US culture'. 22

It has also been argued that the sexual and violent content of the television, especially satellite television is eroding the sense of values and this has led to the breakdown of the family and a general population-wide abandonment of religious belief. 23 Sutherland and Siniawsky found that, contrary to popular belief, soap operas do not condone immoral behaviours 24 whereas other authors argue that soap operas do help legitimise taboo behaviours. 25
1.3 Media Effect Research & Television Audience Studies in India

An essential beginning point for understanding the development of the parameters for the study of mass communication is to review the meaning of the term mass society. It is from this concept that came such derived terms as "mass" audience, "mass" media and "mass" communication. The concept of mass society emerged from the study of fundamental social change that took place in society over the last two centuries. These changes altered drastically the relationships that a member of society has with others as they carry on their everyday lives. These changes were subtle, complex and, yet profound. The master trends, industrialisation, urbanisation, modernisation and now globalisation, shaped the emerging mass society and continue to be at the heart of the change from traditional to modern society. The contemporary forms of mass communication emerged as a part of the development of mass society. The new media - newspapers, movies, radio and television are the products of industrialisation and modernisation and with the development of the new society, each of these had a profound influence on social relationships, material culture, social norms and values of the society and individuals.26

Communication research is an extension of the methodology and theory - building strategies of social and behavioural sciences. The earlier studies were based on a theory of the effects of mass communication derived directly from the assumptions of the nature of mass society. As research continued, these in turn were called into question and the study of short-term immediate influences of the media revealed a very mixed picture. Eventually, theories and research strategies were to be revised again and again to search for more indirect and long-term effects. As research accumulated, increasingly valid and reliable generalisations about the effect of mass communication have emerged.
In 1957 UNESCO published a detailed register of mass communication research projects in progress and in plan. It carried a detailed bibliography of books and articles on mass communication published since January 1, 1955. The aim was to keep mass communication research workers regularly informed of research projects undertaken and on studies published. The monograph mirrors the pictures of progress of mass communication in different countries. Whereas in some developed countries good results were achieved from their plan of action, it was obvious that the majority of the countries were lagging behind.

Communication research in Asia started in the late 1950s and early 1960s when Asian journalism and mass communication professors returned from graduate studies in the West, particularly the United States, and introduced their students to “readability studies”, “content analysis”, “readership and listenership surveys.” In 1973, Feliciano as focused in three areas summed up Asian communication research:

(1) media infra-structure studies i.e. dealing in the industry and development of the media;
(2) studies of communicators and receivers of the messages; and
(3) developmental-type studies dealing with the communication aspect of the various components of development such as agriculture, health, family planning etc. Feliciano further pointed out that Asian mass communication research as press/journalism-oriented, Western influenced and uni-directional. It was journalism-oriented.

In the early 1970s communication research in the region was still a fledging field, riddled with numerous problems, among them- a lack of professionally trained researchers in the field, lack of resources and facilities, weak support from allied social sciences disciplines, low priority given to the development of mass media by the governments and lack of public
awareness about what communication research can do for public welfare. The subject matter for these research studies was not relevant to development, except in the agricultural and commercial fields and their methodology were generally poor. But fortunately by the end of the 1970s the role of media research in national development was finally beginning to be recognised in the region as Feliciano stated:

"Communication research has started to demonstrate its usefulness to development programmes by calling attention to what media can contributed to the process of change by serving it as initiator, legitimiser, and facilitator".28

The progress of mass communication research in India and other developing countries as surveyed by the UNESCO report was very insignificant. Research programmes still had to be set up in departments other than communication such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology and at institutes of social sciences. Most of the media effect research in India has focused on the source or channel of communication. There is a respectable body of research in the areas of development communication and diffusion of innovation that have investigated the effect of media from the perspective of the source or medium.29 While a plethora of research exists on the effects of communication, there is a glaring gap in studies examining uses of mass media from the perspective of individual media users in India.30 With the exception of a few studies, which have examined factors influencing patterns of media use among adolescents and urban population, most mass media research in India has focused on the media as agents of developments.

The earliest and most notable audience study was the project that evaluated the social impact or effects of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) conducted in more than 2000 villages scattered in 20
districts and in six states of India for about a year between 1975-76. The project unproblematically adopted the linear, knowledge-dissemination and diffusion of innovation approach of the dominant paradigm of development communication. They provided valuable information about a number of first-generation media audiences. In a seminar organised in May 1973, to discuss the plan of action for social evaluation of Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) it was suggested that a qualitative descriptive evaluation, in addition to the sample survey should be conducted to evaluate the effects of satellite TV on rural viewers. There was a general agreement that holistic studies using anthropological perspective in communication research and evaluation could provide a qualitative and in-depth understanding of the effects of satellite TV on this section of society. A fundamental proposition of anthropology is that no part can be fully or even accurately understood apart from the whole. Hence, it was considered essential that communication whether satellite or human being culture bound must be studied while focusing human beings in their totality. 31

Even after it was accepted, sociologists continued to disagree with this practice of holistic study, as they saw very little utility in the procedure followed, and were of the opinion that hard data was required.

In the past, the majority of the television summative evaluations had consisted of a qualitative 'impact' or 'effect' studies conducted with the help of sample surveys. These surveys conducted in rural India had serious methodological problems in eliciting correct responses. Therefore, it was felt that a method that allows deep probing and understanding of the communication process should be followed as an alternative approach for social evaluation of SITE. The 'impact' survey only allows a probe into some pre-determined specific areas, rather than the exploration of the wide concerns of human behaviour. In other words, instead of measuring the impact of television in some specific areas, an attempt should be made to understand the role and process of television communication while focusing
on man in his totality. In order to analyse communication process as a whole, it is imperative to follow a 'research design' which would allow diachronic observations. It is a safe assumption that television messages are interpreted and understood within cultural contexts. Therefore, it is essential to discover the cultural judgements and various categories of television messages for contextual interpretation.

1.3.1 Some findings of Media Research in India

Many academic researchers in the field of mass communication in India continue to frame their studies either in terms of effects or gratification. The title of a study conducted by Centre for Policy Research\(^2\) is explicit about its location in the uses and gratification tradition of research. Primarily a quantitative study using a questionnaire, it covered in its survey both rural and urban areas in six states - Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, and Gujrat. Among other things, the study finds that people in higher income groups watched more television; men emphasised the news and information functions of television, while women preferred entertainment programmes. Need assessment being a central aspect of the uses and gratification perspective, the study also found that the majority of viewers in the survey felt that the electronic media did not satisfy their needs. In another recent study conducted in Madras on the “relative impact of STAR TV and Doordarshan”, the researchers uncritically employ the uses and gratification perspective that “the audience is active, i.e. individual members consciously select media content and expose themselves to the media in a goal-directed manner”.\(^3\) Based on 150 questionnaires completed by viewers who were chosen randomly, the study concluded that more viewers preferred to watch STAR TV over Doordarshan and the major motivation for watching STAR TV was found to be the desire to “learn about new things, places and cultures.”\(^4\)
There has been some minor work on reception contexts and modes of viewing television, which has not been followed up thoroughly. For instance, in a volume on how families around the world watch television, have commented on how the seating patterns for television, have commented on how the seating patterns for television viewing, either in the rural, community TV context or in the context of people in urban homes watching TV with their household help, are replete with meanings related to class and caste and how the structure of the family and type of household strongly determined people’s modes of engagement with television in India.35

Work on gender and television in India, in general, and women audiences, in particular, has been quite sparse. Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe in a study have conducted a content analysis of Delhi Doordarshan programmes for about 15 days and concluded, among other things, that:

“.... women are under-represented and occupy less central roles than men; marriage and parenthood are considered more important to women than to men; and employed women are shown in traditionally female occupation, with little status or power.” 36

However, the authors have not undertaken any audience study to see how women in different social contexts negotiate these texts. This is where the kind of work done by Purnima Mankekar opens up new possibilities for understanding how and why men and women interact differently with television. Based on ethnographic research for nearly two years among 25 lower middle class and upwardly mobile working class families living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in New Delhi, Mankekar 37 examined how men and women, located in specific socio-cultural contexts, interprets entertainment serials shown on Indian television.
The in-house Audience Research Unit of Doordarshan after years of its existence can offer only a set of figures about television audience in India. With the intrusion of cable and satellite, increased competition from rival channels and market pressures for programme-specific quantitative information, audience-centred research in terms of Television Rating Points (TRPs) dominates the media research scene for all practical purposes. Such studies in India are television viewer profiles periodically conducted by the research division of Doordarshan’s DART (Doordarshan Audience Research TV Ratings), a similar system called TRP (Television Rating Points) has been developed by the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) and other independent market agencies for private channels. These studies are basically based on the popularity of programmes, the peak listening or viewership hours, and programme preferences of the viewers. But, like all television rating systems elsewhere, DART and TRP reduce “watching television” to having the television set on during particular programmes and, modes of watching, meaning and salience are assumed to be the same for everybody. In India both public and private media are mainly interested in action research - to find out how effective a communication strategy is in selling deodorants or family planning. The research studies are expected to come out with instant solution to communication problems. These research studies rarely consider the social needs of their audiences. In spite of all inherent limitations, there are way to the media research and media effect studies. Media studies are being overshadowed by message studies (content analysis).

1.4 The Present Study

Muted response to Indian television for years after the sudden entry of STAR TV in the country have left many wondering. Debate on social and cultural impact of STAR TV and India’s response continues unabated. Is the outburst against Western culture partly the result of a wider cultural
intolerance which became manifest by the latter part of the eighties-
objections to western films and serials or the Indian imitations is that they
portray lifestyles and value systems which are alien to the Indian way of life.
What probably began, as an assertion of cultural identity has become a
commercial imperative. The mass media should help build national
character but are the entry of STAR TV and other foreign channels shaking
the very foundation of Indian cultural traditions? The most pertinent
question, is whether STAR TV is Westernising Indian values and rest of life?
This study tries to bridge the gap in the area of audience-centred research
and seeks to break new exploratory ground in the area of media research in
India. This study will assess the role of television programmes in promoting
and reinforcing cultural values. This study is also a systematic empirical
study on the effect cable and satellite television.

1.4.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was also to find:
1. Is STAR TV capable of inducing Western values to Indian society?
2. Does the programming on STAR TV have the potential of endangering
   Indian traditional values?
3. How Indian audiences have received in receiving various STAR TV
   programmes?
4. How technology of communication followed by entry of STAR TV in India
   has altered the communication scene in India?
5. Where does it help and what are the positive and negative consequences
   of advent of STAR TV in India?
6. Whether Indians should depend on others for values, knowledge,
   information and entertainment?
1.4.2 The Method of Study

The relationship among communication, values and STAR TV's prime-time popular programmes are complex, no single study is likely to reveal all of the dynamic intricacies among these three system.

**The major areas of enquiry were as follows:**

1. What patterns, types or kinds of human relationship are portrayed in STAR TV's popular programmes and series?

2. What particular values do STAR TV's popular programmes and series reinforce?

3. How these values promoted by STAR TV's programmes are explicitly identified as well as their relationship in larger social and cultural system?

**The study was conducted at various levels:**

1. The method of study included review of secondary literature, comparative study of all channels, more specifically Doordarshan, Zee TV, and Sony in the scale of STAR TV. The debate on media, society and culture, television in the age of globalisation and impact of television programmes on local cultures and values covered the substantive part of this study. The review of secondary literature also included television criticism and comment, features and articles about different television programmes and showed that the potential of meanings of the primary texts are activated and taken into their culture by various audiences and sub-cultures.

2. The quantitative & qualitative content analysis of selected prime-time programmes (8:00 to 10:00 p.m.) on STAR Plus for the second week of August, 1999 was conducted to understand the primary text on
television screen which is produced by the culture industry and needs to be seen in its context as a part of that industry's total production.

3. Finally, the major portion of the study is concentrated on audience analysis through schedule questionnaire to selected quota sample of 150 in Delhi. The main purpose behind the administering of a schedule questionnaire to selected sample was to obtain cable and satellite television viewers' opinion on the socio-cultural impact of television programmes. The survey was conducted in the third and fourth week of August 1999 in New Delhi. The impact of STAR may be much greater than that what its viewership numbers may suggest since most of its viewers are influential urban and middle to upper middle class Indians. India has a huge middle class next only to United States and the fact that a "foreign" channel effectively reaches most of the middle class and also has a significant impact on them makes New Delhi a very interesting case study.

Respondent's characteristics

Sex of Respondents
Out of the total sample of 150 respondents, 90 (60 per cent) were the male and 60 (40 per cent) were the female.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>% age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Age-wise distribution of the respondents**

Majority of respondents was young. Some 130 (86.7 per cent) of the total respondents were in the age group of 18-35 years, 16 (10.7 per cent) being in the age group of 36-50 years of age and 4 (2.7 per cent) in the age group of 51 years and above.

**Distribution of respondent according to Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-Group</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>% age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 and above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational level of respondents**

A very large number of the respondents were post-graduate and above. As many as 76 (50.7 per cent) of them were post-graduate and above, 54 (36 per cent) being graduates. Respondents who studied up to “secondary level” form 13.3 per cent of the total sample.

**Distribution of respondent according to Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>% age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to higher secondary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduate and above</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Occupation of the respondents

Distribution of respondent according to Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector/ Govt. Service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Self Employed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Income (Monthly) of the respondents

Distribution of respondent according to Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (Monthly)</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50001-10000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10001-15000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15001-20000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20001</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evident from the table, 60 (40 per cent) of the total respondents belonged to the income group of Rs. 50001-10000, 22 (14.7 per cent) belonged to the category of Rs. 10001-15000, 18 (12 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the income group of Rs. 150001-20000 and 22.7 per cent belonged to the upper income group of Rs. 20001. Apparently, it was mostly the people of high-income groups who were keen on cable television. But later it caught up with the middle income group, and even lower income group.
**Content Analysis**

As a research methodology, content analysis has been widely used to study media and the manifestation of cultural values. A content analysis of 14 hours of STAR Plus prime-time programming was conducted. The samples of programmes were tapped off the air from STAR Plus (STAR TV's entertainment Channel) during second week (Monday through Sunday) in the August month of 1999. The samples cover entertainment (serial/family drama, movie-based, comedy & game show) and news & current affairs (talk show & documentary) programmes. The sample is good representation of the programming fare for the following reasons:

1. Firstly, STAR TV is primarily is the main target for adversely affecting Indian values and culture and STAR Plus is its entertainment channel. The sample may be small but prime-time programmes give good ideas as to what the audience normally views. During the prime time the viewership is highest and most advertisers strive for the slot.

2. Secondly, the programmes were tapped-off-the-air during the period when there were no holidays or festivals to ensure that particular religious, social and traditional appeal did not skew the representativeness of the sample.

The selected programmes were content analysed and measured in-group of four (Group Rating) in terms of emphasis in the scale of one to four. Values were derived from the various Indian broadcasting codes to make it relevant to the Indian context. These baseline values are national agenda. Thus, these values are national values. These codes are: Code of Advertising Practice of the Advertising Standard Council of India; The Code for Commercial Advertising on All India Radio and Doordarshan; Programme codes for Doordrasahn; Programme and Advertisements codes under Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and The Prasar Bharati Act, 1990.
The dominant values and its attributes were coded. In the coding book, the value selected “traditionalism” was conceptualised as conveying the attributes of time honoured, old, legendary. “Modernism” was defined as depiction of contemporary, new, advanced. “Family” was seen as the focus on home and nurture, sibling relationships. Personal integrity was conceptualised as stressing the attributes of honesty, self-esteem, courage to express conviction, knowledge, education, judgement, expertise. “Aestheticism” was conceptualised as sense of respectability, nothing indecent, vulgar or repulsive. The value of “morality” was conceptualised as depicting virtue, righteousness, uprightness, and honourability, noble, humane. The value of “constitutionalism” depicted fundamental rights, legal authority, citizen’s responsibilities, equality, egalitarianism, “pluralism” as diversity, respect of rights of all, respect differing views, sense of justice, compassion for others, peaceful co-existence of all religious communities, religious tolerance, respect for all religious faith, culture etc and “patriotism” as Nationalism, sense of duty, national prides & respect. The value of “product” depicted the attributes of long-life, effectiveness, purity, efficiency, toughness, standardisation, “good health” as fitness, health, vigour, heartiness, vitality, free from illness, “utility” as handy, time-saving, easy to use, quick, suitable, “economy” as value for money, cheap, giving more product life and “productivity” as work, success, skill, career. The value of “consumerism” emphasised on the attributes of increasing consumption, desire to have more than the required.

For qualitative analysis of cultural practices, weakening or reinforcing of traditional cultures, changing traditions, norms, values and customs, transformation of traditional festivals, commercialisation of religion and rituals, joint families being replaced by independent homes, importance of family, divorce, moral issues, image of women, youth culture, sex and violence, love for anti-hero, children as consumer and early maturity,
changes in life-styles, fashion trends and aspirations, behaviour and how important is success were some of the key points which were taken into consideration. The qualitative analysis also took note of extracts from the episodes, textual statement, conversation, verbal expression, gestures, language, visuals etc.

1.5 Limitations and Future Research

The survey findings can not be generalised across the entire population of the country. In addition the survey did not collect enough data for comprehensible rural/urban comparison, as the study is the case study of Delhi. Urban and rural viewers may differ significantly in their reception of television because television content, usually aimed at the more affluent urban audience, tends to have an urban bias in its frequent and favourable depiction of urban life. The result of this study should, therefore be taken a preliminary rather than conclusive.

The content analysis is limited by the relatively small sample that was examined. Also, television programmes are not the only channels through which Western culture is spread. Large sample, systematic content analysis and integrated methodologies will generate enough data to holistically study the potential for the impact of television on cultural values. Content analysis only makes sense if we know how viewers interpret what they watch. Therefore, content analytic studies must be followed by qualitative studies such as field research to better understand the process of reception and assimilation of Western Values, good and bad, from the media.
Finally, a constraint in analysing the growth of STAR TV in India is that the cable systems, through which the satellite signal is made accessible to the public, are wholly in the unorganised sector. Because of this, audience ratings, statistics on the number of cable operators and any other information are available only from market research agencies, and the available figures from different sources vary. This is a limitation of a study of cable and satellite TV in India.
Endnotes

1. Doordarshan, 1999
2. Frontline, February 21, 1997
3. India Today, February 28, 1995
19. Ibid.63-65.
34 Ibid.
35 Yadava and Reddi op. Cit., 1988