

CULTURAL INVASION OF WESTERN MEDIA AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

Media and transmission of culture are interrelated factors. In today's world media is considered to be the strong carrier of culture values and norms. The West especially American media has upper hand on rest of the world. Hence, it also plays dominant role in transmission of western culture upon Muslim countries. This paper discusses various aspects of western culture invasion in Muslim countries through media. It also ponders on remedial suggestion for countering media's culture invasion.

How Muslim countries should protect their culture from foreign invasion? Some important aspects of the issue have been highlighted in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

In the age of information technology, we cannot underestimate the role of Mass Media as a great “agent of change” in the society. Nowadays we frequently encounter media campaigns on TV, Radio, Internet or newspapers or magazines. There are so many “pieces of information” which are carefully designed to mould attitudes and public opinion. Media has become a very effective and powerful weapon through which “authorities manipulate social attitude and behavior. Media is producing information and entertainment day and night throughout the world.

The Twentieth century has been described as the age of mass communication revolution. Mass Media came up in a big way and its influence on people was very powerful. This was recognized for the first time scholars and researchers in the area came to realize that mass communication had far reaching and pervasive effects on the audience. The messages were directed, pointed and extremely influential.

Mass media typically means TV, Radio, Press, cinema etc. These channels are generally controlled by the elite. Media may be received by millions of peoples.*1

Media production and dissemination of information and entertainment programs have great impact on society. It influences the social, economic and political norms and values. Media has become so powerful that it tied together whole of the world. Modern world has become a global village, not only by fast means of transportation but also due to mass media. Media has powerful effects, so many social scientists have launched program for the development of masses.

There is no question that the mass media play an important role in society. Their impact in social change, achievement cultural taste, instruction politics and image building is not to be denied.*2

The rapid rise of mass media utility and their potential influence has led many to wonder about the actual role and behavior. Mass Communication are all powerful that they determine thought and action to a major degree.*3

Particularly electronic media brought a big change in the attitudes of the people. Among these television is a very powerful medium of communication.

We are now living what is called a “Communication revolution” by Rfled Williams. What is occurring in the field of communications has been described by Wicklein as follows: “All modes of communication we humans have devised since the beginning of humanity are coming

together into a single electronic system, driven by computers.

Toffler has been forecasting technological changes since his first book, *Future Shock*, published in 1970 suggesting with remarkable accuracy the changing trends in our society. In 1980, his book, *The Third Wave*, discussed how civilization was in transition between the second and third cycle of human history. The first cycle was the agrarian society, which exists until the second cycle, the industrial age, was ushered in during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The third cycle, which is now replacing the industrial society, is the information age.

His latest book *Power Shift*, published in 1990, deals with how the information explosion is causing turmoil among established institutions-such as governments, banks, trade unions and the media as the industrial age gives way to the information age where more than half of our gross national product is generated by the creation and distribution of information-as contrasted with the production of goods. The information age is bringing us a wide range of new communication technologies that play an increasing significant role in the making and distributing of our mass media.

Most of us have seen satellite dishes people have installed to pick up TV signals. The advent of satellite television transmission has made it possible for people living in most remote regions of the nation or world to join the telecommunication age.

The computer revolution also ushered in new technology that began to merge print and electronic mass communication. These systems, which provide print text on television screens, are called videotext and teletext. Both systems were invented in Britain in the early 1970s and to date have been far more successful in Europe than in the United States.

In Teletext a television viewer can turn channel selector and read an electronic newspaper, learn of new products, check airline schedules or learn what is playing at local theatres if the TV set is equipped with a special converter. Transmission of textual information by over-the-air signals called teletext. Transmission by a wired two-way interactive system is called videotext sometime also called videotext.*4

Television is considered a very valuable medium for developing country like Pakistan where a great majority of residing population is illiterate and live in the very remote areas of the country. These people can be imparted much information and education through television program. Television can also help in removing the social and political evils from the society. It can be used in highlighting the social evils of dowry, bribery, drinking, gambling etc., but also can play a very effective role in promoting government program like family planning, adult education, cleanliness, environmental protection in the society.

Radio is also very useful medium for expanding educational program in the far-flung areas of the country.

According to Farishullah (2004) Use of media for intended messages that persuade the audience members to bring some changes in behavior a pattern is quite common. Almost all countries employ media to run social communication campaign for the achievement of goals like good health, small family norm, clean environment, and enhancement in education etc.*5

The mass media has the power to highlight, to campaign, to persuade and to project socio-economic and political issues.

IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The West got the opportunity to establish its domination on news dissemination because of the tremendous advancement in the field of information technology. This reality cannot be matched

by the Third World countries merely by raising a protest against the imbalances of the news flow. Only the development of information technology and building up of a strong news network can remove the imbalances by reducing overdependence on the Western network. There is no doubt that like the industrial revolution, the information revolution has also enriched and benefited disparity inevitable follows. Developing countries are far behind the developments occurring in the West. The gap will gradually increase. This is the negative aspect of the information technology.*6

For developing countries, development is the main thing. In these countries media is playing very significant role. In the fields of education, Science and technology, agriculture, trade and industry, there is a great change and development due information revolution.

In developing countries there is a need for more and more information and explanation of the local and regional issues. Although developing countries are striving to put together an infrastructure for mobile phones, FM radios and news exchange system through satellite technology but they are facing some hurdles and these are;

1. Lack of resources
- 2, Poor telecommunication system
- 3, lack of trained and qualified journalists.
- 4, Low literacy rate
- 5 One-way Flow of information

There are developing countries where 65 to 80 percent of the TV programs are American or West European. That amounts to a cultural invasion through the media, culturally detrimental to the country which is the victim of such invasion. As every evening after evening the young people of the country watch TV program presenting American way of life, entirely divorced from the realities and values surrounding them, the country faces the danger of cultural subversion and other evils of cultural disorientation. This is a hazard confronting most developing countries which are showed under not only by alien and inimical TV image but also by the one-way free flow of international news disseminated by the monopolist Western news agencies.*7

DEVELOPING WORLD'S DISADVANTAGE

The developing nations are at a distinct disadvantage in global communication because they lack technology or money to purchase or develop local production, and sometimes, they lack the ability to use these forms of communication for purpose that are relevant to their lives. The information and even the technology that does make its way to the developing countries is often culturally and pedagogically basis in favor of the philosophical policies and politics of industrialized world. At times, these philosophies and the practices are at odds with conditions in the receiving countries. When this happens, the developing nations experience a challenge to maintain its values and exercise its right to autonomy. These issues are often referred to as the North/South debate since the industrialized countries are primarily in the northern hemisphere and the developing countries are in south. International communication scholars like Mustapha Masmoudi suggests that there is a flagrant quantitative imbalance between North and South. This imbalance is created by the disparity between the volume of news and information emanating from the developed world and intend for the developing countries and the volume of the flow in the transitional agencies, however these devote only 20 or 30 per cent of news coverage to the developing countries, despite the fact that the south accounts for almost three quarters of mankind. This result in a monopoly situation on the part of developed countries. Five major

transitional agencies monopolize between them the essential share of material and human potential, while a third of the developing countries do not yet possess a single national agency.

In addition to dominating and manipulating news flow, the developed countries practice other forms of control over communications institutions of the Third World. They have possession of the media through the world exercised by the major advertising agencies which earn their income by serving the interests of transitional industrial and commercial corporations.

Another factor is the fact that once individuals have made their investments for receivers they will demand for more programmers which creates programming needs far exceeding most local production. Then the door is opened to foreign program suppliers. The United States is by far the most important and largest supplier to export television material. These suppliers are willing to sell at much lower prices because all foreign sales are bonus profits as the program have already more than covered their production costs.

Once the developing countries start depending on foreign program their television operations become a vehicle for materials produced outside the country with a culture and values irrelevant, if not injurious, to its own society. Dr. Lloyd A. Free, director of the institute for International social research, describes this situation in the most heavily populated country in Africa.

Some critics such as Schiller have found that the real source and shaper of developing countries communication systems and the messages they produce is the West. Most of the third World does not have the expertise or material resources to institute domestic communication system which would genuinely reflect their history, needs, concerns, values, and culture. They rely on transfer of Western communication technology and software usually through foreign aid program such as television sere, Hollywood movies, and wire copy, which are cheaper to get Ghana the production of domestic counterparts. In addition, almost all of the international communication industry is owned and controlled by giant Western, mainly American base, transitional media and telecommunications conglomerates. Some of the media moguls who have pursued aggressively new media markets into the developing countries are Murdoch, Turner, Maxwell Kirch and Berlusconi.

One of the greatest problems for a nation is the threat to its privacy from communication satellites and international computer data bases. Satellites have the capacity to send vital information back to the country controlling the satellite's transmission. These "Spy" satellites can detect the presence of natural resources in developing countries, sometimes before the government of those countries knows what they have. The industrialized country may then make some very attractive offers to the developing countries for mineral extraction. Remote sensing also reveals information about the presence of technologies and high-risk or restricted substances as in the case of Iraq, North Korea and Cuba.* 8

IMPACT ON MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Waves of western culture equipped with secularism and materialism are heading towards the Muslim cultures and societies very rapidly. They are feeding us their values by using electronic media and press for this purpose. There is a wave of these attacks in the form of computer, internet, TV, Cable network, dish antenna, VCR, Video Cassettes, films, newspapers and magazines. In present age this wave can be termed as culture invasion of the western countries.

As the developed countries are the architects of the modern age so they want to keep control over education, industry, economy, culture and traditions. They want to dominate over the pious Muslim civilization by replacing it with their free society and culture. So, they are

demolishing the values and life style of Muslims.

Objectives of cultural invasion are:

1. To prevail vulgarity in the name of art and entertainment.
2. To propagate English language at world level.
3. To propagate materialism, fashion, music and amusement.
4. To introduce and increase the sale of multinational companies products.
5. To propagate the idea of secularism.
6. To promote Western culture i.e. use of Coke, Jeans, burgers and free life style.
7. To prove that the Muslims were ignorant, narrow minded extremists and terrorists.
8. To prove that the Muslim civilization is wrong and inapplicable to the modern society and age.*9

Developed countries have kept the developing countries, especially, the Muslims countries into the cultural domination and mental slavery, that's why, the flow of all sort of news and information is one sided. That's why a distances change can be seen in the cultural, education and values of those nations.

Due to western cultural invasion there has been an increase in socio-economic and political tensions. There is undisciplined, vulgarity, obscenity, lawlessness and other big crimes in the developing countries.

Though the Muslim population is a biggest part of the world population but they are unable to solve their problems and worries. They have no common currency, strategy and media policy. Muslim need collective struggle to defend western cultural invasion. Muslim countries are spread from Morocco to Indonesia. These countries are rich in Oil, Gas, Minerals and manpower. Greater military capability and famous trade ways pass through them. But unfortunately due to indiscipline and planning of America, British and Israel, they are facing many problems. Cold and hot war is being fought against Muslims. Generation killing of Muslims is being started in Kashmir, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Superpowers have started a continuous and discipline planning through multinational companies, NGO's, cable network and satellite technologies. Such planning has bent the Muslims emperors before them. They are dependent on west in the fields of education, politics, military and economics. The new world order of America in fact proves it is a desire to hold its power over the whole world.

For this purpose, the use of media is their first choice America and Europe have their experts in media and propaganda. These sources are spread from earth to oceans and skies.

Whole of the western media propaganda is against the civilization and cultures of poor countries particularly Muslim countries are under the invasion of the western media. They are blackmailing the Muslim in every field of life. But Muslim emperors and scholars are not aware of the fact that the destruction in western society is increasing. No one can save them from the disruption. Free style of life and by the name of modernism, west have given the gift of mental psychological and sexual diseases. For this purpose, western world is making dynamic and long term planning just to destroy the Muslim culture and civilization so that they will be able to deprive the world from the universal knowledge of Islam. It is the duty of Muslim countries to save the world from feature shock.

According to Mansoor Jaffer, it is the need of the day that Muslim scholars should formulate communication policy for all media institutions of their own countries under such policies which could reflect Muslim culture, religion and social life in true sense. Instead of promoting Pop music programs we vigilant about the minds of western policy makers.*10

WE MUST BE REALISTIC

We have two ways to solve the problem of culture invasion first one is to be negative i.e to boycott all sources of information and second is to be realistic and build those sources of communication under the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah. We should use those sources of propagation for the purpose to provide the true spirit of Muslim Civilization because we will have to build our communication policy according to our ideology, values of life and needs of nation and state from the very beginning.

Our God gifted state Pakistan is an Islamic Ideological state. So our communication policy must be in touch with Islamic teachings and ethical limitations because it is the need of the day.

Millions of Muslim of the world have an eye on the state of Pakistan as leading country. In present scenario we must understand the religious creeds. We must be realistic we must aware the other nations of the world from our culture, civilization and great ethical education. It is our duty as well as the need of the modern age.

In the present age sources and rules are changed but the basic human needs values of goodness and badness are the same as determined by the nature. We must use the equipment of the modern age to win the battle field. Today war is not fought to control area but to dominate minds and hearts.

IDEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL INVASION AND SUSPECTS OF INTELLECTUALS AND PATRIOTIC PERSONALITIES

There are some Muslim scholars and thinkers who know the responsibilities regarding their nation and religion. Those intellectuals have the power and determination to stop this flood of waster invasion. Let's have a glimpse on the thought of those thinkers and scholars.

Prof. Dr Miskeen Ali Hijazi writes, today not only Muslim states but all of the third world is under the effects of media. The cultures and civilization of Eastern countries are under attack of western media. West through their films, drama, musical program, newspapers, journals, books and other many forms invaded on developing and Islamic countries. Those effects of media are making issues that are ethical, social and psychological. Good values are reducing passion, apology, brotherhood and sincerity is disappearing in the society. Individuality is increasing. This all is producing very dangerous results.*11

Prof. Abdul Jabbar Shakir writes, this cultural invasion is affecting our creeds and civilization. Our new generation is depriving from their religious and cultural heritage. This cultural deficiency is a signal of many disastrous results.*12

Prof. Irshad Ahemd Saddique writes, sources of mass communication such as news agencies, newspaper, radio, T.V and VCP technology have increased the American planning of capturing the power of whole world. Now none of the part of the world is away from it. That is the cultural invasion which is dominating the small cultures of the world. We should seriously think about the American control over the mass communication resources.*13

Prof. Dr Khalid Alwi writes that one aspect of the western world is its cultural demonstration. Due to its military dominancy and political interference, the west has been dominated as universal culture. Western media has played an important role to present this life style and to make favorable. Television network, satellites dish and international channels are trying to promote American life style from door to door in the world. Having an international

status, English has introduced this culture to every person. Hollywood actor, famous American programs, Coca cola and Jeans are the popular cultural demonstrations for the generation of the educational institutions. No nation of the world is safe from this culture invasion. The acceptance of this culture for non-Muslim societies will be considered as cultural development of civilization but for the Muslims it will be considered as the loss of its own identification.*14

Prof. Dr. Mugheesudin Sheikh writes that the western world after making us surrendered in the fields of politics and military, is striving to hands-up us in the field of civilization. We can defend our boundaries invasion but we are unaware of even have no information that of cultural invasion.*15

Prof Mehdi Hassan writes that modern media has become the right of those rich countries which are developed from industrial and technological advancements. The whole life of poor countries is under sway of thin cultural invasion. This situation is giving birth to a new kind of cultural imperialism .Newspapers, information departments, radio broadcasting, television programs, films, books, magazines and even every important source of media are under the hold of force of developed countries. They can present any picture of the world to others as they like.*16

Prof. Mateen-ur-Rehman Murtaza writes that the whole society of the world is passing through in big change. This social change is due to the influence of the media. But a major and related question is that what kind of change is appearing in the society. An elite class society is shocked to see immoral practice, and attitudes of the youth of the day, our national thinking, target, Aims values and even more our loving national ideology is looking to be perished in the dark.*17

Moulana Atta-Ur-Rehman writes: This fact can not be ignored that Muslim Ummah are facing with some horrible threats in which the most important and dangerous one is that of the invasion of the western culture with the help of which the minds of our new generation are being changed. And the most sorrowful fact is that our own governments are helping those factors who deliberately working and planning to divert the Muslim Ummah from its Islamic values, e.g. the educational institutions on western style, media, multinational companies, NGOs, dish culture and the vulgar and obscene foreign literature.*18

Mohammed Tahir writes due to the satellite revolution changes are occurring in the four different walks of life.. Those four fields are economics, cultural, social and political. Due to the flood of countless channels and satellite, travels of hundred years are being covered in moment. An amazing aspect of this is that the established cultures, traditions, and tastes of life can be controlled easily due to satellite technology.*19

Prof. Zakria Sajed writes that: Most of the developing countries of the world are impressed from the industrial development of the west. They are ready to adopt the media system in addition to their media policy. Of course those countries that have deep rooted and strong traditions of civilization also adopt the western technology but at the same time they severely criticize the traditions and values of west and men of vision considered it as dangerous for Muslim society. We should define our media system in such a way which can save our culture.*20

In short in the age of media every true Muslim and of Muslim Ummah is worried and confused and wants to stop this devil civilization and cultural invasion of India, America and Europe so that we will be able to save our up coming generation from being deprived of their creeds and cultural heritage.

HOW TO EQUIP WITH THE CULTURAL INVASION OF MEDIA:

Indian and western media's cultural invasion has made the every patriot person worried and confused. How to defend the challenges of the age. We must boycott the foreign sources of communication. If China, Iran, Malaysia and Singapore can do the same then why can't we? Why the Muslim nations watch the programs of Jews, Christ and Hindus? Those programs are in contradiction with our religion, culture, civilization and tradition.

Dr. Liaqat Ali Niazi writes: Pakistani society cannot be safe from foreign culture invention until they boycott the foreign media. Foreign programs must be banned so that stops the bruit from expending. Valorous programs of foreign countries are which though dish which may special then brains of our youth.*21

Tariq Jan from (institute of policy study) writes:

"In the name of freedom of expression, the cultural disaster cannot be permitted. Here it is tried to bring sexual revolution, while culture belong to chastity, family life, and pious way of thinking. But in the pressure of dish antenna we cannot imagine such like things."*22

SUGGESTIONS

- 1 To keep the media on right track we must prepare comprehensive media policy on national and international level.
- 2 There must be an advisory committee of scholars, media experts, ulemas and professors of media studies, who will make laws to defend the negative effects of media.
- 3 Media programs must be based on Islamic teachings and ethical limitations.
- 4 Rights of Allah and Humanity must be presented before the people through media and simple way of life must be highlighted and media should give the importance of parents' rights, neighbor rights, relatives' rights and teachers' rights.
- 5 Information should be given through media about the efficiency of mosque and madrasa and educational institutions.
- 6 Islamic life and Islamic way of life must be advertised and developed through media. Suchlike feature, dramas, film must not be shown which are against the Islamic culture and civilization.
- 7 Cinema houses, video centers and adverting institutions must be stopped from spreading vulgarity and obscenity. The owners of video centers who sell blue film must be arrested and punished.
- 8 Professions like modeling must be banned so the new generation makes a trend toward the religious values rather than the make up of their faces and dresses.
- 9 Media should tell the masses what is good and what is bad and it must practically show how to stop the evil and do well. The grace of Quran must be presented before the people as final and unchangeable utterance from Almighty Allah.
- 10 Vulgar songs, the usury, interest, music must be forbidden on media.
- 11 Cricket and cricket players must not be extraordinarily advertised. Test matches must not be shown as they are just time wasting.
- 12 Newspaper, journals and television must avoid showing the advertisements that are crossing the boundaries of ethics.
- 13 Health channels must be opened to give health tips.
- 14 Programs about education, female education and higher education and technical education must be presented.
- 15 These programs must show the true picture of Islam, specially the Islamic point of view

about Halal and Haram.

16 This all need a highly skilful and trained persons in media organizations.

17 Our media must give information about our glorious history and about the Muslim scientists, Muslims politicians, great Muslims warriors and philosophers.

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