

Revolutionary Impact of 'Satmass' Media: An Analytical Study in Three Districts of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

By mid 90's India experienced incredible changes due to revolutionary impacts of **Satmass Media** (a word coined by the author to indicate the mass media that use satellite technology). The mushrooming of electronic and satellite communication and the rapid technological growth in communication process, witnessed during the recent years have changed the complete profile of media as never before. Though the Urban and Semi-Urban regions of India have witnessed an extensive use of revolutionary impacts of **Satellite TV & the Internet**, their impact among the rural areas has been very little due to various reasons. The objective of this paper is to deeply analyse the impact of two Mass Media revolutions – Satellite TV & the Internet at all geographical levels.

Keywords:

Revolution, Development, Impact, Satellite, Mass Communication, Mass Media & Geographic Levels

1. INTRODUCTION

With the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg on 16th Nov, 1455 at Mainz in Germany (Fran Rees, 2006), the process of revolution of communication has get ahead of the first mile stone. Advancing this revolution, the advent of Satellite Communications has changed the entire profile of communication in the contemporary world as never before. Satellite communications has begun with the first voice heard from space which was that of President Eisenhower, who recorded a brief Christmas message that was transmitted back to earth from the Project SCORE (Signal Communication by Orbiting Relay Equipment) satellite in December 1958 (Craig Allen, 1993). The concept of *Satellite TV* wasn't thought by Arthur C. Clarke, when he wrote an article, "Extra Terrestrial Relays: Can Rockets Give World-Wide Radio Coverage?" (Nick Heap *et.al*, 1995) But he ignited a ceaseless fire in the field of satellite communications with this article. This article was published in "Wireless World Magazine" in 1945 (Ibid, p.8).

Two media revolutions namely Satellite TV & the Internet have changed the communication from 'on paper' to 'on screen' and 'on line', respectively. At time when these two **Satmass Media** (Suman K. Kasturi, 2013), namely Satellite TV & the Internet, and the society as a whole are going through a rapid change, it becomes more important than ever to try to keep a track on the impact of these two media among various geographic levels (urban, semi – urban and rural). Both the service providers and the beneficiaries of these media have to play a vital role for their effective utilisation towards the development of societies. In order to study the impact of these two media revolutions, a study has been undertaken in the three randomly chosen districts of Andhra Pradesh – Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Hyderabad.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The advent of Satellite TV and the Internet have brought the world communities together paving a way for information sharing among the masses. The study is important:

- To analyse the level of impact of these two revolutions among the masses.
- To widen the awareness among the beneficiaries and enlarge the utilisation of these two media by the audience, especially by the rural folks.
- To assess the availability and reach of these two media at various geographic levels i.e. urban, semi – urban and rural.
- To evaluate and assess the services & quality of services provided vis-à-vis the cost of obtaining services at various geographic levels.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

All available conceptual and empirical literature has been reviewed for the acquaintance of the 'subject topic', for exhaustive analysis, and to achieve the objectives of the study.

4. HYPOTHESIS

It is assumed - though Satellite TV and the Internet have a great impact on the masses of urban and semi-urban origin, its impact among the rural masses is very less due to a great level of unawareness and more illiteracy rate of rural people, as compared to urban and semi-urban people.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The advent of Satellite TV and the Internet brought world communities together in the area of information sharing among the masses. These mass media have a great impact on the masses. The objectives of the present analytical study are appended below:

- To examine the impact of these two mass media in sharing information among the masses at all three geographic levels.
- To analyse the availability of services in different geographical levels with respect to Satellite TV and the Internet in the three randomly selected districts of Andhra Pradesh (the state with a large amount of audience for these two media as compared to most of the other states in India, which was revealed by the pilot study) namely Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Hyderabad.
- To workout the levels of satisfaction among the masses of different age/gender groups with respect to each of these mass media by identifying the gaps between current level of service being provided and level of service expected by the masses. Also, to get some insight into the role played by these two mass media among the folks.
- To assess both direct & indirect service costs borne by the masses, while analysing its impact on service seeking behaviour.
- To compare and contrast the audiences of both these media, while comparing the effectiveness of these two media in the developed, developing and the undeveloped countries.
- To emphasise how these two media have revolutionised the quality of work.
- To formulate suggestions, if any, for overcoming the disadvantages of these two media, after deeply analysing the existing facts.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. RESEARCH DESIGN The research has been conducted in two stages:

6.1.1. Stage 1: Exploratory Stage: It has been an endeavour to understand the revolutionary impacts of the two media (Satellite TV and the Internet) in sharing the information among the masses. This has been done through research, in-depth interviews and questionnaires with experts.

Secondary research on available literature has also been undertaken to enable benchmark for the impact of these media – both internationally and nationally. Exhaustive interviews with experts have been undertaken to formulate

the relevance of these two media in the contemporary societies of India.

6.1.2. Stage 2: Survey Stage: In this stage, the extent of service availability, the depth and quality of available services in the areas considered for the research purpose have been assessed. This stage has been conducted through a survey of facilities and collection of the information from the beneficiaries (the mass audience). Facilities survey covered government as well as private centres, while the beneficiary survey assessed the levels of availing the services, and key triggers & barriers for the service usage.

6.2. TARGET GROUPS

6.2.1. The Service Providers of Both Satellite TV and the Internet: The sample for the study includes service delivery points at primary, secondary and tertiary levels at each of the selected Primary Sampling Units (PSUs).

6.2.2. Beneficiaries: The audience of these two media have been interviewed in the selected PSUs.

6.3. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND THE SAMPLE SIZE:

The study has been conducted at three geographical levels – urban, semi – urban and rural in the randomly selected three districts of Andhra Pradesh. The sampling of PSUs has been done with the help of Census of India 2011. As there is no legal definitions of ‘semi – urban’ in the census, the differentiation between ‘urban’ and ‘semi – urban’ has been done with the help of PoPs data. The PoPs data has facilitated sampling in urban wards according to the population statistics and helped to cover areas with different levels of population. The analysis of data has also been done with the same stratification.

6.3.1. Sample Size for Studying These Two Media Facilities: For a holistic coverage across the selected areas, the study has been carried out in 3 PSUs at each geographic level. A total of 9 PSUs have been covered in the three districts of Andhra Pradesh covering all three geographic levels.

6.3.2. Sample Size for Beneficiaries: The beneficiaries are the end users or the so called audience of these media (with any of these two media). Per each PSU, 50 end users have been considered. A total of 450 beneficiaries have been covered in the three districts of Andhra Pradesh.

6.4. STAGES OF SURVEY

6.4.1. Preparatory Stage:

- Exploratory research consisting collection of data, review of available literature, and in-depth interviews with experts.

- Preparation and pre-testing the research tools and their translation into regional language (Telugu), after pre-testing.
- Sampling and selecting the PSUs through census (wards and villages selected with the size & population) within each geographic level (urban, semi-urban and rural).
- For Facilities: Census of all service providers in each PSU and
- For Beneficiaries: Sampling of beneficiaries in the PSUs.

6.4.2. Execution Stage:

Collection of data from:

- Facilities: Availability of services of these two media and their costs within the selected PSUs.
- Beneficiaries: The level of satisfaction from the media facilities provided and the assessment of both direct & indirect cost for these services.
- Data entry and analysis.
- Evaluation and assessment of services and their quality with respect to the cost incurred for these services.
- Detailed draft report on the basis of the above.
- Final report with both qualitative and quantitative findings together with all additional analysis required with suggestions for the same.

6.5. RESULTS The overall aims of the research are stated as objectives. Specifically the research has been intended to provide information on:

6.5.1. Information on the Impact of these Two Media among the Masses: Through data collection and literature review information has been collected in quality parameters, some of which are:

- Responsiveness of the audience to these two media.
- Access and availability of these two media among the masses at different geographic levels.
- Reliability of these two media among the masses.

6.5.2. Information from the Service Providers of these Two Media: Some of the information collected is:

- Awareness about these two media among the masses at all three geographic levels.
- Reason for non availability of certain services, if any.
- Monitoring of services offered.
- Infrastructural capacity of the facilities.
- Cost of Services :
 - Cost of services (all types)
 - Subsidised cost offered to the poor, if any.
 - Indirect & other hidden costs for these services, if any.

- Beneficiary Population: The Information areas are:
 - Awareness levels: Awareness about these two media services among the masses.
 - Satisfaction and expectation from the service being received.
 - Cost of service – direct & indirect.
- Cost of services provided – all types have been recorded.
- Details of any subsidised cost offered.
- Indirect and other costs such as service charges, fault rectification charges, etc.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation in this study is the lack of information about non-users of both these mass media. To expand the knowledge of the digital divide within the three geographical levels, it is very much required to know more about the “have-nots” i.e. the people that are not using Satellite TV and the Internet. Therefore, this study might be followed up by collecting data from a sample of non-users across all three geographic levels in the same social and economical contexts as the users, and even from areas with no facilities of Internet access or provision of Satellite TV services.

8. FINDINGS

This study and its embedded data analysis find that the two revolutions of mass media have a tremendous effect on the masses of all three geographic levels – urban, semi-urban and rural. The following are the results of this study:

(a) *Effectiveness of Media:* 58.5% respondents in this study felt that Satellite TV is the most effective medium while 41.5% respondents felt that the Internet is the most effectiveness medium among these two media.

(b) *Usage of the Media:* At an average, an individual who use both these media use the Internet for 9.6hrs in a month, while the same individual use the Satellite TV for 87.9hrs in a month. The ratio of usage of these media is placed at 1:9, approximately.

(c) *Impact of the Media:* The respondents felt that Satellite TV has 44.4% positive, 33.3% negative and 22.2% mixed impact, while the Internet has 66.7% positive, 22.2% negative and 11.1% mixed impact.

(d) *Satellite TV & the Internet Vs various parameters:* Table 1 gives the information regarding the overall rating given by the respondents i/r/o satellite TV & the Internet. The values mentioned in the bracket indicate the average rating of the respondents on a 5 point scale.

Table 1. Medium Vs Overall Rating of Various Parameters

Medium	Parameter	Overall Rating
Satellite TV	Content	Good (2.93)
	Information Quality	Good (3.33)
	Reliability	Good (2.86)
	Dependability	Good (3.33)
	Cost for service/maintenance	Average (2.2)
	Customer relationship with service provider	Good (2.93)
	Overall satisfaction	Good (3.33)
The Internet	Content	Good (2.93)
	Information Quality	Good (3.13)
	Reliability	Good (2.93)
	Dependability	Good (3.53)
	Cost for service/maintenance	Good (2.27)
	Customer relationship with service provider	Good (2.48)
	Overall satisfaction	Good (3.13)

(e) *Awareness Levels:* Table 2 gives the information in a nutshell regarding the levels of awareness for all age groups of respondents at various geographic levels among the three randomly chosen districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Table 2. Overall Levels of Awareness at Various Geographical Levels

Medium	Awareness Levels		
	Minimal	Moderate	High
Satellite TV	11% (Urban)	73.75% (Urban)	15.25% (Urban)
	17.5% (Semi-urban)	70.25% (Semi-urban)	12.25% (Semi-urban)
	29.75% (Rural)	64.75% (Rural)	5.5% (Rural)
The Internet	48.5% (Urban)	40.5% (Urban)	11% (Urban)
	58.5% (Semi-urban)	33.75% (Semi-urban)	7.75% (Semi-urban)
	78.25% (Rural)	7.5% (Rural)	3.25% (Rural)

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the purview of this study and with the analysis of the data collected, the following recommendations and suggestions are implored for their implementation to make these two mass media much effective in all three geographic levels of randomly selected three districts in Andhra Pradesh:

- The local government needs to consider offering subsidies to the underprivileged, in order to make the Internet and Satellite TV services available to all classes of masses irrespective of their levels of economy. In a similar way, a special subsidy may be prearranged both by the government and service providers to the rural masses, on whom the impact of these media is comparatively less and requires to be propped up.
- A nation develops when its villages (rural areas) or the so called pastoral areas are developed. Satellite TV is a powerful mass medium which could develop the rural masses. Keeping in view of the above, it should be an endeavour for all Satellite TV channel program producers, to pass development oriented messages to the masses through their programs.
- The policy recommendation here is to make the conditions favourable for entrepreneurs and organisations to set up public Internet access points and to give people in rural, and geographical distant regions the same necessary qualifications as in the case of urban and semi-urban areas to utilise the Internet for their own (of rural masses) human development, and thereby bridging the digital divide.
- Gender digital divided areas may be chalked out by the government. After sorting out such areas, promotional activities are to be implemented in order to bridge the gap created by the gender digital divide.
- By this study, it is revealed that the knowledge imparting channels are viewed less by the audience of all geographic levels. In this regard, enforcement of forced knowledge content is required onto the masses by their transmission through all Satellite TV channels at a fixed time, everyday. Such enforcement could prove worth in taking up the revolutionary effects of Satellite TV to the masses to certain extent.
- As far as the Internet is concerned, about 85% of users surf the Internet for porn content as revealed by this study. Likewise like many other countries have formulated a code of conduct for the use of Internet and imposed ban on many harmful/incredulous sites, the concerned authorities of India also require imparting such a regulation/ban.
- The Internet is a potent mass medium. Educational institutions spread around all three geographic levels may be offered free Internet services by the ISPs for the use of students of all genres. Especially in the rural areas wherein the cost of the Internet services are very high, free Internet services may be provided in all the educational institutions for the successful exploitation of the revolutionary effects of this media.
- Expansion of Internet access in poor areas may be facilitated by arrangements for public use such as Internet kiosks, Cyber Cafés, or multipurpose community tele-centres which are to be run exclusively by the government at cheaper rates of service.

- Due to an extensive barter economy, the rural people do not have cash to the same degree as in the urban regions. Of course this is a serious limitation for the spread of commercial Internet café business and proffering Satellite TV services to these areas. In view of this, the concerned authorities require to give more importance to promote these services in rural areas with the introduction of promotional packages.
- The Internet as a mass medium is limited only to the educated people with knowledge of computer operation. Unlike the Internet, Satellite TV has its advantages in spreading its revolutionary effects to all masses without any sort of discrimination. Keeping this point in view, the help of Satellite TV programs may be sought by the government in diffusing/addressing various issues of wide interest.
- Both service providers and the beneficiaries of Satellite TV and the Internet have to play a vital role for successful exploitation towards the progression of societies. A policy to this effect is required to be brought into force. The concerned regulatory authorities are required to act in regulating the content of these two media.
- A recent study from the University of Chicago has shown that simply turning on the television can greatly influence a woman's social standing in rural India. The study's focus did not include the effects found from access to the internet. Women's lives could be greatly improved by providing a portal into a world across the globe. So efforts should be made that the rural women are more exposed to Satellite TV programs with useful content.
- This study suggests that in order to achieve sustainability and success, the Internet and Satellite TV services must begin with the real needs of the local community of users. This fact should be borne in the minds of the service/content providers of these two media at all geographic levels. Many characters in the Satellite TV channels' popular soap operas have more education, marry later, and have smaller families—all things rarely found in rural areas; and many female characters work outside the home sometimes as professionals running businesses, or in other positions of authority. By exposing rural households to urban attitudes and values, Satellite Television may lead to improve the status of rural women. Such an advantageous fact may be utilised for development of rural women.
- Considering the immense capabilities of Entertainment-Education (E-E), programs should be designed for Satellite Television and World Wide Web. The content of these programs should be addressing various problems being faced by the masses. In India, considering all the audience from all

three geographic levels (urban, semi-urban and rural), and their education levels, such programmes should be designed. This would affect the social attitudes of the masses, immensely.

10. CONCLUSION

It is a matter of great concern in India that many eminent personalities from various fields have made the Internet and Satellite TV responsible for the burning problems of sexual abuse and drugs use by youth and other similar problems in India. Cultural Imperialism, the word coined by Herbert Schiller which is defined as (John Tomlinson, 1991)

“the sum of the process by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system”.

It is not possible to draw a generalized conclusion in respect of the Internet and Satellite TV in Indian context. Critics like Schiller who just sees one side of the impact of mass media to look into the possible positive effects of exposure to Western popular culture through the mass media like Satellite TV and the Internet. With their revolutionary effects, Satellite TV and the Internet have brought the western popular culture diffused into many developing countries like India.

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