

## **The Impact of Satellite TV Channels on Lifestyle Changes for Women in Iran**

**Elaheh Ghavam Zadeh**

PhD Candidate in Social Communication Sciences

Department of Social Communication Science

Faculty of Humanities, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

**Afsaneh Mozaffari, PhD**

Faculty Member at Department of Social Communication Science

Science and Research Branch

Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

### **Abstract**

*This article aimed to study the impact of satellite TV channels on lifestyle changes for women in Iran. As a case of study, the effect of three channels of GEM, P.M.C. and Manoto were considered on changing the lifestyle of women in Tehran. Two methods of Delphi and survey were applied to collect data and the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses. It was concluded that Persian - language satellite channels seek for a change in lifestyle among Iranian women.*

**Keywords:** Media, satellite, GEM, P.M.C., Manoto, women, lifestyle change, Tehran, Iran.

### **1. Introduction**

The role of technological development in society has long been an interesting area and an important intellectual issue for both academics and researchers. The influence of technological development is changing the present world very rapidly. Changes are taking place in all spheres of life and ultimately changing the social and cultural belief systems. Technological advancement is the one which is playing a major role for this change. The introduction of satellite television is one of the dimensions of this technological advancement which has a definite effect on the social and cultural area of Bangladesh. For these changes, human behavior is also changing and therefore, the study of changes in the human behavior is becoming more important in the present business world (Shamsher and Abdullah, 2012).

Decades of studies on the consequences of mass media exposure demonstrate that effects are varied and reciprocal—the media impact audiences and audiences also impact media by the intensity and frequency of their usage. The results of mass media for promoting social change, especially in developing countries, have become important for public health. Finnegan, Viswanath, (1997) have identified three effects or functions, of media: (1) the knowledge gap, (2) agenda setting, and (3) cultivation of shared public perceptions.

Like other countries in the world the emergence of satellite television brings significant impact on the country, society and particularly on cultural mores and values (Fahmy, 1997 and Amin, 2001). In this regard, Harbi (1996) suggested that there is a positive correlation between satellite exposure and adoption of Western values and that satellite viewing causes superficiality, distortion, and ambiguity. Labib (2001) stated that there is no solid evidence yet to prove the influence of satellite television, but he does not deny the anecdotal evidence to suggest an influence on women and girls in fields such as fashion and clothing as well as fast food consumption. However, El Fawal (2001) indicates that satellite television affects reading habits and radio listening in general. According to Meyrowitz (1986) for any particular country, culture is the representation of the country's identity. He demonstrates how television undermines the national identity and overrides the local traditions through the various transnational communications and media networks (Shamsher and Abdullah, 2012).

According to Zia (2007), satellite television viewership is no more restricted to the upper-middle class only; with the availability of low-priced television and cable connection, it has become a common household facility for the lower class as well.

Viewers have access to a variety of channels from local to foreign, which provide them an opportunity to watch all types of programs. These media sources expose viewers to new information about the outside world and other ways of life, which may affect attitudes and behaviors (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Olken, 2006) as well the overall culture (Zahid, 2007). Numerous research studies have been conducted to observe the impact of satellite television on viewers, particularly on their behavior (Bukhari., 2002; Malik, M., 2001; Naseem, A. 2001). Due to easy access to satellite channels, low cost and a huge interest of television viewership for entertainment purposes have created the rapid growth of satellite television all over the world (Zia, 2007).

Medial impacts on various social, economic, political and cultural areas, is one of the concerns and sensitivities of politicians. Identity, beliefs and values of a community have been affected by various sociability sources including group media such as T.V, internet and especially satellite in recent years. By appearing satellite, globalization as a process which is the product of communication global industry, has become the origin of community variations and has led to cultures transnational up (Thompson, 2000) and changing the concept of publicity in public domain (Habermas, 1989). An issue which has attracted the attention of many scholars, pundits, and politicians around the world is negative or positive effects of satellite programs contents on the status of humans' social life. Some people believe that, using satellite is an opportunity and knowledge for cultural-social communications, political participation, creativity and innovation and etc. and some other emphasize on disadvantages and negative points of the satellite. There are some concerns about cultural invasion to religious and national culture in Iran due to increasing use of satellite equipment and increasing rate of benefiting direct broadcast satellite programs (Larijani, and Malekitabar, 2007).

Using cultural lever to eliminate resistance of liberal nations and making them dominated, has a long record in Iran and the world history. West and east governments have used important cultural tools to legitimize their domination since the beginning of their military attacks against other nations in the colonial period which lasted for several centuries used cultural tools not only have been considered at first, but also consist of language and culture and affecting defeated nations beliefs and then, promoting superiority of the west specially the U.S. and Europe in all fields using scientific, technical and industrial advances of the west. They try to justify the west superiority in all economic, social, political and cultural fields using forestall in some certain fields. In order to make this believe as a reality, the colonizers consider themselves as the executer of their dominated and influenced nations and they believe that, nations' development is possible only through cultural similarity with the west culture and under domination and leadership of colonizer countries. In the old colonial stage, cultural movement of the west can be considered as a kind of invasive tool which was faced with the colonized nations but, in the new colonial stage after World War II, the colonies obtained their maturity by achieving political independence. Despite of disappearing colonizer domination, not only there was no resistance against the west cultural influence in the former colonies or the third world countries, but also this culture was demanded severally.

In this period, cultural tools are applied with elegance and latency to westernize the entire world in the framework of transnational companies' benefits so that, it is not like an invasive movement and on the other hand, many experts and statesmen believe that, mesmerized global acceptance of the west is necessary to develop their countries and they try acquisition and dissemination of the western culture. Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and their graduate advisors are the complete instances of such persons. In the new colonial period, the impact of mass media is so that, in terms of technological it has been highly diverse and complex compared with a century ago. The cultural impact method is done by promoting western goods, tools, knowledge and beliefs in the world countries and usually these promotions are along with a thick cover of being scientific and apolitical, this kind of promotion raises the least resistance particularly that, it relies on meeting the simplest human needs (Razzaqi, 1995). Satellite as an effective tool on other nations' culture is nowadays as the most effective tool which has affected different dimensions of the social life. Identity is one of these dimensions which its different aspects consist of social identity, personal identity, religious identity, ethnic identity, occupational identity and family identity that are affected directly and indirectly by satellite.

In our age, the communities has been faced with changes and transformation more than every other periods so that, social scientists believe that, the combination and integration, communication technologies and restructuring of capitalism in recent years have caused to open a new stage in human societies history. This stage has been described by some expressions such as post-industrial society, network society, Informational society, postmodern society, virtual society and etc.

From the characteristics of this new society can be mentioned to global economy, variable geometry of permitted virtual network, astonishing development of digital technologies, continuous services and compression of time and space (Sharafi,2002).Entering this new kind of society has affected all aspects of the human life and has caused profound changes in the societies structures and relationships between the people so that, political, social, economic and cultural fields have been faced with variety of fundamental opportunities and challenges just like the stage of transition from agricultural society to industrial society or migration of rural people to cities. Among mass media, visual media has the highest impact on families and the most aspects of the life are affected by this kind of media (Ghaysvandi and Mostafaei, 2013).

## **2. Research Objectives**

### **2.1. Main purpose**

1. Studying lifestyle changes patterns induced by Persian satellite networks with an emphasis on the target population (women).
2. Identifying and understanding the impact of satellite TV channels on Iranian women in various cultural and social spheres.
3. Explaining the philosophical foundations of the satellite TV channels and its impact on the lifestyle of women.

### **2.2. Secondary objectives:**

1. Identifying the factors that affect the lifestyle of women in big cities.
2. Explaining how lifestyle changes from traditional methods to modern and postmodern styles.

## **3. Research Hypotheses**

**3.1. Main hypothesis:** There is a significant relationship between the secular western content of the satellite Persian TV channels and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.

### **3.2. Secondary hypotheses:**

1. There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in GEM TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.
2. There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in P.M.C TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.
3. There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in Manoto TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.

## **4. Research Spatial Domain**

The spatial domain of the research was Tehran, Iran.

## **5. Research Period**

Period of this research was during 2012.

## **6. Research Methodology**

This research uses a descriptive survey method. However, in this study a mixed method was applied. Using "Delphi method", Comments of experts in the field of culture and communication and philosophical principles and characteristics of each of satellite TV channels and their impact on the kind of lifestyle have been asked in deep interviews, and then the lifestyle factors already affecting women in was discussed, and finally, by setting questionnaire and conducting survey, the impact of Satellite TV channels on the lifestyle change for women in Tehran were studied.

## **7. Table of variables**

Table 1 show the relationship between variables, components and indicators in this research which have been used in questionnaires.

Variables	Components	Indicators
Dependent 1: women's lifestyle in Tehran	The way they spend their spare time	The places to pass spare time
	The way they dress and make up	Considering the latest fashion of clothes and make up styles
	Dressing style	Believing on and making use of Hijab, the governments interfering in this issue
	Listening to music	Choice of music type
	Family relationships	Believe in the final decision making and commanding role of the father as the family commander, and believe in traditional maternal role for Iranian women
	Relationships between men and women	The main criteria for choosing a spouse, belief and non- belief in a heterosexual relationship
	Types of food	Tendency in traditional and/or foreign foods or fast food favorites
	The role of religion in society	How to Promote Religion at the community level
	Use of visual cultural goods (video)	Selective media for visual cultural goods (video)
	Purchases of consuming and business goods	Purchase of consuming and commercial goods and intending to use Western consuming and commercial goods
Independent 1: The various contents of programs offered in 3 TV channels of "GEM TV, P.M.C and Manoto	Hours of the use of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and Satellite channels	Select satellite channels for observing the number of hours they are used
	Promotion of factors of Western life, such as heterosexual relationships out of the religious norm, Western religious ceremonies, western music, western food, western clothing, make up, luxury culture, convergence and welfare capitalism, secularism and indifference to religion	Approaches and trends to styles of the various satellite programs, selection of Persian Channels (Persian or foreign language) to watch and a choice of programs of three channels of "Gem", "P.M.C." and Manoto

**Table 1: Relations between research variables, components and indicators**

### 8. Findings

Content analysis of the responses to the questions offered to professor's and scholars, 30 statements were derived from Proposition and 15 was approved and as deep questions No. 2 were asked from professors and after the confirmation were considered as our reliance to design the questionnaire.

Analysis of the contents of in-depth interviews with experts, professors and the analysis of data from survey questionnaires for Tehran women indicated as follows:

The first hypothesis was: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in GEM TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

The probability amount obtained from the Pearson correlation test was zero, which shows the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in GEM TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran. Positive correlation coefficient measure 0.436 is the average value and confirms the direct relationship between two variables.

The second hypothesis was: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in P.M.C TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

The probability amount obtained from the Pearson correlation test was zero, which shows the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in P.M.C TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran. Positive correlation coefficient measure 0.367 is the average value and confirms the direct relationship between two variables.

The third hypothesis was: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in Manoto TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran.

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

The probability amount obtained from the Pearson correlation test was zero, which shows the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant relationship between lifestyle change patterns introduced in Manoto TV channel and the lifestyle changes of women in Iran. Positive correlation coefficient measure 0.521 is the average value and confirms the direct relationship between two variables.

### **9. Conclusions**

The overall findings of this study with respect to the propositions derived from the responses of professors and analysis of questionnaire survey collected from the attitude of women in Tehran are as follows:

1. According to the Pearson correlation test, there is a significant relationship between lifestyle changing patterns applied in all three satellite TV channels of (Manoto), GEM and P.M.C. and lifestyle changes style of women in Tehran.
1. Patterns of lifestyle changes imposed by the Channel of Manoto is most correlated with the lifestyle changes style for women in Tehran.
2. Patterns of lifestyle changes imposed by P.M.C. channel had the lowest correlation with quality of lifestyle changes of women in Tehran .
3. The relationship between patterns of lifestyle changes applied on all three channels of Manoto, GEM and P.M.C. and the lifestyle change styles for women in Tehran is straight.i.e. the more the lifestyle changes pattern are applied, the more lifestyle changes for women in Tehran.

Given the foregoing discussion, the main hypothesis of this study is confirmed and it is concluded that Persian - language satellite channels seek for a change in lifestyle among Iranian women.

## References

- Amin, H.(2001) "Arab Women and Satellite Broadcasting" Transnational Broadcasting Studies (TBS)which is published by the Adham Center for Television Journalism, the American University in Cairo.
- Bukhari, B. (2002). *The effect of television programmes on youth*. Unpublished master's thesis, department of Mass Communication, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
- El Fawal, Nagwa, head of the Mass Communication Unit, the National Center for Criminological and Sociological Studies. Personal interview, Cairo, 2001
- Fahmy, A. (1997). "Uses and Gratifications of Egyptian Women for Satellite Television." *The Egyptian Journal of Mass Communication Research*, volume 1, number 2.
- Finnegan, J. R., Jr., and Viswanath, K. (1997). "Communication Theory and Health Behavior Change:The Media Studies Framework." In *Health Behavior and Health Education*, 2nd edition, eds. K. Glanz,F. M. Lewis, and B. K. Rimer. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Gentzkow, M. and Jesse , S. (2004) Media, Education and Anti-Americanism in the Muslim World, "Journal of Economic Perspectives, 18, pp.117-133.
- GhaysvandiA. and Mostafaei F. 2013.Investigation of satellite impact on the people's beliefs and attitudes (A case study:Saghez city). *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Science*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 2013: 127-143.
- Harbi, AbdallahMunir (1996). "Al-Athar al-Igtima'iyawa al-Dirasiyya li-Istikhdam al-Dish fi al-Manzal Kama YarahaTulaab al-Marhala al-Thanawiyya" (The Sociological and Educational Impact ofSatellite Dishes on High School Students.)MagallahKuliehAltarbieh bi-Damiatt.*Journal of Education*,number 26, Damiyetta, Egypt.
- Labib, Sa'ad, Member of the Board of Trustees, Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU).Personal interview, Cairo, 2001.
- Larijani, A. and Malekitabar, M. (2007).Investigation of strategic-security role of the satellite on the youth's beliefs. *Journal of Strategic Defensive Studies*, 8th year, No. 27, Tehran: National Defense University
- Malik, M. A. (2001). *Effects of TV advertisements on teenagers of two different classes*.Unpublished master's thesis, department of Mass Communication, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- Meyrowitz, J. 1986. *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behaviour*. NewYork: Oxford University Press
- Naseem, A. (2001). *Effect of satellite channels (Zee TV) on Lahore middle class*. Unpublished master's thesis, department of Mass Communication, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Olken, Ben, (2006). Do Television and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence from Indonesian Villages," NBER Working Paper, No. 12561.
- Razzaghi, E. (1995). Consumption pattern and cultural invasion. Tehran: Chapakhsh.
- Shamsher R. and Abdullah M. N. (2012).Effect of Satellite Television on the Culture of Bangladesh:The Viewers Perception, *European Journal of Business and Management*, Vol 4, No.9.
- Sharafi, M. (2002).Youth and identity citisism. 3rd Edition, Tehran: Soroosh.
- Tompson, Brookshire, J. (2000). The media and modernity. Translated by: IsariKasmaei, A., Tehran: Institution of Iran.
- Zahid, D. (2007) "Impact of Cultural Globalization on the Upper Class Youth in Dhaka City: A Sample Study *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. Volume 4 Number 2. pp. 1-11
- Zia, A. (2007) "Effects of Cable Television on Women in Pakistan: A Comparative Study of Heavy and Light Viewers in Lahore". Submitted to Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree if Doctor of Philosophy in mass Communication.