

**PAKISTAN TELEVISION DRAMAS AND THE INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS
GOVERNMENTAL REGIMES (A STUDY OF 30 YEARS)**

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Abstract

This study explores the tradition of PTV Urdu drama serials (from 1973 to 2003), the impact of various political regimes and the manipulation of content in dramas. In this span of thirty years, there are total seven governmental regimes, and out of each regime, five dramas have been selected for research by using the technique of purposive sampling. The paper focuses that whether different governmental regimes exploited the issues and topics addressed by state-owned TV channel (PTV). However, the underlying question is to study the difference between coverage of different issues during political and military regimes. Besides this, the inclination of these regimes towards orthodoxy has also been studied. The research based on the methodology of content analysis reveals that the topics and themes of dramas were regularly being changed from government to government. It was also concluded that comparatively, during military regimes 'Islamization and patriotism were significantly more promoted than political regimes. Similarly, another significant difference was about women rights, which were more highlighted during political regimes.

Key words: Drama Serial, PTV Drama, Political regimes, Martial regimes, Orthodoxy,

1. INTRODUCTION:

From the foundation of Pakistan Television (PTV) in 1964 till new millennium, it was the only TV channel in Pakistan, which was serving the purposes of Mass Communication. Being the only source of entertainment, Urdu TV dramas were very widely viewed throughout the country. Pakistan Television (PTV) enjoyed its monopoly before the onset of PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority), which came into being in 2002 after the advent of different private TV channels (PEMRA n.d.). This channel was viewed across the country and is believed to be the main source for capturing people's minds and thoughts. The study is restricted to 1973-2003. Although PTV got recording facility in 1970 (Ahmad 1990, p. 45) but the first available recorded play was telecast in 1973 (Abbas, 2010, p. 8). Moreover, above-mentioned duration covers all the evolutionary stages of PTV drama i.e. in late 70s and 80s PTV dramas were on top in subcontinent.

It is based on strong observation that the popularity of Pakistani drama went so high by 1975 that roads and markets used to get deserted during drama hour. This situation was not only observed in Pakistan but PTV drama was watched with the same interest and liking in the neighboring countries where PTV's transmission could be watched. As Sabahat says in her newspaper article that "Pakistani dramas (Tanhaiyaan and Waris) are fabled to have left the streets of Lahore deserted". (Zakariya 2012).

PTV Dramas are also important in such a way that the channel is state owned and right from 1964, every government had been trying to implement its media policy during its regimes. The genre of drama is very popular among the citizens of the county, so it can be considered as a best tool of propaganda in Pakistan. The duration that is selected for the study is 1973-2003. It's the time where we can observe

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the role of various regimes. Following seven various governments came one after another during this time period.

S #	Regimes		From	To
1	Zulfikar Ali Bhutto	People's Party	14-08-1973	05-07-1977
2	Gen. Zia-ul-Haq	Martial Law	16-09-1978	17-08-1988
3	Benazir Bhutto	People's Party	02-12-1988	06-08-1990
4	Nawaz Sharif	Muslim League	06-11-1990	08-07-1993
5	Benazir Bhutto	People's Party	19-10-1993	05-11-1996
6	Nawaz Sharif	Muslim League	17-02-1997	12-10-1999
7	Gen. Pervez Musharraf	Martial Law	12-10-1999	18-08-2008

(National Assembly of Pakistan 2013)

From the beginning of PTV till 2003, many kinds of dramas were telecast including serials, series, long plays and assorted plays. Producers and playwrights tried to address almost every social and national issue of the country.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Much has been written on history and art of television drama. Especially in Europe and America considerable research work has been done on different aspects of television drama in which they have set many principles and directions to use television drama as an effective mean and to achieve better and positive aims through it.

Abbas conducted a study on the topic of "A critical and analytical study of PTV Urdu drama serials", and the period of this work was 1970 to 2000. In his study, he analyzed PTV drama serials, which were highly influenced by the governmental policies. He concluded that the intensity of influence had been changing from regime to regime, however, the number of affected drama serials was significantly higher. Hence, indicating the level of government impact on the production of television content (Abbas 2010, p. 458). Similarly, in this article, researchers have selected slightly different time period (1973-2003), and the focus of the study is to explore that how various governmental periods have been influencing the topics and themes covered by dramatists.

Al Helal (2013) studied that tele-drama has great influence and impact on the society. The producers can introduce changes in any society. He analyzed in his study that how Indian drama serials are promoting sex, extra marital affairs and also endorsing Hindu culture in the Muslim society of Bangladesh. Therefore, it is comprehensible from this research that television drama serials have strong impacts over the society. In the same way, the study at hand reveals that different government regimes were having different impressions on the content of drama serials and hence, producing different kind of effects in the society at large.

Barracrough in his article entitled "Pakistani Television Politics in 1990s: Responses to the satellite Television Invasion", says that Pakistani governments particularly Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto regimes have been using television channel as a tool for their promotion and publicity. Besides this, he

also talks about the portrayal of women issues during Benazir regime and conservative issues addressed during Nawaz Sharif regime. Therefore, this research is pertinent to the study at hand in a way that it deals with the issues, which were focused in different governmental periods.

There is not any substantial research work on Pakistan Television drama serials. However, there are some dissertations, in which authors have generally focused upon different TV programs, their contents and impacts, but not PTV dramas specifically. However, Nasreen Pervaiz wrote a published thesis in 1999 on the topic of “Pakistan Television Drama and Social Changes”. She very first time reviewed PTV dramas and focused on the process of change in individuals and the society. This dissertation presents the insight of Pakistan Television Drama along with its impacts and analysis. Moreover, her work has laid a new foundation of research with reference to PTV drama and social changes. In her conclusion, she writes that television in Pakistan has increased the ratio of social communication, and PTV drama has accelerated this process by giving it new vision and ideas. In her research work, she has explored the kind of topics covered by Pakistani playwrights and the impact of these drama serials on the perception of people. But in the present study authors have tried to figure out the impact of different governments on the drama serials of PTV (Pervaiz 1999, p. 152).

“Issues related to women in PTV dramas were negotiated during Zia-ul-Haq regime and its immediate aftermath especially in 1980s and 1990s”, Kothari says this in 2006 in an article titled “From genre to Zanaana: Urdu Television drama serials and women’s culture in Pakistan”. The author further says that this women portrayal was also one of the key elements of Zia’s Islamisation project. In 1980s and 90s, majority of Urdu plays were written and produced by female writers, hence primarily dealing with women related issues and their lives. Kothari’s work basically deals only with the women related issues during Zia-ul-Haq regime and his immediate aftermath, whereas in the present study, apart from female issues, various other issues in different governmental regimes have been studied.

Munir Ahmad reviewed twenty-five years of Pakistan Television from 1964 to 1989. He speckled light on the history of PTV through interviews of renowned artists, dramatists, and producers. Besides providing information about the TV people, his book covers the background and evolutionary stages of PTV as well (Ahmad 1990, p. 17).

Mueen-ur-Rehman wrote a book on the topic of “A critical analysis of Urdu Drama”. The book is in Urdu language. In the book, he discussed overall evolution, style and art of Urdu classical drama. He also described different genres of stage and TV plays and their components (Rehman 1996, p. 8).

Hence, the literature reviewed so far suggests that ample work has been done on PTV drama serials with different dimensions. But studying the impact of different governmental regimes is comparatively a new and significant area. This research is important for understanding and interpreting the influence of government sector on the content produced by Pakistani media, particularly drama serials.

3. METHODOLOGY:

The methodology employed for the present study is content analysis.

3.1 Research Questions:

RQ1: Is there any difference between the topics and themes focused during Military and Political regimes?

RQ2: Which governmental regime was more inclined towards orthodoxy?

3.2 Hypothesis:

The content and topics covered in PTV dramas during military regimes were more 'orthodox' than Political regimes.

3.3 Research Design:

The most relevant and effective methodology of communicative research on this topic is content analysis.

3.4 Universe of the study:

The study includes content analysis of Urdu drama serials telecast by PTV during the years of 1973 to 2003. The dramas that were telecast during primetime (from 7:00 pm to 9:00pm) were selected for study because this is the maximum viewership time and have a greater influence on public.

3.5 Sample:

The selection of dramas is based on purposive sampling technique. There are seven regimes in this study. The researchers chose five dramas from each period. In this way following thirty-five dramas have been selected for the study.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <u>Khuda Ki Basti</u> , | 19. <u>Mandi</u> , |
| 2. <u>Jhok Sival</u> , | 20. <u>Aahat</u> |
| 3. <u>Kiran Kahani</u> , | 21. <u>Marvi</u> , |
| 4. <u>Shehar Daam</u> , | 22. <u>Gul-e-Lala</u> , |
| 5. <u>Ankal Urfi</u> | 23. <u>Zard Dopehar</u> , |
| 6. <u>Waris</u> , | 24. <u>Mujihe Sans Lene Do</u> , |
| 7. <u>Aakhri Chatan</u> , | 25. <u>Hawaeen</u> |
| 8. <u>Shaheen</u> , | 26. <u>Jinnah Se Quaid-e-Azam</u> , |
| 9. <u>Sunehre Din</u> , | 27. <u>Ghulam Gardish</u> , |
| 10. <u>Mirat-ul-Uroos</u> , | 28. <u>Zangirain</u> , |
| 11. <u>Nile Hath</u> , | 29. <u>Rahain</u> , |
| 12. <u>Tapish</u> , | 30. <u>Musafatain</u> |
| 13. <u>Suraj Ke Sath Sath</u> , | 31. <u>Tipu Sultan</u> , |
| 14. <u>Havva Ki Beti</u> , | 32. <u>Zeb-un-Nisa</u> , |
| 15. <u>Jangloos</u> | 33. <u>Us Paar</u> , |
| 16. <u>Pat Jhar'</u> , | 34. <u>Kajal Ghar</u> , |
| 17. <u>Wisaal</u> , | 35. <u>Bahar Aane Tak</u> |
| 18. <u>Ba Adab Ba Mulahiza Hoshiaar</u> , | |

3.6 Unit of Analysis:

The unit of analysis for this study is each episode of a drama serial that contained Dialogue(s) Character(s) and Situation(s) related to the following themes. If any episode did not have any required material, the episode was not analyzed. The themes are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Commoner's Right | 6. Modernism |
| 2. Democracy | 7. Patriotism |
| 3. Education | 8. Political Leaders |
| 4. Feudalism | 9. Students' politics |
| 5. <u>Islamization</u> | 10. Women Rights |

Based on above-mentioned themes a coding sheet was prepared. After getting access to dramas besides the researcher, two coders watched the selected plays and gave their views on the topics addressed in the drama serials. And researchers concluded the outcomes in the light of the majority of opinions. The definitions of abovementioned themes are as follows:

3.7 Operationalization of Key Terms:

Operational definitions of the key terms used in the study are as follows:

3.7.1 Commoner's Right:

It includes the rights of common and ordinary people of Pakistan, for example, rights related to the basic necessities of life i.e. food, shelter, health, honor, education etc.

3.7.2 Democracy:

It is about the promotion of democratic activities, and awareness about the democratic rights of the public.

3.7.3 Education:

It deals with the educational issues addressed by playwrights and drama producers during different regimes.

3.7.4 Feudalism:

It has been taken as a system in which landlords (called 'zamindar' in Punjab and 'wadera' in Sindh province) want to maintain their supremacy.

3.7.5 Islamization:

In this study, the category includes presentation of Islamic culture and history. It includes characters performing or talking about the obligations of Islam and its values. e.g. scenes showing saying prayers, reading Quran, having *Tasbih* (rosary) in hand, sound of *Aazan*, (call for prayer) Pictorial display of Islamic culture etc. During one of the martial law regimes, the administration raised the slogan of 'Islamization' to capture people's popularity. During this time, various things were depicted under the umbrella of religion.

3.7.6 Patriotism:

It is about the content revealing affiliation with the country, for example, displaying Pakistani Flag, playing national anthem or any national song. It also includes dialogues that reflect, love for the country.

3.7.7 Political Leaders:

This is about the portrayal of members of parliament, ministers and military rulers of Pakistan

3.7.8 Modernism:

It deals with the imitation and admiration of western life style e.g. wearing western dresses, using English in daily conversation, listening English music.

3.7.9 Students' politics:

In this, we'll see the influence of political parties over college and university students, and the involvement of students in the activities of political parties.

3.7.10 Women Rights:

It deals with the issues of women emancipation, education and empowerment.

4. FINDINGS:

Table 4.1: Coverage of 'Commoner's rights' during political & military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	126	38.8	38.8	38.8
		Favor	199	61.2	61.2	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	77	59.2	59.2	59.2
		Favor	53	40.8	40.8	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

This table reveals that during political regime almost 61% dramas gave importance to CR issues, whereas conversely during military regimes, this ratio goes to only 41%.

It is clear from table 4.2 that during political regimes in 38.5% dramas the democratic values were promoted whereas it happened only in 7% dramas in military regimes. In the same way, almost 92% dramas during martial law did not even touch this issue.

Table 4.2: Comparison of the promotion of democratic values during political and martial regimes.

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	185	56.9	56.9	56.9
		Against	15	4.6	4.6	61.5
		Favor	125	38.5	38.5	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial Law	Valid	No Existence	120	92.3	92.3	92.3
		Favor	10	7.7	7.7	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3: Coverage of educational Issues during Political and Military Regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	139	42.8	42.8	42.8
		Against	14	4.3	4.3	47.1
		Favor	172	52.9	52.9	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial Law	Valid	No Existence	58	44.6	44.6	44.6
		Against	6	4.6	4.6	49.2
		Favor	66	50.8	50.8	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The table 4.3 reveals that slightly more importance was given to educational issues in political regimes, which is almost 53% as compared to 50.8% during military regimes.

The table 4.4 illustrates that the feudalism issue was highlighted and condemned during political regimes, as the percentage is 39, which is 23.8% during military regimes.

It is clear from table 4.5 that as compared to political regimes, the 'Islmaization' issues were highly focused and presented during military regimes. The ratio in military regimes is 67%, which is significantly higher than 45% in political regimes.

Table 4.4: Coverage comparison of ‘Feudalism’ during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	197	60.6	60.6	60.6
		Against	1	.3	.3	60.9
		Favor	127	39.1	39.1	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial Law	Valid	No Existence	99	76.2	76.2	76.2
		Favor	31	23.8	23.8	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5: Comparison of ‘Islamization’ issues during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	179	55.1	55.1	55.1
		Favor	146	44.9	44.9	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	43	33.1	33.1	33.1
		Favor	87	66.9	66.9	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6: Comparison of portrayal of ‘Modernism’ during political and military Regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	170	52.3	52.3	52.3
		Against	1	.3	.3	52.6
		Favor	154	47.4	47.4	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	97	74.6	74.6	74.6
		Favor	33	25.4	25.4	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 displays that the political regimes showed more modernism that is 47.4% as compared to military regimes, which is 25.4%.

Table 4.7: Coverage comparison of ‘Patriotism’ during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	205	63.1	63.1	63.1
		Against	2	.6	.6	63.7
		Favor	118	36.3	36.3	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	48	36.9	36.9	36.9
		Favor	82	63.1	63.1	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.7, it is mentioned that as compared to political regimes, majority of dramas telecast during military regimes displayed ‘Patriotism’ in their dialogues, storyline and situations, while the percentages of portraying ‘patriotism’ in political and military regimes are almost 36% and 63% respectively.

Table 4.8: Discussion on ‘Political leaders’ during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	195	60.0	60.0	60.0
		Against	38	11.7	11.7	71.7
		Favor	92	28.3	28.3	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	96	73.8	73.8	73.8
		Against	18	13.8	13.8	87.7
		Favor	16	12.3	12.3	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The table 4.8 explains that the ratio of discussion on ‘political leaders’ in dramas of political regimes is higher as compared to military era. According to the table 28.3% material was in favor of ‘political leaders’ during political regimes, while in military regimes the percentage was decreased by 12.3%.

Table 4.9: Coverage comparison of ‘Students’ Politics’ during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	273	84.0	84.0	84.0
		Against	6	1.8	1.8	85.8
		Favor	46	14.2	14.2	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	121	93.1	93.1	93.1
		Against	3	2.3	2.3	95.4
		Favor	6	4.6	4.6	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table No. 4.9 illustrates that the coverage of students’ politics in military regimes is many times less than political regimes. As shown in the table that political regimes contain 14.2% while military regimes have only 4.6% coverage.

Table 4.10: Coverage comparison of ‘Women Rights’ during political and military regimes

Regime			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	Valid	No Existence	118	36.3	36.3	36.3
		Favor	207	63.7	63.7	100.0
		Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Martial	Valid	No Existence	83	63.8	63.8	63.8
		Favor	47	36.2	36.2	100.0
		Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The difference of coverage between two kinds of regimes is very high in the above-mentioned Table. 63.7% dramas voiced women-rights issues in political regimes. But on the other hand, in military regimes only 36.2% dramas highlighted the same issues.

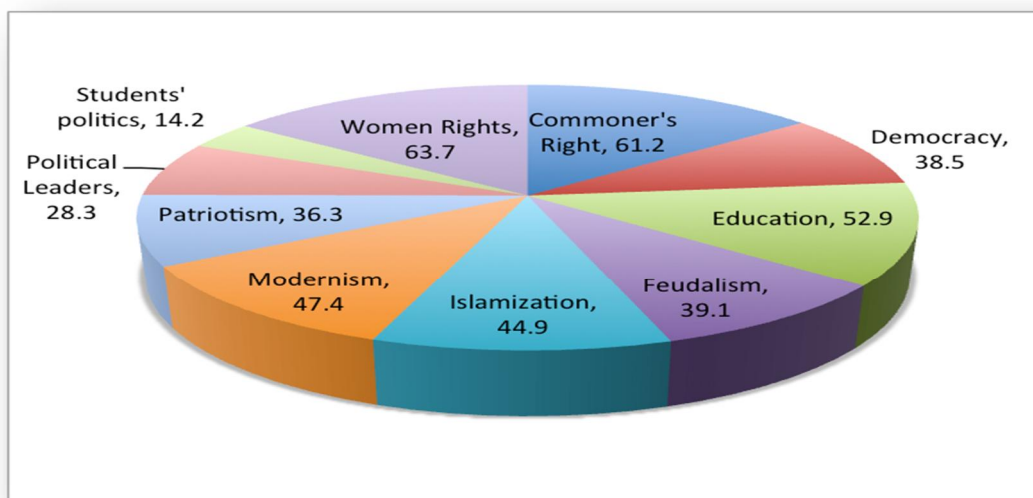


Figure 1: Overall analysis of Political Regimes

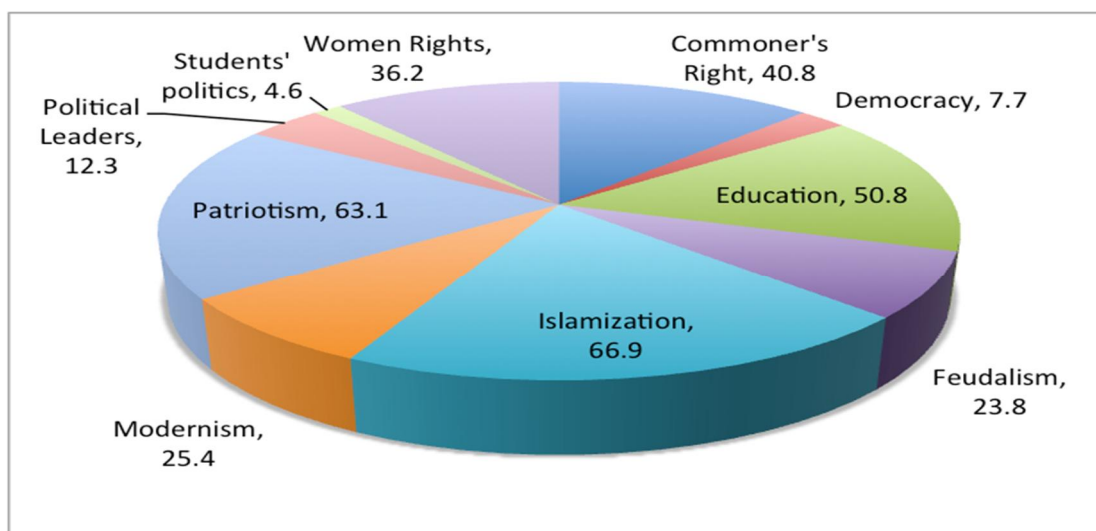


Figure 2: Overall analysis of Military Regimes

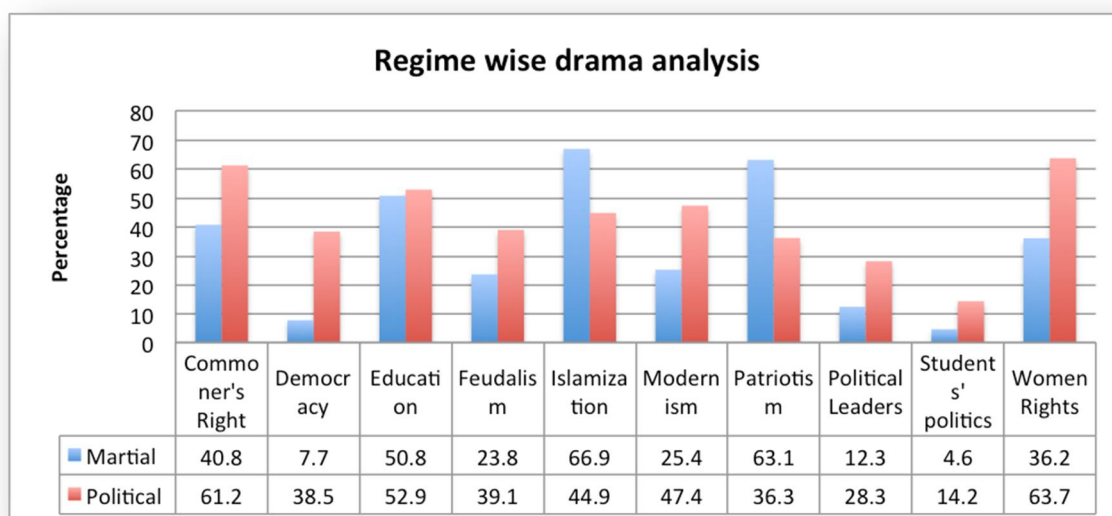


Figure 3: Regime wise drama analysis

Table 4.11: 'Islamization / Modernism Regime Cross tabulation

Count						
Regimes			Modernism			Total
			No Existence	Against	Favor	
Political	Islamization	No Existence	92	1	86	179
		Favor	78	0	68	146
	Total		170	1	154	325
Martial	Islamization	No Existence	54		32	86
		Favor	140		34	174
	Total		194		66	260
Total	Islamization	No Existence	146	1	118	265
		Favor	218	0	102	320
	Total		364	1	220	585

Table 4.12: Chi-Square Tests

Regimes	Values	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Political	Pearson Chi-Square	.916 ^b	2	.633	
	Likelihood Ratio	1.293	2	.524	
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.099	1	.754	
	N of Valid Cases	325			
	Pearson Chi-Square	9.486 ^c	1	.002	
Martial	Continuity Correction ^d	8.577	1	.003	
	Likelihood Ratio	9.162	1	.002	
	Fisher's Exact Test			.004	.002
	Linear-by-Linear Association	9.450	1	.002	
	N of Valid Cases	260			
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	11.335 ^a	2	.003	
	Likelihood Ratio	11.708	2	.003	
	Linear-by-Linear Association	10.180	1	.001	
	N of Valid Cases	585			

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

b. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

c. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.83.

d. Computed only for a 2x2 table

According to the table, the Pearson chi-square of the political regimes for comparing the Islamization with Modernism is 0.916, which shows that there is no significant difference in Political Regimes as the P-value for this statistic is 0.633 that is quite higher as compare to our level of significance i.e. 0.05.

In martial regimes there is a significant difference between Islamization and Modernism. As shown by the Pearson chi-square value 9.486. The P-value for this statistic is 0.002, which supports us to declare that in Martial regimes Islamization and Modernism are two different dimensions .

5. CONCLUSION:

This research work done in the perspective of portrayal of different issues during different governmental regimes in PTV dramas draws the concerns of various important issues like Modernism, Islamization, Women rights, Democracy, and Patriotism. It is revealed from the findings that there were noteworthy differences in the coverage of all the above-mentioned issues from regime to regime. For instance, it was seen in the period of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq that the television content was highly influenced from the religious approach. It has also been explored in the findings of the present study that the period of military governments were strongly upholding 'Islamization' concept through PTV dramas. However, Gen. Zia's period was remarkable in this context because of being the longest and highly influential regime.

In the same way, we can find a notable difference in the promotion of modernism and democracy between political and military governments. The dramas telecast during political regimes were more supportive for these issues. Same is the case with the topic of commoners' rights. It was revealed from the research that the dramas of political periods focused on topics like unemployment, price hiking, health related problems, bonded and child labor to underline commoner's rights.

The hypothesis of the study has been proved through the statistical test, which shows that during military periods, significant ratio of importance was given to Islamization whereas modernism was downplayed. This case is same with the issue of democratic and commoner's rights, which were also particularly neglected during the governments of military rulers. Hence it has been proved from this study that the contents and the topics covered in PTV dramas during military regimes were more orthodox than political governments.

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