
Effects of Indian Cartoons on Pakistani Children

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Abstract

This study is conducted to assess the impact of Indian Cartoons on Pakistani children. For this purpose, the survey was conducted among the common citizens of Pakistan. In total 50 participants took part in the survey. It has been established that the major impacts of Indian Cartoons include children adopting foreign cultural traits, adopting Hindi language and diverting away from Religion to some extent. These impacts can become harmful in future if the foreign traits adopted by children get cemented. These children are the future of Pakistan. If they do not stick to their original cultural identity, then in few years the distinct identity of Pakistan will be lost. Even when the cartoons are banned from Pakistani channels, still they are present on social media platforms like Youtube. Parents must ensure that their children do not watch Indian cartoons. Only then we will be able to save our culture.

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Introduction

The nature vs nurture debate has been going on since time immemorial. One side claimed that human abilities and personalities are inherited. The other side claimed that these traits are developed and shaped by the environment an individual is placed in. In the last century, with the advances in science, it has been conclusively proven that both nature and nurture play important roles in the development of humans. Human psychology is complex, and a variety of factors are involved in shaping each trait. With that said, childhood environment plays the biggest role in shaping the personality and beliefs of people. The minds of newborn infants are often likened to clean slates upon which their environment imprints the experiences that will play an important role in shaping their personalities over the rest of their lives. While this is an oversimplification, as prenatal conditions also affect the human psyche, the point still holds. Childhood environment plays an extremely important role in shaping the beliefs and personality traits of people (Sultana, 2014).

One important factor that affects the psyche of children is the entertainment they are provided from a young age. Before the rise of modern media, children were generally told stories from a very young age. Each story came with a moral that the parents wanted their children to learn. It was through those stories that parents imparted religious and cultural beliefs to their children. Now, when media and electronic devices have become common in most parts of the world, cartoons are the most popular form of entertainment for children (Raees & Karamat, 2016). Since cartoons have an important effect on the highly impressionable minds of children, they are strictly regulated for their content. Censor boards make sure that children's cartoons are free of violence, explicit language and other kinds of graphic content. This is because children take a lot of lessons from the cartoons they watch and often repeat the words and phrases, as well as even actions, they have heard and seen in cartoons (Ghilzai & Ahmad, 2017).

One important thing to note here is that like other forms of entertainment, cartoons too differ in content and themes across nations and cultures. The popular art and media of each nation reflects the cultural values of that nation. This can become a problem when people from a nation consume popular entertainment produced in another nation. Such a scenario can be positive because it leads to the sharing and exchange of values and traditions. But it can also be negative as people can forget and leave behind their own norms and values. Academics even use a specific phrase, cultural imperialism, to describe the phenomenon of powerful nations exporting their values and norms to weaker nations through popular media and arts. Children, especially, are vulnerable to such propaganda as they are unable to distinguish between their own culture and the cultures of other nations. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the nation and its government to safeguard its culture and values by regulating the content consumed by their children (Aziz & Kazim, 2017).

In the last two decades, Pakistan experienced a rising popularity of Indian content on its TV. This content was largely in the form of Indian movies and drama serials. However, there were also a number of children's cartoons produced in India that were very popular among Pakistani children. This raised a lot of concerns among Pakistanis as the Indian content portrayed and glorified Indian culture, norms and values. Indian content has now been banned from Pakistani TV channels; however, it still remains on online platforms like YouTube where it is consumed by a significant number of Pakistani audience. Parents continue to show their children Indian cartoons on YouTube (Zia, Naz, & Munir, 2017).

In this paper, we will analyze the impact that Indian cartoons have had and continue to have on Pakistani children by exploring and discussing the different angles of cultural imperialism and the effects visual media has on impressionable children. We will be utilizing the primary as well as the secondary means of research. For primary research, we have developed a questionnaire which is attached here as Exhibit A. Secondary research methods include articles from other journals and newspapers. Our aim is to determine the impact of Indian content on Pakistani children.

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Background

Cultural appropriation has always remained a tool for those culture who try to establish their cultural hegemony by exporting their cultural components to other cultures. Unfortunately, Pakistani culture was also under attack by Indian and Western Imperialist agendas. Indian content was especially having a strong impact on Pakistani population. Children being the easy target, were conveniently falling prey to the foreign culture. Those problems are needed to be determined and analyzed completely, so, in future, we will be able to protect our culture and more importantly our children who will become the custodian of our culture in future.

Problem Statement

The rising trend among children to watch Indian cartoons then following those cultural norms unconsciously, mimicking those religious practices and speaking Hindi language was needed to be addressed. In order to have an analytical look at that rising trend and determining the problems with it, "The effects of Indian cartoons on Pakistani children" will be determined in this study.

Significance of the Study

This study will help us understand the impacts of Indian Cartoons on Pakistani Children. Children are the most vulnerable part of our population. So, it is important that we must assess and identify and threat that is diverting them away from their culture, hence threatening the cultural fabric of Pakistan. This study will help us analyze the way in which the foreign cultural threat can be mitigated. This study is particularly important because it will add a great deal of content to the Mass Communication Academia which is dealing with these prospects.

Research Questions

In this research, following research questions will be analyzed:

- How Indian cartoon are affecting the children in Pakistan?
- How Indian content is impacting the cultural fabric of Pakistan?
- What are the ways to stop the impact of Indian content in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

This research study will be based upon both the primary and secondary means of research. The research questionnaire will be distributed among randomly selected participants. In total 50 questionnaires will be filled. Those participants will be belonging to the different parts of Pakistan and they will be having different social backgrounds. As for secondary means of research, the literature review will be conducted using the research articles, journal articles and books. The data will be collected from both the means then it will be analyzed in the discussion and analysis section.

Literature Review

General Impact Cartoon on Children

Up until the first decade of this century, and even in the early years of the second decade, the primary leisure activity of children used to be physical play. From a very young age, they would play with other children from the neighbourhood. This activity would teach them about social skills and coexistence, and imprint in them a sense of community. Through their childish experiments, they would learn new things about their environments. Their plays would play a crucial role in developing their mental and physical health. This would often be the first lesson in shared cultural norms that they would learn. However, as the world has transformed into a digital one and electronic devices have become more popular, this has led to atomization of individuals. A shared sense of community is fast disappearing from our society. This is also apparent among children as increasingly, instead of going outside to play, more and more stay inside their homes to watch TV or play video games. Often without any kind of parental supervision(Sultana, 2014).

As mentioned above, childhood environment plays a crucial role in developing the personalities and beliefs of people. Children learn everything, from language to behaviour, from observing their surroundings. Until a few years ago, a large part of that was playing outside with neighbourhood friends. Now that has been replaced by visual media. What children see in cartoons, they try to copy in real life. The fantasies they cook up in their minds are inspired by their favourite cartoons. The beliefs they develop are inspired by their favourite characters and the morals they portray. When the content children are consuming comes from other cultures and nations, the beliefs and values these children would develop and imbibe would be the dominant beliefs and values of other cultures. Currently, the most popular children's cartoons are produced in India, Japan and the USA. Especially India, as the content is in Hindi which can be understood by the majority of Pakistanis. This increased understanding puts children at an increased risk of copying Indian values and norms(Ghilzai & Ahmad, 2017).

Indian Cartoons

Indian cartoons come in two forms: cartoons that are produced in India, and cartoons that are produced in other countries but are dubbed in Hindi for the Indian audience. Since Hindi is understood by most Pakistanis, Hindi-dubbed cartoons are also more popular among Pakistanis than non-Hindi cartoons. Both types of cartoons influence Pakistani children with Indian culture. The ones produced

in India obviously include the values and norms of Indian culture. As for Hindi-dubbed foreign cartoons, they teach Hindi phrases and words to Pakistani children. Hindi isn't just a language. It's a reflection of Hindu culture(Ahsan, Bashir, Bajwa, & Sehar, 2015).

ChotaBheem and Doremon are two cartoons that are really popular among Pakistani children. ChotaBheem is Indian-produced and is set in rural India of the past. The characters and their beliefs and actions reflect Hindu values and norms. Doreamon, on the other hand, is a Japanese cartoon. However, many Pakistanis watch it in Hindi dub. Other famous cartoons include Ben 10 and Oggy And the Cockroaches. Both cartoons are not only usually consumed in Hindi dub, they also depict acts of violence that children should be shielded from(Hassan & Daniyal, 2013).

Impacts of Indian Cartoons

As mentioned above, Indian cartoons reflect the dominant norms and traditions of Indian values. These cartoons imprint upon the impressionable minds of children. Below, we examine this impact in a detailed way.

Language

Indian cartoons come in Hindi language. This language is similar to Urdu, which is understood and spoken by most Pakistanis. However, there are some key differences between Urdu and Hindi. Within the context of Pakistan-India relations and the cultural conflict that has existed for centuries between the two countries, distinguishing between the two languages is important. Pakistani children should be encouraged to learn Urdu rather than Hindi. In schools they are already being taught English. The visual media they consume, at least, should be in Urdu. What we see, however, is Urdu being replaced by Hindi in that regard(Naz, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2018).

In today's world, with increasing cultural conflict and tensions, it is important to retain pride in national culture and language. Attempts of cultural imperialism by other countries should be resisted. Instead, our children should be taught the values of our culture. India is our political rival, and it has always tried to undermine the legitimacy of Pakistani nationhood by denying the concept that the two are separate nations. The Urdu-Hindi controversy has been going on since the 19th century. In this context, it becomes extremely important to preserve our local and national language. Our separate and independent status must be preserved and defended(Ghilzai & Ahmad, 2017).

A survey conducted by Aziz and Kazim (2007) in 6 schools showed that children's vernacular were made up largely of Hindi words and phrases, while English and Urdu phrases were used on an equal ratio. This is a very concerning situation as it suggests that our national language is dying out among our own children.

Culture and Religion

Popular art always reflects the dominant beliefs and traditions of the culture it is produced in. Indian cartoons are no different. They don't teach Hindi language, they also glorify Indian traditions and norms. When Pakistani children watch Indian cartoons, they pick up bits and pieces of Indian culture which are then imprinted onto their subconscious mind(Ahsan, Bashir, Bajwa, & Sehar, 2015).

Pakistani researchers Ahsan, Bajwa, Bashir and Sehar(2015) established the impact of Indian cartoons on Pakistani children. From data collected from children who watch Indian cartoons, they concluded that children are picking up bits and pieces of Indian culture. Through those cartoons, the children learned about Indian festivals like Holi, Diwali etc. They also learned about traditions like Raksha Bandhan. On the other hand, these children are less knowledgeable about their own traditions and norms. This is clearly in line with the Social Cognitive Theory, which holds that individuals gain their knowledge by observing their surroundings. So our children are learning Indian culture and values through the media they consume.

However, Indian cartoons aren't just impacting the language and culture of Pakistani children. They are also impacting their religious beliefs. Indian cartoons generally portray Hindu beliefs and practices. There are many Indian cartoons about Hindu gods and mythical figures, like Krishna and Hanuman(Anis, Ashfaq, & Mujtaba, 2012).

A 2017 study conducted by Pakistani researchers Zia, Naz and Munir concluded that Pakistani children who watch Indian cartoons are generally more knowledgeable about Hinduism as compared to Islam.

Violence

Studies have conclusively proven that violence in cartoons gives rise to violent behaviour among children. This is relevant here because Indian cartoons often portray violence. Cartoons like ChotaBheem portray the protagonist engaging in violent fights. Other Indian cartoons portray mythical wars between gods and spirits. All this would impact the psyche of children(Rawan, Dar, & Siraj, 2018).

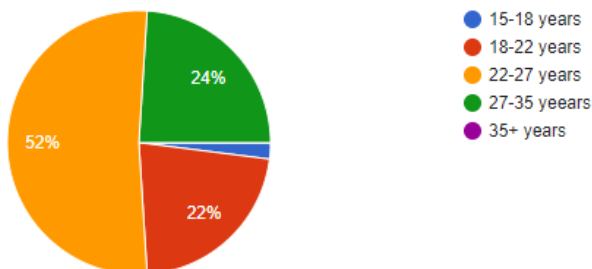
Theoretical Framework

All the above-mentioned factors prove that cross-culture war by Indian cartoons is really harming Pakistani culture and children. Children are developing foreign cultural norms as per social cognitive theory. It is the responsibility of Parents to monitor their children, so they do not indulge themselves in such inappropriate content. It is also the responsibility of state to regulate the content on digital media. When any culture is threatened by foreign culture then it becomes the primary of responsibility of state and the custodians of that culture to protect it. This responsibility of parents and state both comes under the ambit of social and cultural responsibility. Where state is the primary stakeholder while individuals are secondary stakeholders as they constitute the culture and religion.

Results

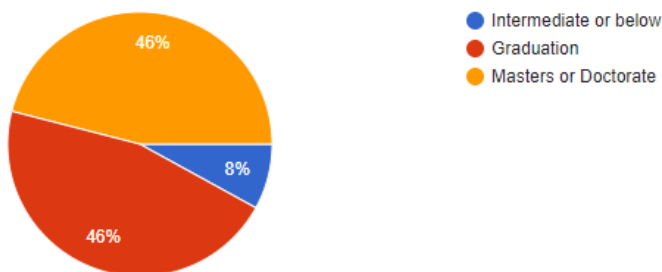
In the survey, a total of 50 participants were selected randomly and they were provided with the designed questionnaire. Those people were totally selected randomly, and they belonged to different age groups, financial and educational backgrounds. The results obtained are presented here.

Age Group



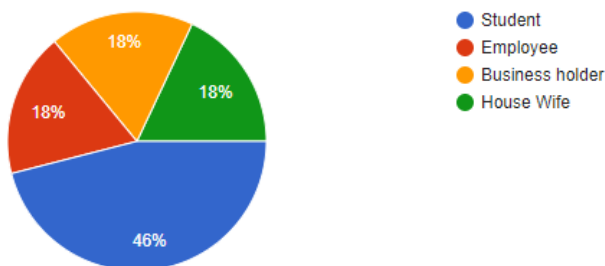
In our sample population, the majority belonged to the age bracket of 22-27. 26 out of 50 respondents belonged to this age group. 11 belonged to 18-22 years bracket, 12 respondents were from 28-35 while only one respondent was belonging to 15-18 years bracket. So, respondent for this survey belonged to a range of 18-35 years. We may conclude that all our respondents were in their youth years and there is a higher probability that they were aware of their surroundings through education.

Education



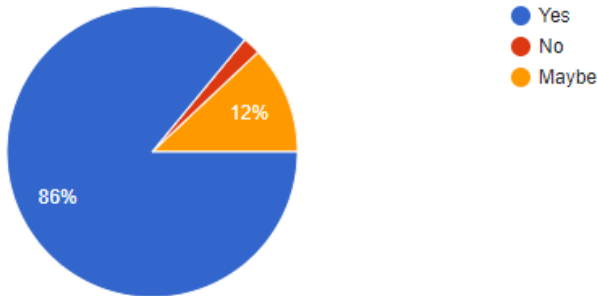
Education was another important metric to understand the level of knowledge and awareness of respondents. In our survey, 23 people had the education of masters or doctorate level, 23 were doing graduation while only 4 respondents had the education level of intermediate or below. So, it can be concluded that all of our respondents belonged to the literate strata of population.

Occupation



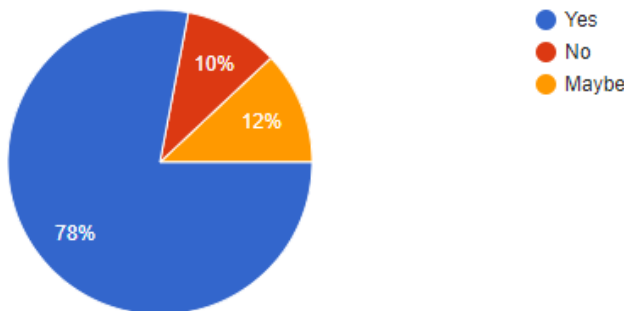
In the field of occupation, 23 respondents were students, while other 27 were equally divided into the occupations of business holder, employee and housewife. These states indicate that the almost all the respondents in our survey were doing jobs which demand some kind of awareness and they all must be familiar with the issue in hand.

Do you Agree with the Notion that Indian Cartoon are Affecting the Pakistani Children?



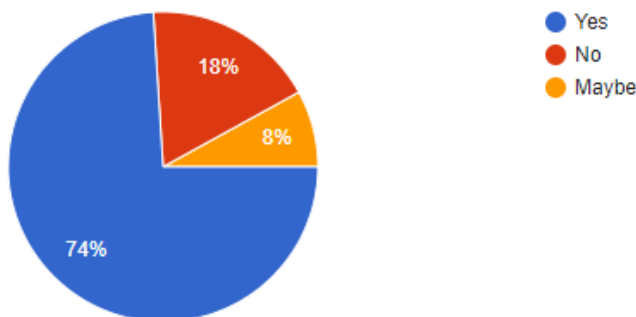
So, when asked about whether or not Indian cartoons are effecting, he children in Pakistan, overwhelming majority of i.e 43 (86%) respondents believed that IndianCartoons are indeed effecting the children in Pakistan. Only 1 respondentbelieved that there is not harm for Pakistani children to watch Indian cartoon while 6 respondents were not sure about the answer.

Do you Agree that Cross Cultural Elements are Harmful for Submissive Culture?



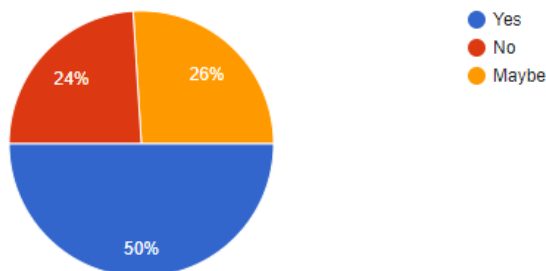
In response to this question, where cross cultural elements were meant the norms of big cultures whereas submissive cultures taken as small cultures like Pakistan. Here, majority of respondents that is 39 (78%) believed that yes, cross cultural elements are indeed harmful for submissive cultures, while 6 respondents were not sure about it and 5 respondents believed that small cultures are not threatened by elements from other cultures.

Do you Think that Indian Content is Harmful for General Public in Pakistan?



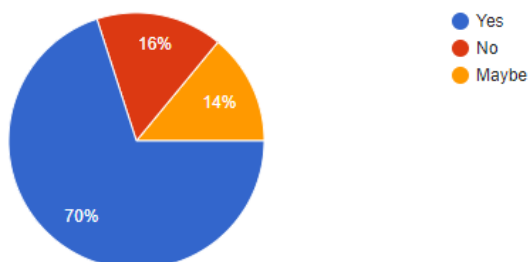
When asked about that whether or not Indian content is harmful for general public where there is no age limit, again the majority of participants which is 74%; 37 respondents in total believed that Indian content is indeed harmful for Pakistani public. While 9 respondents were of opinion that Indian content does not impact general public in Pakistan. 4 participants were not sure about the answer.

Do you think there is any political Notion behind Stating the Concept of Effects of Indian Cartoons on Pakistani Children?



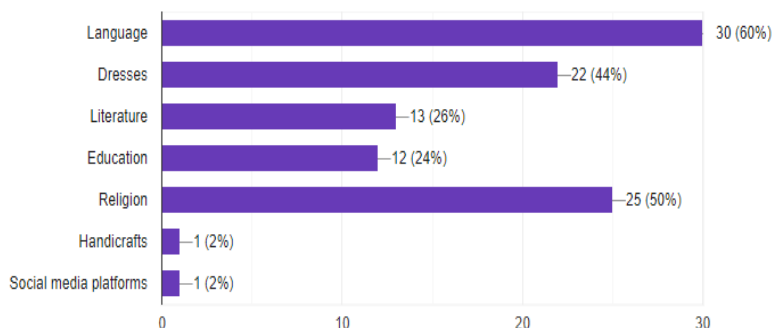
This question was specifically asked in a context that whether or not there is a political notion attached to the concept of Indian cartoons affecting the children in Pakistan. Which means that is there any hidden or exposed political agenda? While answering this question, half of the respondents believed that yes political notion is indeed attached to this concept. 12 respondents answered the question in negative while 13 participants were not sure about the answer. Here, it must be kept in mind that the question in hand might be difficult to understand for some people, which is why they chose maybe as a response. But still 50% of the respondents were affirm that all of this is being done in the name of politics, which is being carried out on the both sides of border.

Do you think we are in a Cultural war with India?



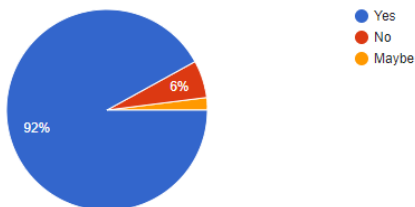
When asked about the truthfulness in a concept that we are in a cultural war with India, majority of the participants believed that yes, Pakistan is having a cultural war with India. The number of these participants was 35. While 8 people were against this notion. On the other hand, 7 respondents were not sure about the answer. Hence, it can be said safely that majority of people in Pakistan does believe that we are having a cultural war with India.

What are the other Means of Exporting Cultural Elements other than Digital Content?



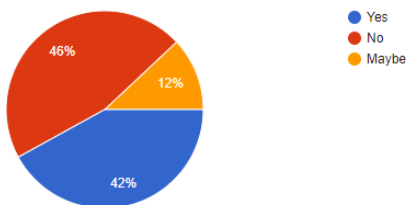
We asked the participants about the ways in which one culture may export its elements to the other culture other than digital content, which is already a part of this study. Initial provided options were language, dresses, literature, education and religion. In this question, respondents were provided an option to choose more than one option. So, majority of the ticks came for language where 30 respondents went for. 25 respondents chose for Religion. 22 ticks came for dresses. While literature and education received 13 and 12 respondents respectively. The option for other was provided so, handicrafts and social media platforms were written by 1 respondent each for these elements. Hence, keeping in view the concept of people, we can say that language and religion are two major cultural elements apart from digital content.

Do you think Children get Affected by Indian Cartoons?



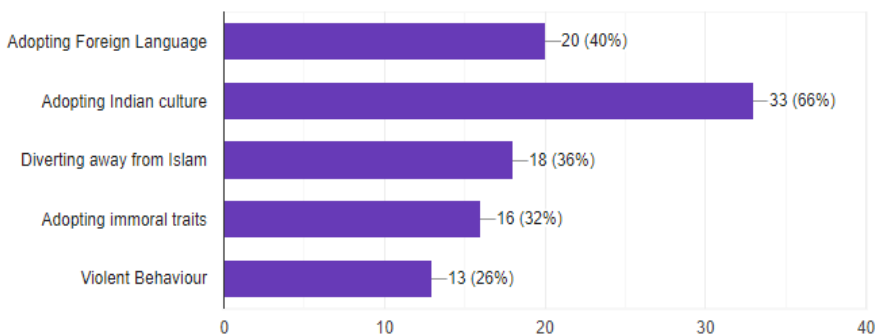
When participants were asked that whether there is any impact of Indian cartoon on Pakistani children or not, overwhelming majority of 46 respondents believed that Indian Cartoons do contain some kind of impact for Pakistani children. Here, only 3 respondents were negative about this question. Meanwhile, 1 respondent was not sure about the answer. So, majority of people in Pakistan believe that Pakistani children are being effected by Indian cartoons.

Do you think Pakistani Children must not be shown any other Foreign Content Apart from Indian Cartoons?



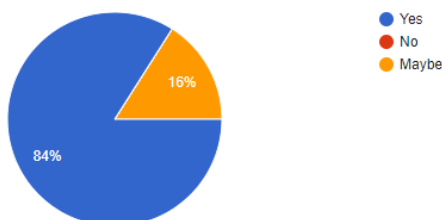
This question was asked in a context that if Pakistani children can be shown other foreign content apart from Indian content. Interestingly, 46% of the respondents which make 23 participants in total believed that content from other culture can be shown to Pakistani children. 21 Participants believed that no Pakistani children must not be shown any foreign content at all. While 6 respondents were not sure about the answer. Here, we cannot say that majority was in favour of broadcasting of other foreign content. Opinion was mixed but yes the people opting in favour foreign content was more than those people who were going against any kind of foreign content.

In what Ways do you think Indian Cartoons are Affecting Pakistani Children?



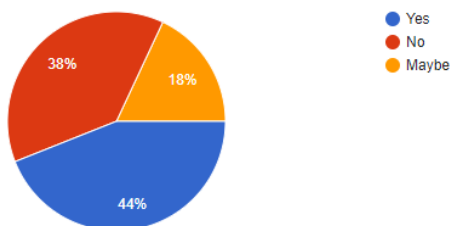
When asked about different ways in which Indian content is impacting children in Pakistan, 33 respondents believed that Pakistani children are adopting cultural traits from Indian culture. Here, in this question, respondents were given a chance to choose multiple options. 20 times respondents went for Pakistani children adopting foreign language, 18 people believed that our children are diverting away from Islam while 16 times respondents went for Pakistani children adopting immoral traits. 13 respondents believed that Pakistani children are becoming violent after watching Indian content. Although the majority of ticks came for an option about Pakistani children picking up the traits from Indian culture, but other options like adopting language, diverting away from Islam and adopting immoral traits also received a significant number of ticks. So, these options cannot be ignored.

Do you think Children are the most Vulnerable Target for any Cultural Rival?



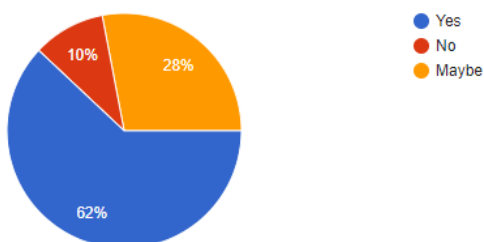
We asked participants about their opinion that whether or not they believed in children being the most vulnerable faction in any culture to get affected by foreign cultural elements. 84% of participants, which were 42 in number believed that children are indeed the most vulnerable faction of any society in this regard, while 8 respondents were not sure about the answer. Interestingly, no participant opted for negative answer. Hence, the notion about children being the most vulnerable part of any population is indeed confirmed in this question.

Do you think Parents are Fulfilling their Role of Protecting their Children?



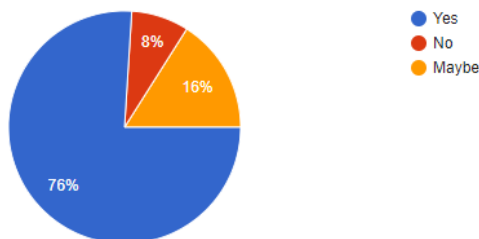
Participants were asked that if they really think that parents of Pakistani children are fulfilling their responsibility of protecting their children from Indian cartoons and other such elements. Only 22 people answered affirm, while 19 respondents believed that no parents are not fulfilling their responsibility. On the other hand, 9 respondents were not sure about the answer. Hence, the opinion about parents fulfilling their responsibility was mixed.

Do you think state is Responsible for the Spread of Indian Content in Pakistan?



Respondents were asked that whether or not they consider the state of Pakistan to responsible for the spread of Indian content. Majority of respondents believed that Pakistani state is indeed responsible for the spread of Indian content in Pakistan. Number of these participants was 31. On the other hand, 5 participants believed that state is not responsible while 14 respondents said state might be responsible but they are not sure.

Do you think Indian content must be banned in Pakistan?



Last question was asked about the opinion of participants on banning Indian content in Pakistan. While answering this question, 38 respondents said yes Indian content must be banned in Pakistan. 4 participants were against imposing a ban on Indian content. While, 8 respondents were not sure about the answer. From this question, it is confirmed that majority of the participants were in favour of imposing a ban on Indian content in Pakistan.

Discussion & Analysis

While discussing the results and analyzing them, they will also be supported by the facts from literature review that have been already mentioned above.

Before discussing the proper substance from results obtained through a survey, we also need to discuss the sample size in its demographics where the questionnaire was filled. 50 participants were selected at random. These participants belonged to the different areas of Pakistan. As it is clear from the questionnaire results, all the participants were falling into the age bracket of 18-35. Majority of the participants were either students or settled in practical fields. The awareness and knowledge can be indicated from the data about their education where all the participants were falling into the literate category of Pakistan. So, it can be established that people who participated in this study were well aware about the subject in question and they were well placed in a position to form any opinion.

As for the fact that whether those participants believed in a notion that Indian Cartoons are affecting the Pakistani Children, overwhelming majority of the people responded positively to this question as 92% of the participants believed that children in Pakistan are getting affected by Indian cartoons. So, the basic ground was set in this regard and even literature was supporting this notion that Indian Cartoons are affecting the children in Pakistan.

Now, we can move on to the analysis about what kind of impacts Pakistani children are receiving. In this regard, literature indicated that when children watch the foreign content or specifically cartoons, they get affected the most as compared to the adult population with respect to consuming the foreign content. This fact was verified in the survey, where 84% of the respondents answered that children are most vulnerable part of the population who can get affected by the foreign content. The majority of population also believed that we are in a cultural war with India. Hence, it can be established that due to the natural rivalry between India and Pakistan, the cultural war is also taking place where one culture is trying to influence the other culture.

From literature review it was confirmed that children in Pakistan are getting affected by Indian cartoons in a way that they are adopting foreign language, adopting cultural elements of India, diverting from Islam and developing violent nature. From survey we got major response in support of children adopting cultural elements from Indian culture. While significant proportion of the participants also believed that children are adopting the foreign language. Some respondent do believe that children are diverting away from Islam and they are also adopting inappropriate moral values from foreign culture. The option about children getting violent received the lowest number of responses. Hence, it can be established from the amalgamation of data from literature review as well as the survey, that there is a higher chance of children adopting the traits from foreign culture as well as its language. While Religion can also get impacted but the data from survey is kind of vague in this regard. While the notion of children adopting violent traits can be discarded due to not receiving enough data.

As for the research question about the how the Pakistan as a whole is getting affected by the Indian Cartoons, we need to consider the fact established from the literature review that children are the future of any country as the participants in our survey also confirmed that children are the most vulnerable portion of the population, so it can be easily inferred that if children consume the foreign cultural elements and adopt foreign language, cultural traits and other elements like Religious chunks, then it does affect the dynamics of Pakistani culture as a whole. Because in few years, when these children will grow into adult population, their traits from Indian culture will be cemented by them and they directly impact the Pakistani culture by making a hybrid out of it. In futures years the distinct identity of Pakistani culture will be lost.

Last research question was about the ways to mitigate the impacts of Indian culture in Pakistan. In literature, it was indicated that the state and parents both are responsible in this regard. This concept was confirmed in our survey, where majority of the respondents believed in banning the Indian content in Pakistan. Majority of the participants also believed that the state is responsible for spreading the Indian content in Pakistan. However, the opinion in survey about parents not fulfilling their responsibility was mixed. Yet, the

people never believed that the parents have no duty in this regard. So, it can be established that state must ban the Indian content in Pakistan, while parents must play their role in monitoring their children and they must not allow children to watch Indian cartoons.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that Pakistani children are indeed getting affected by the Indian cartoons. Children are the most vulnerable part of any population. It is always easy to target children in any cultural war because children are going through their growth phase. They adopt what they watch and observe. So, when children watch Indian cartoons that contain the foreign cultural elements, they try adopting those traits. Major impacts of Indian Cartoons include children adopting foreign cultural traits, adopting Hindi language and diverting away from Religion to some extent. These impacts can become harmful in future if the foreign traits adopted by children get cemented. These children are the future of Pakistan. If they do not stick to their original cultural identity, then in few years the distinct identity of Pakistan will be lost. It is the combined responsibility of State and Parents. State should have banned the Indian content earlier but even now State can ensure that the ban remains intact. While the parents can ensure that their children do not watch Indian cartoons. Even when the cartoons are banned from Pakistani channels, still they are present on social media platforms like Youtube. Parents must ensure that their children do not watch Indian cartoons. Only then we will be able to save our culture.

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