

Rise and Fall of Progressive Thought in Pakistan: An Appraisal of PTV Drama Tradition

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Abstract

The progressive thought process initiated by the Progressive Writers' Movement of South Asia encapsulates its very ideals of secular thought, politics of social realism, challenging the status quo and presenting a fight of ideas or intellectual discourse. This aiming to develop a consciousness within the people about their existential state being promulgated by writing, the modus operandi of the movement, is what this paper adopts as a tool to further assess the reflection of the socio-political discourse on progressive thought, on to television in Pakistan. The advent and position of progressive thought served as the very foundation of PTV drama content during its initial years of 1967-1977. Being the only television channel and owned by the state, its acceptance and that of progressive content found place in society naturally. Due to no private interests playing a role and more creative space provided by the democratic government of the 1970s, the initial decade came to be known as the golden era. Television reaching across geographies brings people on a uniform platform face to face with their lives, social problems and alternatives facilitating an interpretation of content, progressive content in the initial years of PTV. This paper aims to explore and analyze the same along with any effects it might have had for society in terms of building an alternative perspective to the one which existed. This being the entire purpose of the progressive tradition. However, since 1977 after a right-wing military takeover in Pakistan it is generally believed that the circumstances for the channel and some of its best content began to change coupled with the lack of intellectual rigour. Ultimately, this led to the decline of progressive traditions at PTV; a postulate deduced on the basis of findings ascertained through primary research on the matter forming the body of the paper.

Keywords: Creative minority, decline, oppression, Progressive Writers' Movement, progressive thought, PTV drama, progressive literature, realistic literature, status quo

1. Introduction

The Progressive Writers' Movement aimed at bringing social and political change in South Asian society advocated secular and tolerant ideals, challenged repression and dictatorship but fundamentally reflected upon the existential state of people living in what is now a divided South Asia (Naqvi, personal interview, 2012). The writings of the movement and its literature, came across as controversial and revolutionary because it spoke of issues not only facing the people but using imagination and creativity challenged societal constructs, norms and mores in a manner that could overturn the very ideological foundations of South Asian society. Thus, the resistance to its radical and free spirited nonconformist approach.

Conformity was anathema and this averred through literature was the course of action adopted by the movement (Mahmud, 1996). Its principles all expressed as progressive thought came

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to be an alternative way of thought and perception. This very idea gained momentum in Pakistan after 1947 but met with suppression and oppression during military regimes however, the very reflection of progressive thought encapsulated in progressive literature on to Pakistani television is a mark left by PTV that remains lucent in Pakistan otherwise reflective of quite the opposite of any progressive trends.

This paper aims at exploring and analyzing the progressive trend in PTV drama history during the initial decade of 1967-1977 and its consequences for people and society, if any, depicting an impression of progressive literature onto television and its gradual decline. However, the breakdown of the progressive tradition, one forming the very foundation of a state-owned channel and its implications on the society it prevails in also becomes an important question. This rise and fall of the tradition whether due to a change in societal dynamics or that of the country, coupled with internal reasons for the television channel with respect to its content, if brought about the end of the golden age of the Progressive era of PTV, is what marks the direction of this paper.

The propositions guiding this research endeavour thus, become (P1) “Progressive thought found acceptability via television on the PTV network in Pakistan”; (P2) “Progressive thought played a role in shaping the content of PTV dramas in Pakistan in between 1967-1977 ultimately depicting its effects through drama content on society;” (P3) “The golden era of PTV fell in to a phase of decline after 1977.”

2. Literature Review

With literature came about the advent of the Progressive Writers’ Movement particularly, the publication of four short stories (in Urdu) in a book called *Angare*, this attempt laid down the foundation for a literary movement (Mahmud, 1996) the progressive movement, striving for social and political change (Ali, 1977-1978). The movement espoused as its values, leftist Marxism, tolerance, speaking out against oppression and authoritarian rule and the economic degradation of the 1930s, secularism and freedom of speech and expression along with any social issues facing the people (Naqvi, 2011) and this came to represent progressive thought.

Literature, along with its aesthetic requirements can incorporate critical insight for history and politics in society (Soter & Bonnerjea, 1970) and this became what progressive literature began to represent. Even after South Asia was partitioned in 1947, geographies indeed were modified but the role of literature in the changing environment evolved as it were to. Its reflection on television, part of various media available for disseminating information the job of whom is to reinforce dominant values and cultures goes hand in hand with the television environment simply being a reflection of the material culture prevalent in society and that which precedes the content on television (McLuhan, p. ix). Ergo, the element of certainty seems to be lacking when the role of television in bringing about societal change is ascertained (Miller, 2010). A historical movement or change of a considerable magnitude or forces for that matter, can govern the trend of television content (Tichi, 1991, p. 4), including the texts which enable this process to take place more or less covering discourse on societal problems of all kinds for instance, gender, economics, class stratification etc. and adaptations of novels and even public discourse (Tichi, 1991).

Television which as a medium is viewed as a facilitator of globalization leading to the creation of new and different identities and constructs. It also makes it not only a platform for developing stereotypical ideas but also the one where objective and seemingly neutral television content becomes the place for political, social and cultural meanings to compete and newer constructs and alternatives have a chance to develop (Barker, 1999). Because the audiences and television content when come in to contact with each other, the exercise of interpretation occurs and the content then serves as an interactive agent and even intervening at times (Tichi, 1991).

With space for political, social and cultural meanings and constructs to compete, a fight of ideas takes place and established norms in a society dealing with issues related to gender, language and race, for that matter, are given a place right in the midst of audiences (Barker, 1999). Such an exercise can be facilitated by progressive literature acquiring a place on television. Be it television portraying race in a specific stereotypical manner for instance, and an alternative defying the set ideas about race (Poindexter & Stroman, 1981). On the same medium if guided by the right text, literature can lead to steering the trends on to a different direction (McGeorge, 1999-2000).

Progressive thought can radically change the manner of portraying the placement of a specific sex or gender on television, especially when it comes to females who have been stereotyped enough on this medium. From being projected as housewives resorting to household chores to being employed in fixed occupations like nursing and teaching, it has been a slow process of depicting women in gender neutral positions or in circumstances presumably reserved for males reflecting a shift in attitudes and opinions (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Furthermore, how in today's digital age sharing television content is also a possibility and highlighting the importance of relevant thought provoking content and interaction and communication over it can lead to newer avenues for content to be given a different and new interpretation (Cesar, Bulterman & Jansen, 2008). Similarly, any medium even television can be perceived having its merits and disadvantages. It could be a source of information or merely for the sake of entertainment hinting at various consumption patterns of people (Rubin, 1983) and how viewing might differ.

It is observed that the content might not always be the driving force behind choosing to view television programs (Smythe, 1954). It could have to do with the time schedules of people and listing and timing of shows on television (Webster & Wakshlag, 1983). Despite the uncertainty, the choice of accepting television content remains with the audience and the assumption that they are rational and able enough to offer criticism (Rubin, 1984), provides an insight on audience behaviour in the form of willingness to view television content and assess it (Comstock & Rubinstein, 1972).

In addition, audience of television is actively involved with it (Bauer, 1964), and media content with its multiple meanings is always open to different interpretations and scrutiny from varied perspectives by the active audience (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992).

Other than the relationship between the audiences and content on the media which reflects cultural values (Medina, 2004), market forces also play a role in deciding what kind of content is to stay based on the simple logic of profitability and audience appeal catering to economics as compared to culture and society (Istrazivanja, 2005). Furthermore, governments also tend to regulate content but must also ensure freedom of expression and speech allowing free flow

of the content (Medina, 2004). This makes the presence of content at any specific time period in the form of literature as compared to commercial scripts quite a complex process. For the sake of this paper which deals with PTV and its drama content areas not referred to in any detail up till now, is a deliberate attempt because of the focus of this research endeavour being precisely towards exploring and aiming to understand the progressive streak in PTV dramas between 1967-1977 and its consequences, if any, despite the short-lived era of progressive content on screen along with the influence the political and social surroundings of then might have had in shaping the course for PTV's progressive tradition also referred to as its golden era, and then its culmination.

3. Research Methodology

Data has been collected both from primary and secondary sources such as books and research papers, both of which have aided the analysis of this paper based on established and contextually developed constructs and themes because of the unavailability of direct information on the topic. Due to the genre of the theme, and the availability of limited potential candidates who have worked with the PTV or with reference to it, the limited primary data forms the sample for this exploratory research using the case study method.

For primary research, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted. The data was then analysed according to two qualitative techniques and procedures typology and logical analysis. Also, due to the unavailability of a formal sampling frame, upon the reference of a prominent PTV Director/ Producer and female Actor residing in Karachi-Sindh, names of two interviewees were highlighted who in turn provided a reference to other members of the sample population and the sampling technique being used for this study became classified as snowball sampling. This led to a total of eight candidates forming the sample population who were interviewed accordingly based on either their connection with PTV in terms of being part of the creative processes or with the Progressive Writers' Association in Karachi.

It must be noted that analysis of secondary data is treated similarly to that of primary data within the qualitative paradigm. The data collected upon reflection was categorized using axial coding and then divided into groups according to categories similar to the themes of the research paper. Once sorted, the data is sifted thus, completing typology and prepared for a taxonomic depiction that simply presents categories in a hierarchy but in this case broadly shows the relationships between various themes explaining the rise and fall of the Progressive era of PTV and consequent links with the major subject of enquiry.

With patterns and concepts highlighted, through the qualitative technique of logical analysis an overall understanding of the subject at hand is achieved. The similarities of all constructs and themes are presented in one flow in congruence to the data collected reforming interrelated findings in to a cohesive discussion. This has also been corroborated against secondary data wherever available and presented in a way that reliability and validity within the qualitative realm, its procedures being quite different from the quantitative paradigm, is maintained. This research aims at exploring the progressive roots of PTV and its decline by means of first-hand research referring to television dramas which satisfy or fit into the criteria of

progressive thought as laid down by the original movement mentioned at the beginning of the paper. It is not a study of content primarily delving into in-depth analyses of it henceforth, not being the only instrumental tool for addressing the propositions made in this paper.

3.1 Themes

The themes to be explored for this case study are as follows:

1. Progressive thought
2. Progressive thought: A reflection in PTV dramas during 1967-1977
3. Progressive ideology
4. Content
5. Space provided by the democratic government of the 1970s
6. The state of freedom of speech and expression
7. The presence of a creative minority
8. The absence of a creative minority
9. Ability to challenge the status quo with a new medium that of television

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 PTV: The Beginning of a New Era

In Pakistan, television came in 1960s and the Pakistan Television Network or PTV as it came to be known became the first and only channel to meet the auditory and visual senses of people across the country. By 1966, Karachi and Islamabad were included to the previously existing 1964 Lahore and Dhaka coverage. Its formative phase, more or less the initial decade often declared to be the golden era of the channel had reasons to support such a claim.

Television was a new space provided by technology in a country where this medium was non-existent thus, no other television channels to compete with gave PTV an unparalleled edge. Such a situation is inconceivable in today's day and age when Pakistan has many television channels that make it impossible for any single one out of the many to benefit from a PTV like situation of the late sixties and then throughout the seventies and beyond. Such a television channel fostered by the government apart from being the only one was state controlled. This provided PTV with one advantage perhaps beyond all others that helped shape the content and course for the channel. A complete absence of commercial interests, as the state was funding the channel, kept principles of business and finance out of the sphere of functioning making possible the projection of content encompassing education, information and entertainment and not just the content that would sell.

In addition to that, the initial period of PTV's development, a time period when the pioneering work for the channel was being done, the best of the best were employed and trained writers, actors, producers and directors alike opted for the channel translating their energies in to performing some of the best works in PTV history. From the presence of trained artists to the scripts and writings forming the content shown on PTV, the standard of work done was a priority with the small creative minority Pakistan inherited after the partition doing its work

mostly in the Urdu language being attracted into the channel. However, literary works in local languages like Sindhi and Punjabi were also translated in to Urdu and shown on PTV with those in Balochi and Pushto shown on PTV when the networks' stations reached the respective provinces.

4.2 The Progressive Elements in PTV Drama Content

The advent of PTV brought about a new technological phase in Pakistan and with new technology came new facilities of providing information, entertainment and a source of educating the populace. In Pakistan, before this very medium, radio and newspapers were serving such a purpose but with a new visual medium, people adapted to it bringing about the commencement of a newer understanding of issues and ideas all helping to form different perspectives. The reach of newspapers and the radio was indeed limited to those who could read and write for the former and those who could possess or had access to the latter but despite these limitations the methodology of understanding newspaper content, observation, and hearing in the case of the radio was combined with television where consequently Pakistanis began to have a progressive experience.

This is so because television although, controlled by the state and its content closely watched still gave people the chance to analyze the content and develop an understanding by means of auditory and visual aids at the same time. A simultaneous experience was the new modus operandi and with television, television dramas brought into the homes of people the option to gain exposure to ideas and issues facing them and others as compared to travelling from their homes to engage with theatre and cinema.

During the decade of 1967-1977, the plays and dramas of PTV had a more creative streak in them because the small creative minority then had been working for the channel and PTV could maintain a standard where professionalism and creativity were given preference over the idea of profit making. This led to a trend of content rich in language and ideas portraying the issues of people and the society they lived in all the more highlighting other areas like classical music showing *Ragas*, a classical dance show called *Payal* featuring Naheed Siddiqui and also the Thursday night *Qawalli*, science and information, shows prodding the intellect of people namely, *Kasauti* and others like the *Zia Moheyuddin Show* with a flavour of culture, art and literature or *Manto-rama* the drama series. PTV was catering to all segments of society and an audience present in society for its content.

The working definition of 'progressive thought' gathered from secondary sources and guiding the construct in this paper, would include Marxism, tolerance, speaking out against oppression and authoritarian rule and economic degradation, secularism and freedom of speech and expression along with addressing any social issues facing the people and social change through intellectual discourse (Naqvi, 2012) all of which came to represent progressive thought.

With regard to this definition, the dramas on PTV during 1967-1977 were of the sort where the class structures in society were constantly highlighted and the plight of ordinary people was portrayed for the reason of promoting progressive thought. The content included adaptations of novels, short stories and some original scripts dealing with the people and their conditions. One such show, Shaukat Siddiqui's *Khuda Ki Basti* that depicted the problems

of the urban lower middle classes met with strong criticism at the hands of the Jammāt-e-Islami, a political party formed by Maulana Maudoodi in 1940 along the lines of Muslim Brotherhood. This was so because of the religious intonation felt in the drama title and the writer and his words being leftist and Marxist in nature with the television drama thought by the right wing groups to be helpful to the left. A new trend on PTV had started. *Jhok Sayal* another popular PTV drama highlighted the situation of the Punjabi countryside, the role of religious clerics and local saints or *pirs* and the socio-economic condition of females. *Waaris*, also prominent on PTV, had feudalism and its consequences as a subject with Amjad Islam Amjad's *Jangloos* very similar in content to *Khuda Ki Basti*. All these dramas being fundamentally progressive, reflected social issues and advocated the possibility of an alternative perspective and reality subliminally although, the element of progressivism was not as strong as that of the 1930s when the progressive movement had emerged in South Asia. However, each spoke of the relationship between oppressors and the oppressed. By showing this the possibility of an alternative is automatically highlighted and the viewer made to feel likewise even if not long enough to actually do something about it making television a passive experience.

In addition to these, dramas like *Qurbatein aur Faslay* featuring Sahira and Rahat Kazmi as the protagonists was an adaptation of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* where Rahat Kazmi played the role of 'Bazharov, the anarchist'. Such ideas were new on PTV and for the people watching it. The writings of Ashfaque Ahmed, Dr. Anwar Sajjad and Munnu Bhai were also attuned for drama on television and alongside Urdu, Sindhi writings were also being picked up for the channel and then translated into Urdu, including Ahmed Salim's *Sara Mulk Manzoor*, Sheikh Ayaz 'diaries from prison' and the dramas written by Abdul Qadir Junejo particularly, the popularly known *Deewarein*. Alongside these, the Quetta station of PTV was showing dramas in Balochi and dramas in Pushto came from Peshawar, all of which were progressive in ilk more than those written in Urdu. The Sindhi writings adapted for PTV were also progressive because they were a voice against feudalism and spoke of women's rights, education and social issues waging a fight against ideas not progressive but retrogressive ones prevailing in Pakistani society.

However, dramas directed by veteran Sahira Kazmi reflected the rural culture alongside its urban counterpart and not just any one facet of Pakistani society. In the 1980s and 1990s, dramas like *Parchaiyaan* adapted from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Dhoop Kinaray* and others like *Teesra Kinara* on Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, to name a few, a wide array of choices to viewers over the years. Also, dramas like *Hawa ki Beti* depicted the sale of a young girl and the events that followed till she grew up in to being a young woman. Others spoke of women with different sexual orientations and about prostitutes, who fought for their lives, *Zebunnisa* on wife bashing, *Aahat* and *Nijaaat* on family planning but the likes of *Tota Kahani*, *Khokh Jali* on selling children or others like *Badaltay Kalib* on subjects taboo in Pakistani society came during the 1970s and were considered to be part of PTV's golden era. With Sahira Kazmi's courage, one of the few women working as a director and producer, her work brought in to the limelight the socio-economic conditions and social issues to do with inequality and intolerance in Pakistani society and promoted rights of women and younger females.

4.3 Progressive Content: Acceptability and Influence

It is contested that PTV content revolved around society and its problems making it 'realist than progressive,' (R. Kazmi, personal interview, November 2012), and the writings guiding the content fall under the same tradition. However, the working definition for progressive thought being used for this paper is inclusive of realist tendencies because the definition itself sieved from the ideology and action as laid down by the Progressive Writers' Movement explains progressivism accordingly.

Progressivism being a relative construct for the Progressive Movement and its idea of progressive thought thus, becomes flexible and one inclusive of challenging the status quo (Naqvi, 2012), in a nutshell, proffering more free-minded alternatives for society with regard to social and economic issues and eventually politics. Only by means of realism and social critique of it would progressive ideas be fostered. This being the reason why realist content and progressive content are being taken as interrelated. The late 1960s and the 1970s, the period of Pakistani history under study for this paper was one when 'trade unionism, films, theatre and the students' movement were gaining momentum and society was not retrogressive by and large,' (S. J. Ahmed, personal interview, 2012) showing the level of receptiveness and openness to progressive ideas because 'that was only acceptable to the people and PTV had to produce similar content,' (M. Mansoor, personal interview, November 2012).

The reasons cited for such a claim initiate with more publications, magazines and digests and other publications reflecting an audience showed more people were reading and drama on PTV provided them with an additional experience of seeing those stories unfold before the eyes of the viewers.

Along with drama, PTV content included programs featuring discussions on societal issues and politics leading to an increasing social and political awareness amongst people with regard to their existential state and that of the country. Evidence to such a claim is the more organized Anti-Ayub movement of 1968 against the first military dictator of Pakistan General Ayub Khan showing the effects of a state-controlled television network providing the people not with information but also higher degrees of awareness and understanding on the part of the people who began to interpret information, issues and problems vouching for political action in the form of an organized movement.

The onus for bringing about such a movement is not to be placed on television because it was only informing the people and giving them a chance to interpret information in various ways depending on their perceptions and allowing the formation of newer perceptions. The 1968 Anti-Ayub movement is one such example with the election coverage of the 1970s being another when all politicians had to present their manifestoes on television and all parties were given equal time and an equal chance to present themselves allowing the people to observe what the politicians of that period in time were willing to offer and the strategies espoused by them. Even the freedom movement begun by women during General Zia-ul-Haq's time who took over Pakistan in 1977, the year PTV's progressive era begins to fall, can be taken as an example of the acceptability of women being out of their households and on television in dramas, in various circumstances.

Similarly, writings from other languages like Sindhi, for instance, translated on to PTV in the form of television dramas continued after the 1972 Language Crisis involving Urdu and Sindhi in the province of Sindh which was a political problem as well. That in turn depicts the progressive trends PTV had adopted but it does not become a factor in reducing the ethnic and linguistic gaps between people for which other variables have to be considered particularly, the role of the state in fostering such differences and the violence initiated during Zia ul Haq's regime continuing to date.

As much as it would seem likely that television or PTV had consequences for society, there is no evidence in the traditional sense to prove such a claim. However, what PTV did accomplish apart from presenting bold content after the introduction of VCR's or NTSC video cassette players which brought access to Indian films, not a one-sided trade because PTV dramas were also smuggled into India and were much appreciated, was exposing its viewers to newer ideas, bringing them face to face with realities prevalent in their own society. It brought the rural and urban imagery together on screen allowing people in urban areas to know of rural realities and vice versa, acceptability of women on screen and correction of the modern educated Pakistani woman's image in society who was depicted in a derogatory manner in cinema from which television took over in the 1970s, (R. Kazmi, personal interview, November 2012). At PTV, professionalism and creativity were upheld.

All of this was possible because PTV was the only television channel and owned and funded by the state. It did not face competition nor did it have any commercial interests. This meant that PTV activities were being performed in a defined manner and there was no confusion regarding the portrayal of content which happened to be progressive when it came to drama because the democratic government of the 1970s had allowed it the space to grow. Otherwise PTV had strict restrictions and limitations much visible in its news reporting but even 'international standards were maintained there because it was founded on the prototype of the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*' (S. Kazmi, personal interview, November 2012).

PTV provided a new message through a new medium to the people of Pakistan in its creative and professional manner, and promotion of culture and exposure to progressive ideas contributed towards educating the people in one way and also led to people accepting and owning their culture. This exercise in exposing people to progressive ideas through drama content further led to openness which cinema of the 1960s in Pakistan, strong as it was already doing with films like *Armaan* where a westernized Waheed Murad, (actor) fell in love with a Pakistani girl, danced in a bar with young adults and then an illegitimate child comes into the story. With openness progressive ideas also led to enlightenment of society as a whole and arts and culture generally tend to reduce ethnic and linguistic gaps (Alkire & Alkire, 2007), putting an end to one-sided culturally superior ideas ultimately, facilitating the development of newer perspectives and movement in a progressive direction because the social preferences of people can be changed using culture (Gatcher & Hermann, 2009).

The definition of a progressive drama was highlighted as one which takes the initiative against suppression and oppression in society and talks about the oppressors and oppressed (M. A. Siddiqui, personal interview, November 2012) which brings into mention again Shaukat Siddiqui's *Khuda ki Basti*, an apt example, when on PTV the writer received many messages from viewers who did not want anything unjust to happen to the female protagonist *Sultana*

showing the sympathetic attitudes of people and perhaps their moral standing and to some extent tolerance but within an individual capacity. Whether PTV's *Khuda ki Basti* made society tolerant cannot be said of the situation because drama did not get translated into political action thus, being unable to bring about change in society.

4.4 Decline of the Golden Era

The decline of the golden era of PTV began around 1977. There are three main reasons that brought about a phase causing deterioration thus, a gradual decline over time to the progressive trends this television channel had adopted. To begin with a dearth of good writers was the order of the day and the creative minority referred to earlier on had been exhausted. No institution supported the arts; literature included which provided content for drama as had been the case for PTV. The somewhat diminishing creative group of people were no longer to be found, especially those writing in Urdu because the ones working with PTV previously for any number of reasons were not produced by Pakistan but by United India ergo, after them a lack of good writing brought about the slump in the quality of dramas produced. A similar situation existed with directors, producers and actors. There remained only a handful of people who continued to produce quality but the problem of writers was a grave issue because no second line of writers and artists had taken the place of the exhausted creative minority that helped PTV evolve into a progressive entity to continue the tradition in full throttle and make it the *modus operandi* of PTV.

As a non-continuation of the past trend which was intellectually better, proved to be a more serious issue than technical differences like an inability to get better technology and change in shooting techniques where previously dramas were shot indoors with three to five cameras as compared to single camera outdoor shooting prevalent today or India gaining access to satellite technology before Pakistan. The latter however, introduced in the 1970s colour television and set up myriad stations of PTV across the country gaining access to even remote areas bringing the whole country under a common net.

Progressive literature being produced in other languages like Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto and even Siraiki was available but the problem was of translating it into Urdu and very few regional language programs on PTV proved as a setback for parallel literature both during the initial decade of PTV and the decades to follow. Literature in regional languages being of a more progressive ilk than Urdu content also now faced the problem of the military regime that was to take over in 1977 promoting extremism as opposed to progressivism much needed in Pakistan as part of its agenda.

In 1977, the Bhutto-led democratic government was overtaken by General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq whose rigid religious stance and promotion of hardline approach along with ethnic and sectarian violence shifted the focus of politics in a direction most certainly not progressive. The space allowed by the democratic government of the 1970s to PTV began to shrink and further limitations and restrictions were imposed, particularly on youth programs and English films which along with shows like the 'six million dollars series' and music and dance on screen, coverage and talk of all the arts and culture were banned. Space was created for the retrogressive ideas of those like Bano Qudsia and Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi although the good quality of language remained evident in their works.

Television in Pakistan where initially progressive-minded people had gone to work was now a medium to be curtailed, its freedom restricted not only because of political needs but also religious reasons. 'Mullah Power' in Pakistan had gained pace under General Zia's regime and religious parties and their dogma held supreme due to their alliance with his government. Under such circumstances, progressive television began to be eliminated although some still continued to work with PTV but the state made it extremely cumbersome for them to do so. Therefore, the tradition PTV had started was overthrown and Zia regime's policies of censorship and banning of progressive ideas and thoughts and the writers who came up with them not to mention dramas, found commonplace. However, despite these restrictions if some people were still working with PTV and continued to produce dramas and music doing some of their best works during General Zia's era if anything, further supports the proposition that if the creative minority survives, it can deal with any challenge.

PTV and its drama could alone not bring about any change or have any consequences unless the political variable would be in tandem and that is where the problem began in 1977 when the political course of action began to change and PTV's progressive tradition, a new era in Pakistan, declined but even in the face of oppression and troubled times, if a creative minority is present to face the challenge, there comes change and evolution in society and this being the single largest problem of Pakistan took its toll making it easier for changing socio-political factors to take centre stage.

5. Reliability and Validity

This paper is not making any fleeting claims nor is it representing the views of one or a few even if some interviewees have been quoted now and then. The information provided by them during discussion on the themes of this paper is utilized in connecting and interpreting the findings. Keeping in view the research methodology, analysis and discussion an attempt has been made to prevent any kind of biases from occurring thus, adding impartiality and neutrality to the paper. Also, because established and accurate themes derived from existing literature which includes recorded history on the subject, are being dealt with and no personal definitions involved, the very foundations of this research project becomes trustworthy and not of an ilk based on assumption or whim.

Moreover, by not having chosen analytic induction as a technique to guide the analysis of this paper that might have required a case by case or event by event analysis which would have led to many different scenarios ultimately, not serving the interests of this paper looking into developing a holistic understanding of the subject of enquiry would in all have undermined the credibility of this research endeavour, hence, its quality. Furthermore, information obtained from various primary sources would then, if analytic induction used, have presented a scattered view and digressed from the thematic scope of this project.

Therefore, a practical decision to use logical analysis presents a more realistic picture making this study more reliable and valid. With regard to the matter of transferability or applicability, this project more or less within the domain of both Literature and the Social Sciences can perceive the results with reference to PTV as one perspective on its golden era and the gradual decline of the period over time following 1977, applicable or capable of being relied upon in the case of Pakistan because Pakistan Television Network was the only network in the country and the content of its channel reflective of a certain ideology or tradition as maintained by this research paper, the only information available to the people of Pakistan.

6. Conclusion

The Pakistan Television Network in its initial decade was a relatively new medium in Pakistan and the only television channel available to both those who worked with it and for those where were its audience. The pre-partition creative minority that came to Pakistan played a role in helping to form the foundation of PTV. The writings of then satisfying the working definition of progressive thought as espoused by the Progressive Writers' Movement of the 1930s adopted for this paper shed light on PTV drama content being of such an ilk because the literature was guiding the content, also, being the only channel and one owned and funded by the state with no commercial interests and market competition with many people used to reading back then proof of which are the many publications in those days and television providing a new experience to people, all these points support (P1) that progressive thought found acceptability via PTV in Pakistan.

Consequently, (P2) is partially validated by (P1) because progressive thought present in the writings of that time was shaping the content of PTV dramas but the other half of (P2) that drama content had consequences or effects for society stands negated due to no evidence to support the claim. PTV informed its viewers by bringing them in contact with social realities prevalent in society all with exposure to progressive ideas, kept professionalism and creativity at its zenith but was unable to bring about any results for society due to a seemingly, lack of political support acting in isolation which breeds no change. This further negates the second half of (P2) despite the assertion that people were reading the content in between the lines and interpreting it otherwise and then discussing it both within and outside the family unit than simply projected in the first place. That however, has no bearing for society as a whole leaving PTV and its drama content unable to produce any consequences for society because its progressive ideals could not prevent linguistic and ethnic problems and violence, for instance, both before General Zia's regime took over and after it nor could it alter stereotypical views on gender, sex or the class struggle itself. An inability of drama to translate into political action because of the oppressors being in political control further prevents (P2) from being proven.

Ultimately, the exhaustion of the creative minority and no new line of artists and writers to continue the intellectual trend proved to be the fatal blow PTV received as compared to working in isolation because of politics not being on its side to foster and facilitate change. The standards of the channel fell evidently over time because of no writing of the level of the creative minority that held PTV initially in its clutches, was taking place in Pakistan. Ordinary content, retrogressive content and policies of censorship, restrictions and the banning and imprisonment of writers along with prohibition of their ideas validates (P3) beginning the end of the golden era of PTV after 1977 with progressive literature in regional languages meeting a similar fate at the hands of the state.

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