Research Paper   **Mass Communication**

A Critical Analysis of Urdu Speaking Viewers' Responses on Language Comprehension, Coverage of Muslim Issues and Depiction of Composite Culture in Hindi Channels

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ABSTRACT   *This paper presents result of a field research conducted in Hyderabad, Bhopal and Mumbai during April –May 2012. A total number of 300 respondents were administered the questionnaire i.e. 100 respondents from each city. The primary data includes survey research related to perceptions among Urdu speaking viewers regarding programmes on Hindi news channels and serials on Hindi entertainment channels. The author has attempted to analyze the viewers' perception in terms of knowing their responses about language comprehension while watching Hindi channels programmes, coverage of Muslim issues in Hindi news channels, and depiction of composite culture in the fictional programmes on Hindi general entertainment channels. The result of the study suggests that the Urdu speaking viewers felt that Hindi general entertainment channels and news channels have failed to fulfill their needs as per their aspirations. A majority of Urdu viewers don't have language comprehension while watching programmes on Hindi channels.*

Introduction

A society in the world is often judged by the cultural traditions it inherits. Human beings always acquire information to improve their ability to receive and assimilate information about their surroundings. There is no limit to the variety and other models of communication which have not been used by human beings. Numerous languages came into existence because of close contact among peoples of distant regions, distinct cultural traditions which require specific vocabularies and linguistic structures. In such atmosphere the media of communication become cultural instruments which provide a platform to promote or influence attitudes, human behavior patterns, motivation that paves the way for social integration. The role of communication plays a vital role to promote culture and its practices. Not only that, communication plays a major role in democratizing culture and propagating cultural policies which shape the experience of millions of people across the world. The media can play an important role in the process of cultural growth, diffusion, invention and creativity. But on the other hand, media undermines existing cultures and is also seen an instrument for creating conflicts across the world cultures. Various modern theories and evidence supports the view that media cultural invasion can be resisted by local culture and experience. McQuail, Denis (2000, pp.237)

India is a vast country having continental dimensions and comprising 28 States and 7 Union Territories. India is a multi-racial and multilingual nation. There are scores of regional languages, various hues of culture and different loyalties. In view of the amazing diversities, it is the responsibility of the media organizations particularly television channels to fulfill the socio-political and cultural needs of every community in a multicultural society like India. They are meant for voicing the aspirations of the people belonging to different cultures, religion, language, caste etc., and to provide a forum for discussion, entertainment and to promote or influence attitudes, human behavior patterns, motivation that paves the way for social integration as per the aspiration and needs of each community.

Prime Concerns of Urdu Speaking Community

As per Census of India, 2001, 51.5 million people consider Urdu as their mother-tongue and are spread over several states across India. A majority of Urdu speaking population resides in states like Andhra Pradesh (6,575,033), Uttar Pradesh (13,272,080), Bihar (9,457,548), Maharastra (6,895,501), West Bengal (1,653,739) and Madhya Pradesh (1,186,364). (Figure in lakhs).

A majority of Urdu speaking viewers watch Hindi entertainment channels as well as Hindi news channels. It is assumed that most of the Urdu viewers watch the programmes of these channels, because the language which is used by Hindi channels are Hindustani rather than sanskritised form of Hindi.

Many of the Urdu serials was telecast during the period the late 80s and the early 90s on national channel Doordarshan, Sony TV, and SAB TV has catered the needs of Urdu speaking population. Serials on so-cial themes with background such as Phir Wohi Talaash(Doordarhan), Farmaan(Doordarshan-1995), Gul Gulshan Gulfaam(1991-Doordarshan), Heena(1998-Sony TV)etc with Muslim protagonist characters as also historical and costume dramas such as Akbar The Great(1988-Doordarshan), Bahadur Shah Zafar(Doordarshan), The Sword of Tipu Sultan(1990-Doordarshan), Mirza Ghalib(1988-Doordarshan), Mulla Nasruddin(Doordarshan, 1984), Alif-Laila (Doordarshan-1993 and SAB TV- 1996) and Dastan-e- Hatimtai etc enjoyed a very high viewership. But the question does arise as to whether these channels fulfill the socio-cultural needs of Urdu speaking viewers in general and Muslims in particular since if we see the nature of programmes on these channels, especially fiction, it seems that they have not come up, of late, with any family drama that has Muslim protagonists or social issues confronting the Muslims. There may be few exceptions like the serial Heena on SONY TV but they have been far and few in comparison to others. Almost all the soap operas on Hindi channels feature only Hindu families. Probably they have come to represent the urban polarization happening over the years by which Muslims have been compelled to take up residences in Muslim neighborhoods or ghettos; thus it seems Hindu families in Hindi serials even do not have Muslims as neighbors, thereby losing out on the potential to make the serials, through various sub-tracks, reflect the secular fabric of the country. Not stopping at that, these serials show the families pompously celebrating the Hindu religious occasions with congregational worship of gods and goddesses. Shlokas from the religious texts also form a part of the soundtrack. Some of these depictions may be integral to the story but most of the time; they may not be totally indispensable. So in this study the researcher intends to explore that "Do Hindi channels depict our composite culture?"

In India there has been a feeling particularly among Muslims that adequate representation to the issues concerning to them hardly finds their way on Hindi news channels. The socio-economic-political needs of the community do not get addressed. More often than not, it is lamented, that the Muslim panelists invited by the Hindi and English news channels do not represent the interests of the community and at best are those who hardly turn attention to what the community needs the most. No specific research has been carried out in the past regarding the coverage of issues in mainstream news channels, but when it comes to see the trend on Muslim issues, it is observed that Indian media covers only on controversial issues were happened such as Muslim Personal Law, Shah Bano controversy, the issue of child brides of Hyderabad, or the issue of triple Talaq, Debates on Islam and Muslim are shown often like Imrana case, Sania Mirza's dress, Fatwa selling Mufties, illegitimacy of life insurance, polygamy, Veil (Burqa), Vande Mataram, Deobandi-Barelwi divide, arrests of the Muslim youths etc. This shows that media attention has accorded priority only to the controversial issues, showing muslim community in negative light. It is a fact that the images of the Muslim community both in India and in the Islamic world ––centers on the bogey of Islamic fundamentalism. So in this study the researcher intends to explore that "Do Hindi channels properly highlight problems faced by the Urdu speaking population?".

But there is an apprehension among the Urdu speaking viewers that there is language comprehension while watching programmes of Hindi channels. Therefore, the researcher also intends to know the response of Urdu viewers regarding language comprehension while watching programmes on Hindi channels.

Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are given below:
1. To know the response of viewers regarding language comprehension while watching Hindi channels
2. To know the response of viewers regarding depiction of composite culture in serials of Hindi channels
3. To know the response of viewers on the coverage of issues related to Urdu speaking population on Hindi news channels

Hypothesis
1. There is no significant difference among the responses of Urdu viewers regarding language comprehension while watching Hindi channels
2. There is no significant difference among the responses of Urdu viewers regarding coverage of composite culture in Hindi channel programmes
3. There is no significant difference among viewers about coverage of issues related to Urdu speaking population on Hindi news channels

Sampling Method
In this study, survey method has been applied to obtain the data that is qualitative in nature from large representative but diverse and widely scattered population across India particularly in three cities- Hyderabad, Bhopal and Mumbai. A total number of 300 respondents were surveyed. The survey has aided the researcher in collecting information directly from the cable and satellite and DTH television viewers who have access to Hindi channels and Urdu channels. The total population of this study comprises all male and female cable and satellite television viewers aged from 18 years to above 50 year, belonging to lower, middle, and upper class Urdu households. The respondents from different cities were selected by applying non-probability sampling. The survey was conducted in April –May 2012 .

Data Processing
The researcher entered the data through SPSS-10. Data sheet was prepared by transferring information obtained from the respondents for the purpose of scoring. Data was analyzed separately to examine each hypothesis.

Application of Statistical Test
To test the hypotheses, One-Way ANOVA (F-test) was used. The ANOVA technique enable us to perform simultaneous test, using this technique, one can draw inferences about whether the samples have been drawn from populations having the same mean. The ANOVA technique is important in the context of all those situations where we want to compare more than two populations such as in comparing the differences among the means of all the populations simultaneously. ANOVA is essentially a procedure for testing the difference among different groups of data for homogeneity. The essence of ANOVA is that the total amount of variation in a set of data is broken down into two types, that amount which can be attributed to chance and that amount which can be attributed to specified causes.". The results were tested at 5 % level of significance which means that researcher is 95% confident in making the correct decision. (C.R.Kothari, pp, 256,257). To obtain the mean of each sample opinion values i.e., the mean of each sample was obtain on the following scale

X1(Strongly Agree), X2 (Agree), X3 (Can't Say) , X4 (Strongly Disagree), and X5(Disagree)

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
This part of the study presented the data according to respondent's gender, religion, qualification, profession, monthly incomes, age groups, and mother tongues. The descriptive analysis was presented in frequencies through cross tabs.

Table-1: Gender of the Respondents

	Hyderabad	Bhopal	Mumbai	Total
Gender				
Male	59	54	56	169
Female	41	46	44	131
Total	100	100	100	300
Religion				
Muslim	90	90	90	270
Hindu	9	10	10	29
Sikh	1	-	-	1
Total	100	100	100	300
Qualification				
Up to10th	15	19	28	62
10+2	10	19	7	36
Graduate	27	31	19	77
Post Graduate	33	16	21	70
M.Phil/PhD	15	15	25	55
Total	100	100	100	300
Profession				
Govt.Employee	28	1	3	32
Businessman	15	16	28	59
Self-employed	5	34	23	62
Student	9	13	10	32
House-wife	12	32	26	70
Others	31	4	10	45
Total	100	100	100	300
Monthly Income				
<Rs25000	30	30	31	91
Rs25000-Rs40000	31	30	31	91
>Rs40000	39	40	38	117
Total	100	100	100	300
Age Groups				
18to35	33	33	18	84
36 to 50	26	37	42	105
above 50	41	30	40	111
Total	100	100	100	300
Mother Tongue				
Urdu	87	87	78	252
Hindi	1	13	7	21
Telugu	12	-	-	12
Marathi	-	-	15	15
Total	100	100	100	300

Hypothesis Testing 1: There is no significant difference among the response of Urdu viewers regarding language comprehension while watching Hindi channels

Table 2: (Descriptive)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Hyderabad	100	2.63	1.22	.12
Bhopal	100	2.89	1.17	.12
Mumbai	100	3.05	1.15	.11
Total	300	2.86	1.19	6.87E-02

Table 2-A: (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.987	2	4.493	3.225	.041
Within Groups	413.850	297	1.393		
Total	422.837	299			

Table 2-B: (Post Hoc Tests)

(I) Selected Cities	(J) Selected Cities	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Hyderabad	Bhopal	-.26	.17	.120
	Mumbai	-.42	.17	.012
Bhopal	Hyderabad	.26	.17	.120
	Mumbai	-.16	.17	.339
Mumbai	Hyderabad	.42	.17	.012
	Bhopal	.16	.17	.339

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 2C : (Frequency)

Cities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Say	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total

Hyderabad	16	41	10	17	16	100
Bhopal	14	20	12	41	13	100
Mumbai	14	12	9	38	27	100
Total	44	73	31	96	56	300

The experimental results tabulated in ANOVA table 2A shows that the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. The post-hoc- test results in table 2 B also shows that null hypothesis is rejected 5% level of significance. Hence, the responses of Hyderabad viewers are significantly different in comparisons of cities like Hyderabad-Mumbai only, where as there is no significant difference among viewer's response regarding language comprehension in cities like Hyderabad-Bhopal and Mumbai-Bhopal.

Findings

Most of the Urdu speaking viewers tend to watch Hindi channel programmes because it is assumed that viewers can easily understand the language used on Hindi channels programmes. Therefore, to measure the response of Urdu viewers regarding language comprehension while watching Hindi channels respondents are asked about their reactions on a five-point scale (coded as Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Can't say=3, Strongly Disagree=4, and Disagree=5).

The frequencies in table 2C shows that a majority of viewers felt that there is no language comprehension while watching programmes on Hindi channels, which constitutes 32 percent and 18.66 percent in category of strongly disagree and disagree. On the other hand 14.66 percent viewers strongly agree that there is language comprehension while watching Hindi channels, followed by 24.33 percent viewer's who agree. However, 10.33 percent viewers have not given their opinion on this issue. Findings also revealed that majority of the viewers in Bhopal which constitutes 41 percent strongly disagree that there is any language comprehension while watching Hindi channels, followed by 27 percent viewer's of Mumbai who also disagree. On the other hand, a majority of the viewers (16 percent) in Hyderabad strongly agree that there is language comprehension while watching Hindi channels, followed by 41 percent Hyderabad viewer's who also agree (Table 2 C).

The findings revealed that there is no language comprehension among viewer's while watching Hindi channels. Urdu is often contrasted with Hindi. Apart from religious associations, the differences are largely restricted to the standard forms as Tara Chand Chatterji in his study on "The Problem of Hindustani", commented that linguistically, it is quite correct to say that Hindi and Urdu are two forms or styles of the same 'Western Hindi Speech'-the Khadi Boli Hindustani of Delhi. But historically, and linguistically, Urdu is not the modified, Muslamised form of what now-a-days[s] passes as Hindi, i.e. Sanskritized Khadi Boli.

The researcher concludes that most of the Urdu viewers do not find any difficulty while watching Hindi channels due to language comprehension.

Hypothesis Testing 2: There is no significant difference among the response of Urdu viewers regarding coverage of composite culture in Hindi channel programmes

Table 3: (Descriptive)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Hyderabad	100	2.84	1.05	.11
Bhopal	100	3.13	.96	9.60E-02
Mumbai	100	3.19	1.00	.10
Total	300	3.05	1.01	5.85E-02

Table 3-A: (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.007	2	3.503	3.467	.032
Within Groups	300.140	297	1.011		
Total	307.147	299			

Table 3-B: (Post Hoc Tests)

(I) Selected Cities	(J) Selected Cities	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Hyderabad	Bhopal	-.29	.14	.042
	Mumbai	-.35	.14	.014
Bhopal	Hyderabad	.29	.14	.042
	Mumbai	-6.00E-02	.14	.673
Mumbai	Hyderabad	.35	.14	.014
	Bhopal	6.00E-02	.14	.673

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 3-C: (Frequency)

Cities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Say	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Hyderabad	15	13	6	51	15	100
Bhopal	6	12	10	55	17	100
Mumbai	4	16	14	51	15	100
Total	25	41	30	157	47	300

Results

The experimental results tabulated in ANOVA table 3A shows that the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. The post-hoc- test results in table 3 B also shows that null hypothesis is rejected 5% level of significance. Hence, the responses of Hyderabad viewers are significantly different in comparisons of cities like Hyderabad -Bhopal and Hyderabad-Mumbai, where as there is no significant difference among viewer's response regarding depiction of composite culture in Hindi channel serials like Bhopal and Mumbai city only.

Findings

Most of the viewers tend to show a greater degree of influence of Hindi channels but they feel alienated from Urdu culture and find missing the portrayal of Muslim characters in Hindi serials. Therefore, to measure the response of Urdu viewers regarding depiction of composite culture in Hindi channel serials , respondents are asked about their reactions on a five-point scale (coded as Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Can't say =3, Strongly Disagree=4, and Disagree=5). The frequencies in table 3C shows that a majority of viewers felt that most of serials on Hindi channels failed to depict the composite culture, which constitutes 52.33 percent in category of strongly disagree, followed by 15.66 percent in category of disagree. On the other hand 8.33 percent viewers strongly agree that most of the Hindi channels depict the composite culture, followed by 13.66 percent viewer's who agree. However, 10 percent viewers have not given their opinion on this issue. Findings also revealed that a majority of viewers in Bhopal (55 percent) strongly disagree, followed by 17 percent viewers from Bhopal also disagree that most of the Hindi channel serials do not depict the composite culture. On the other hand, majority of the viewers (15 percent) belonging to Hyderabad strongly agree that Hindi channel serials depict the composite culture, followed by 16 percent Mumbai viewers who agree (Table 3 C).

 Norbert Wildermuth (2005, pp 328) in his dissertation said that under a highly adjusted audience and channel branding strategy Star Plus, SET and Zee TV have, since 1996, increasingly tried to maximize their audience share among the same Hindi-speaking middle classes. Mobilizing the same Bombay tv producers, actors, story ideas and formats, this trend towards greater congruence, has inevitably narrowed the portrayal and imagination of gender issues and constructions. That is, the logic of the market has privileged a particular, binary imagination of the new Indian woman. Commercial satellite television's serialized fiction thus plays a significant role in the propagation of a discursive formation, which articulates a particular middle-class consumer identity, accommodated with the common sense, social conservatism propagated by the Hindu cultural nationalists, as a hegemonic, national ideal of gender relations in present day India.

It has been established from the research that majority of the Urdu viewers feel that Hindi channel serials do not depict the composite culture.

Hypothesis Testing 3: There is no significant difference among viewers about coverage of issues related to Urdu speaking population on Hindi news channels

Table 4: (Descriptive)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Hyderabad	100	3.29	1.23	.12
Bhopal	100	2.86	1.00	9.95E-02
Mumbai	100	2.91	1.20	.12
Total	300	3.02	1.16	6.68E-02

Table 4 A:(ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.060	2	5.530	4.224	.016
Within Groups	388.820	297	1.309		
Total	399.880	299			

Table 4 B:(Post Hoc Tests)

(I) Selected Cities	(J) Selected Cities	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Hyderabad	Bhopal	.43	.16	.008
	Mumbai	.38	.16	.020
Bhopal	Hyderabad	-.43	.16	.008
	Mumbai	-5.00E-02	.16	.758
Mumbai	Hyderabad	-.38	.16	.020
	Bhopal	5.00E-02	.16	.758

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 4 C: (Frequency)

Cities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Say	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Hyderabad	12	5	23	48	12	100
Bhopal	15	7	5	60	13	100
Mumbai	17	16	9	35	23	100
Total	44	28	37	143	48	300

Results

The experimental results tabulated in ANOVA table 4 A shows that the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. The post-hoc test results in table 4 B also shows that null hypothesis is rejected 5% level of significance. Hence, the responses of Hyderabad viewers are significantly different in comparisons of cities like Hyderabad -Bhopal and Hyderabad-Mumbai, where as there is no significant difference among viewer's response regarding coverage the issues related to Urdu speaking population on Hindi news channels in Bhopal and Mumbai city only.

Findings

Most of the Urdu speaking viewers watch news and current affairs programme on Hindi news channels. But, there has been a feeling among Muslims that adequate representation to the issues concerning Urdu speaking population is missing. The socio-economic-political needs of the community do not get addressed. More often than not, it is lamented, that the Muslim panelists invited by the Hindi news channels do not represent the interests of the community and at best are those who hardly turn attention to what the community needs the most. Muslims often complain that the national media is biased in its coverage of issues and events pertaining to the community. Therefore, to measure the response of Urdu viewers regarding coverage of issues related to Urdu speaking population on Hindi news channels, respondents are asked about their reactions on a five-point scale (coded as Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Can't say=3,Strongly Disagree=4, and Disagree=5). Findings in Table 4C shows that a majority of viewers felt that Hindi news channels did not highlight the problems faced by the Urdu speaking population, which constitutes 47.66 percent and 16 percent in category of strongly disagree and disagree. On the other hand 14.66 percent viewers strongly agree that Hindi news channels highlight the problems faced by the Urdu speaking population, followed by 9.33 percent viewers who also agree. However, 12.33 percent viewers have not given their opinion on this issue. Findings also revealed that a majority of viewers in Bhopal, (60 percent) strongly disagree, followed by 23 percent viewers in Mumbai, who disagree that most of the Hindi channel serials do not highlight the problems faced by the Urdu speaking population. On the other hand, a majority of the Mumbai viewers which constitutes 17 percent strongly agree that Hindi channel highlight the problems faced by the Urdu speaking population, followed by 16 percent viewers belonging to Mumbai also agree (Table 4 C).

Vinod Mehta (2009,pp,26), editor-in-chief of the New Delhi-based Outlook magazine, in his article titled "Muslims and Media Images: Where Things Go Wrong", published in the book 'Muslims and Media Images—News versus Views, Edited by Ather Farouqui(2009,pp,26) said that the media has a special responsibility to portray Muslims sensitively, to be balanced and fair, since Muslims are in a minority and are supposed to be the most backward community of India. Theoretically this may be true, but in contemporary world, cut throat competition is the driving force as much for the media as for any other business. However, it is argued that the Indian media should be more sympathetic and objective towards Muslims in comparisons to other smaller minorities who are much better off, more educated, and modern in their outlook simply because of their economic condition. The media is, therefore, seen in very idealistic terms. It is also seen as almost having a special responsibility because Muslims are the largest religious minority in the country.

Kuldip Nayyar(2009,pp,42) in his article in the book 'Muslims and Media Images—News versus Views does not hesitate to criticize what he terms as the 'national press' for not projecting Muslim-related issues in a fair and balanced manner. This media, he indicates, generally 'oversimplifies' Muslim problems and concerns and displays a marked and erroneous tendency to interpret their issues in religious terms while ignoring their numerous social and economic issues.

Badri Raina (2006, page 3&4), wrote that as to the media, it is a grave indictment that the only time they seem to notice Muslim life in India is when "terrorism" is under discussion. It is an agonized Muslim complaint that even as ignorant anchors and such like cavalierly berate Muslims for not standing firmly against "terrorism", they almost never deign to report any one of umpteen instances of common and organized Muslim condemnations of the phenomenon, barring the exception of the Urdu media.

It has been established from the research that majority of the Urdu viewers feel that Hindi news channels do not cover the issues related to Urdu speaking population.

CONCLUSION

Such a sampling cannot pretend to be representative of all Urdu speaking population but it constitutes a first step, a pilot study, which aims to identify the response of Urdu speaking population for a better understanding of the issues at first hand, and to raise questions and pinpoint gaps in research and data that require further exploration. The media represents a vital role in disseminating information, education and entertainment in a multicultural society to fulfill the socio-religious and cultural needs as per their satisfaction. The findings of the research hence suggest that when it comes to reporting on issues related to Muslims on Hindi channels, there appeared to be a significant lack of trust regarding the media's objectivity and fairness, as majority of the respondents feel that Hindi news channels do not cover the issues related to Urdu speaking population. The findings of the research suggest that majority of the respondents feel that Hindi channel serials do not depict the composite culture, as Hindi channels have failed to portray Muslim characters and to bring social family dramas based on Muslim background. The portrayal of Muslim communities in Hindi channels fictional programmes will have a considerable impact on overall perceptions and will be a way of promoting more diversified Muslim role models in the promotion of national integrity. To full-fill the needs of Urdu speaking population, Hindi entertainment channels could consider more diverse programming and imaging in the above findings. Media organizations might consider conducting their own research to gain a better understanding to target Urdu speaking population. A majority of the viewers feel that there is no language comprehension when they watch programmes on Hindi channels as the language used in programmes are Hindustani rather than sanskritized Hindi. Hindi TV channels should concentrate more on Hindustani Hindi rather than sanskritized Hindi in order to draw more Urdu speaking viewers in future.

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