

GENDER SPECIFIC PORTRAYAL ON INDIAN TELEVISION AND THE VIEWERS

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Abstract

The present study entitled “Gender specific portrayal on Indian Television and the viewers” was undertaken to ascertain the responses of men and women regarding their television viewing patterns, liking towards particular characters and portrayal of men and women in television serials. A survey was conducted in the tri-city area i.e. Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula. Portrayal of relative positions of men and women on Indian television can easily be a pointer towards the fact that television reinforces the stereotyping of gender roles. Gender roles in every society are cultural specific. Culture defines how the men and women co-exist, support, depend, associate, relate, think, speak, interact, behave, wear, get educated, move in society or perform their duties and so on. This actual reality and the television realism about gender identities and gender expression may easily reflect each other in this age of dominance of television. The result shows that majority of the population watch television regularly. Although the preferred time, channels and programs being watched by men and women are different but both of them believe that television screen majorly projects stereotyped images of characters. There is a difference between the television realism and real world.

Keywords: Gender, Portrayal, Television, Stereotyping, Culture, Television Characters, Viewers, Gender Identities, Gender expression.

Introduction

Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that is associated with person's biological sex in a given culture. Behaviour that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative whereas behaviours that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity. Gender identity refers to “one's sense of oneself as male, female or transgender” (American Psychological Association, 2006). When one's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the individual may identify as transsexual or as another transgender category. Gender expression refers to the “...way in which a person acts to communicate gender within a given culture; for example, in terms of clothing, communication patterns and interests. A person's gender expression may or may not be consistent with socially prescribed gender roles. These are the some of the common understandings and definitions of gender which underline the life on this earth or say the myth of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman on this planet called earth. The creation myths of the Abrahamic religions narrates the story of Adam and Eve as, the belief that God created human beings to live in a Paradise on earth, although they fell away from that state and formed the present world full of suffering and injustice.

Gender is often related with power which one group currently men have over women. Gender and power collide and exist together because power produces gender differences.

This symmetry needs to be break down as men also feel equally constrained by such a system of stereotypic conceptions that don't allow them to live a life of their own choice. The feeling of powerlessness is one reason why so many men believe that they are the victims of reverse discrimination.

Margaret Mead, an anthropologist explored these differences and was clear that sex differences were "not something deeply biological", but rather was learned and once learned, became part of the ideology that continued to perpetuate them.

Every society reveals some differentiation between women and men and therefore the society intends and exhibits the patterns of gendered inequality and male domination in specific ways. The famous phrase by Simon de Beauvoir, One is not born woman but becomes one, a basic statement which shows distinction between sex and gender. Society takes up the task of converting a biological male into a man and a biological female into a woman by prescribing masculine and feminine qualities to them. According to Ann Oakley's (1985), "gender is a matter of culture".

Culture is a learned way of behaviour that is transmitted from generation to generation. It historically accumulates over a period of time and is continually shared. There are certain norms, values and beliefs in any society that are culturally determined and socially transmitted. Shankarwa (1993) defines culture as the process of "complex processes of interaction through which the individual learns the habits, beliefs, skills and standards of judgment that are necessary for effective, participation in social groups and communities".

Bem (1993) argues that there are three lenses of gender or hidden assumptions about sex and gender which are embedded in cultural discourse, social institutions, and individual psyches. These "lenses of gender" are defined as biological essentialism, androcentrism, and gender polarization. They systematically reproduce male power generation after generation.

Biological essentialism is the widely-held belief that men and women are different as a result of biological differences. Biological essentialism argues that men and women are inevitably different in their biological and emotional makeup, and this influences how men and women feel and act. For example, biological essentialism argues that women's hormones and her physiology result in being naturally more nurturing and gentle because they are built to breed and care for children. Conversely, men are naturally more competitive, aggressive, smart and powerful because of male hormone testosterone. Thus, from this perspective, gendered behaviors are the result of biology "natural" and "normal".

Essentialism normalizes the dominant ideologies regarding gender and reduces everything to binary oppositions with minimal room for change or improvement. As a result, men and women are placed in two distinct categories creating negative social implications for individuals who deviate from those defined categories. Biological theories regarding gender are so deeply rooted in our culture that many of us still believe today. Fortunately, many considered this approach as unscientific which led Bem to define second lens of gender i.e. Androcentrism.

Androcentrism is the second lens that assumes the belief that males are at the center of our culture. Bem (1993) describes it as "males looking out at reality from behind their own eyes and describing what they see from an egocentric point of view" (p. 36).

The androcentric lens accomplishes two things—first; it defines everything as dissimilar or similar from males. Second, it defines all things in terms of meaning or significance to males. Androcentrism is

omnipresent in our culture everyday life and often goes unchallenged and unnoticed. For example, restroom symbols make a clear distinction between male and female. However, “neutral” signs such as pedestrian, elevator, and exit signs are represented by the male symbol. In addition to that nonverbal communication, verbal communication is inundated with androcentric speech. The words like policeman, chairman, fireman all favor the male perspective yet refer to positions held by both men and women. This clearly shows that female experiences are often unaccounted.

The third and final lens is gender polarization, which is the ubiquitous organization of social life around the distinction between male and female. Gender polarization, however, is an effect of patriarchy. Patriarchy is an ideology, too, that is manifested and communicated through gender. Gender is displayed in reaction to the structural demands of patriarchy, which relies on a marking system that distinguishes males from females (Rodino, 1997). Gender performances are part of this marking system. Bem (1993) attributes this lens as the sole reason that people see only two sexes, and work to exclude any varying definitions of gender such as transgendered or non-gendered individuals. The gender polarization lens has resulted in two negative impacts on culture. The first impact is that this lens defines mutually exclusive scripts for being male and female. The second negative impact is that gender polarization causes a culture to be quick to judge any gender deviant behavior as “problematic.”

The growing significance of biological essentialism, androcentrism, and gender polarization was found in the definition of “family”. Because there it was implemented, accepted and institutionalized over time (Renzetti and Curran, 1999). It is embedded so much in our culture that it shapes our idea of gendered family.

Women are one of the most oppressed segments of humanity in the developing as well as developed world. Discussions on the rights of women are considered as threat to man’s position in society. Women are oppressed not only at economic, social and political grounds but this oppression exists at moral level as well. Women are often portrayed as morally corrupt, rarely pious and mostly involved in tempting others. The denial of social justice, respect, dignity and honour to women is a global phenomenon.

The remedies suggested by the secular societies such as equality of sexes, equal opportunities in employment and right to divorce have not led to substantial gains for women (Ahmed, 1991). A global poll conducted by Thomson Reuters in 2012 rated India as the “fourth most dangerous country” globally for women, and the worst country for women among the G20 countries. Still, lot of women are leaving their comfortable home spaces and doing jobs which were earlier held only by men. As per the census 2011, women constitute about 25% of the formal employment in India. Women activists on one hand are fighting from time to time to make society better place for women to live in. On the other hand other group of women activists are protesting against the projection of women especially in electronic media.

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli argued that while religion or education had previously been greater influences on social trends, now “television is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history... Television cultivates from infancy the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other primary sources ... The repetitive pattern of television's mass-produced messages and images forms the mainstream of a common symbolic environment. People who used to be outside the cultural mainstream can now participate in the common television culture. Today, it is possible for everyone to share in a culture that only rich people used to have. For the first time in history, the rich and the poor, the cosmopolitan and the isolated, the very young and the very old share a great deal of cultural imagery

incommon, although none of it is their own making. For many people, the cultural horizon of television is very attractive, especially, when they compare it to other things.

Television continues to portray women in decorative roles in family drama. They are still seen in domestic set up playing happily the role of home makers. They are always seen loaded with heavy clothes, jewellery and make up. Very few women are seen talking about their rights and career. Their ultimate achievement is to get married and have children. This unidimensional projection of women as home maker reinforces the stereotyped image of women.

Maximum of the serials are wrapped in male chauvinism where women is discouraged to aim for more than having a loving husband and happy children. Women's sacrificing role is always highlighted and those who put her choice in front are projected as vamps or antagonist. Although some progressive storylines can be seen, but they only make small sub- plots in the serial. These sub-plots run parallel along with the main story line. This is done in order to have enough content for a soap to run for more years. Usually soap opera is telecasted for half an hour in say five days a week format. Recently soaps are telecasted on six days a week format. Soaps may have intersecting storylines making one plot more popular than other or making certain characters more popular among the audience. Audience opinion is taken and studied from time to time. As it becomes an important factor while scripting further episodes. In soaps there is always the flexibility of tracks and characters. It is very rare that a soap opera having a defined conclusion.

Soap Operas usually have a defined milieu, situation like family, office to which all characters belong. Writer has the freedom to play around with the possibilities of plot twists and surprise the audience. The key idea is to engage the viewer and whet their appetite at the end of the episode with what happens next. Since it is market driven phenomenon so an eye is kept on TRPs. Writers usually add alternative or strong diversion to the plot whenever TRPs are falling. In Daily Soap the narrative is closely followed on a day to day basis, but in a weekly soap, there is relatively more scope to try out other alternatives. Many genres of soap operas can be seen in contemporary television. The main ones can be listed as family dramas, romance, detective stories, thrillers, horror, children's programmes, action-adventure, comedies, mythological, historical etc.

Review of Literature

Many studies (Erkal, 1993; Sivacioglu, 1991; Williams, 1990) over the time have found that women do not have important roles in the divisions of responsibility within the family. In the traditional set up, a women's role is limited to fulfilling her responsibilities as a wife and mother, and ultimately the caretaker.

Aulette (1994) supports this claim and argues that in the nuclear family, the wife/mother typically assumes the expressive family role which means she does the housework, cares for the children, and ensures that the relational and emotional needs of those within the family are met. She is fragile and dependent on her husband and expects and allows him to make the majority of the household decisions. The father's role includes having a professional career and ensuring that the financial and safety needs of the family are met. He is emotionally controlled and puts his needs and career above his family. The traditional roles of the mother and father are gendered constructs, resulting from dominant ideologies and belief systems of a culture.

Bhasin (1994) believed that as feminists, women's condition and position has to be changed along with their portrayal in media. Globalization meant increase in violence and also meant patriarchy becoming stronger. Mainstream media alone cannot bring change in political or economic system. As it is controlled and

oriented by men. There is a necessity to build up media which understands masses need and is controlled by them only. The need of the hour is to develop feminist media. She focused on strengthening media based on oral traditions, like songs, as they are low in cost and leads to creativity.

Research shows that division of labor based on gender roles results negatively in financial dependence on the full-time male caregiver (Sullivan, 1996). In the instances of divorce, the “displaced housewife” in the traditional roles is at a disadvantage because she acquired few occupational skills to place her competitively in the labor market. As a result, these women find themselves struggling to support their family financially (Weitzman, 1985).

However, today when more of women are employed in the workforce still necessarily change has not taken place in the gender roles regarding family and home life especially in traditional nuclear family. The common believe held that that “housework is still women’s work no matter what other demands wives have on their time” (Shelton, 1992, p. 77). Hochschild (1997) reports that as greater numbers of women moved into the economy, families experience short-handedness in work and family life. This short-handedness refers to the decrease in time that women spend at home and the increase in housework and child caring that still needs to be done.

To make sense of how men and women come to play out gender roles, Hochschild (1997) introduces gender strategy and suggested three possible gender ideologies pertaining to marriage i.e. traditional, transitional, and egalitarian.

The woman who partakes in the traditional gender ideology works, but chooses to identify most with work at home, such as mother or wife. A woman who considers herself part of the transitional gender ideology wants her focus to be on both home life and professional life, yet still holds some traditional values about her husband’s role in the family (Hochschild, 1997). Lastly, the egalitarian gender ideology is one where both wife and husband work outside the home and earn money to support their family as well as share home life duties. Within the egalitarian gender ideology, the wife and husband take equal part, or at least strive to, in the cleaning, cooking, and raising children.

Renzetti and Curran (1999) women who consider cutting some work for taking care of the children often feel defeated. They think that they lack sense of professional identity which is regarded highly by most of modern women today. Other options to cope with unsatisfactory marital roles included women cutting back on housework, self, and children. This meant that if their finances could not afford hiring a maid or caretaker, than the cleaning and to some extent, the childcare, went undone for long periods of time.

Rajagopal (2002) observed that serials images have a stronger impact on shaping gender images in people, female oriented serials influence women to become self-conscious about their appearance as a measure of their worth.

Objectives

1. To study the television viewing patterns of the respondents to find out the centrality of television in our lives.
2. To understand the liking of respondents towards male and female television serial characters in lead and supporting roles.
3. To study the opinions of respondents regarding portrayal of male and female lead and supporting characters.

Research Methodology

To investigate the gender representations on television, a survey was conducted recently using questionnaire as a tool. The universe selected for the study was Tri-city area, i.e. Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali. The data has been collected through specially designed questionnaire consisted of both open and close ended questions. The researcher has tried its best to distribute questionnaire equally in the three regions selected for the study.

Sample Selection

The sample constitutes 100 respondents belonging to age group 18-65 years. Sample selected was via random sampling technique. Variables taken into consideration were; Age, Sex, Education, Qualification, Profession, Marital status and Annual family income. Variable of Sex was taken specifically in account as study was gender based so equal proportion of opinion was important. Other variables were also considered so that data collected can represent all types of individual opinions.

Results and Discussions

I. Television viewing patterns of the respondents to find out the centrality of television in our lives.

Going by the standardisation criteria of viewers as light viewers, moderate viewers and heavy viewers depending on the basis of their on screen time given by George Gerbner and Larry Gross for the research project entitled “Cultural Indicators” in 1960s, this study finds out that respondents here mark themselves in “moderate viewers category” i.e. normally watching television for 2-4 hours daily. If they watch television for 2-4 hours this never means that they devote this much time in one single sitting. In other words this the total time an individual spends before television screen in the whole day.

Today no one can claim that they never watch television as it has become integral part of our lives. In other words it has become a way of life. However it's important to know the time viewer spent on watching television.



Fig: I.0

Fig I.0 shows time spent by the male and female respondents in front of television screen. 94% of males and 84% of females spent 2-4 hours daily in watching television. The percentage of respondents watching television for less than 2 hours is 12% for females and 6% for males. The life these days is so fast and hectic that nobody can spend time more than this. Only 4% of the female respondents admitted they watch television for more than 4 hours a day. While analysing the data it was found that these 4% respondents were mostly in the age of 60-65 years. May be this is due to the fact that by this time of age women don't

have that much of burden at their home and office front. The reasons behind this cannot be generalized so easily as it further needs a deeper probe.

Time spend before television screens shows the centrality of television in our lives and homes. The primary proposition of cultivation theory states that the more time people spend 'living' in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television. George Gerbner who gave this theory observed that television reaches people, on average, more than seven hours a day. While watching, television offers “a centralized system of story-telling”. Gerbner asserts that television's major cultural function is to stabilize social patterns and to cultivate resistance to change. We live in terms of the stories we tell and television tells these stories through news, drama, and advertising to almost everybody most of the time. If 94% males and 84% females here (Fig: I.0) say that they watch television for 2-4 hours a day, it surely means television is an integral part of their lives. And if something is integral part of your life, it may easily have reflections in your social and cultural milieu.

The most important time segment for television is prime time segment. Prime time or primetime is the block of broadcast programming taking place during the middle of the evening for television programming. Traditional primetime is eight to 11 o'clock at night, Monday through Friday, but Nielsen finds that more Americans tune in from 9:15pm to 9:30pm than any other period during primetime. The tail end of primetime—10:45 to 11:00pm—is when the fewest viewers use their televisions. In India, prime time occurs between 20:00 and 23:00. The main news programs are broadcast at 20:30, and the highest-rated television program follows at 21:00. The Nielsen ratings system is explicitly designed for the optimum measurement of audience viewership by day parts with prime time being of most interest. Most people tend to watch television at prime time, as most often, based on standard working time, the end of the work day coincides with prime time viewing hours. Most of the viewers sit down to watch television after dinner. This is usually the main reason for the high ratings for television programming at this time, as well as the attraction of the timeslot for advertisers.

Fig: I.1 explores the time preferences of male and female respondents. The data shows that 62% of female respondents and 38% of males prefer watching television during prime-time. This shows that there is a clear cut difference between males and females time preferences. 40% of male respondents and only 8% of female respondents watch late night television. Afternoon slot is watched more by females (6%) in comparison to males (2%). The data further shows that 20% of female and 16% of male respondents watch television during evening hours. Equal percentage of male (4%) and female (4%) respondents watch television during morning hours.

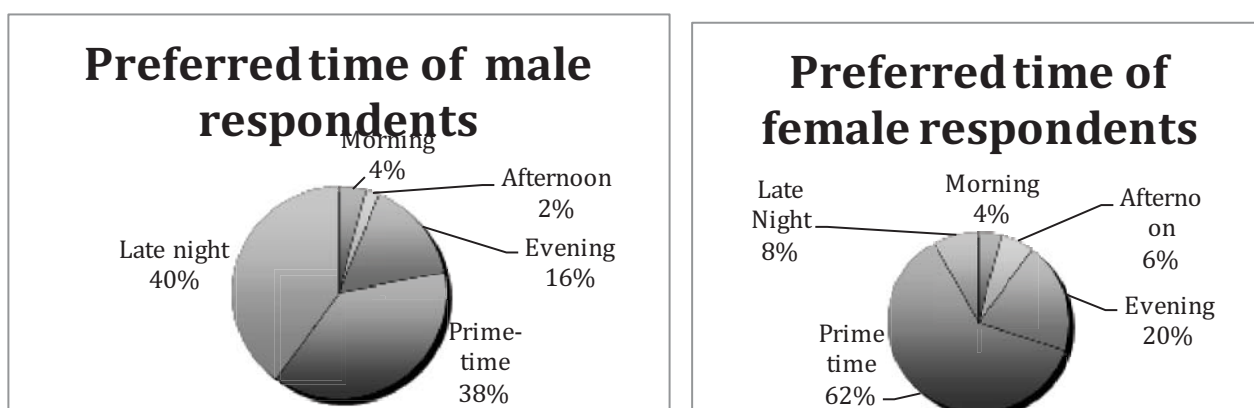
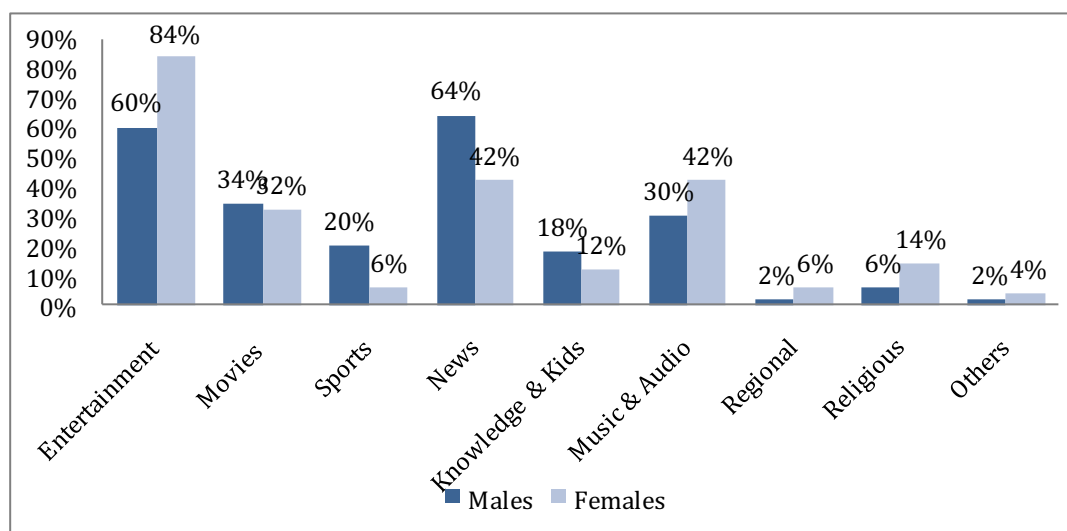


Fig: I.1

Before knowing that what is shown during prime time on television and what is watched during prime time, it is equally important to know what kind of channels are available on television screen. Broadly speaking, the two kinds of channels that is news and entertainment channels are the prime most. Then there are others like movie channels, sports channels, knowledge & kid's channels, religious channels, music and audio channels etc. This study reveals females prefer to watch entertainment channels and males prefer to watch news channels.

Fig I.2 shows the multiple choices of the viewers regarding television channels. The data shows that 84% of female respondents watch entertainment channels in comparison to 60% of male respondents. Movie channels are watched by 34% of male and 32% of female respondents. 20% of male respondents watch sports channel in comparison to 6% of females. News channel are watched by 64% of males and 42% of females. 18% of male respondents and 12% of female respondents watch channels falling in knowledge & kids category. The percentage of respondents both males and females watching music & audio channels is 30% and 42% respectively. The data shows that each kind of television channels may have good number of viewers but each channel cannot fall in popular category. It is only the news and entertainment channels that fall in the popular category.

Another important fact that comes to fore is the preference for regional channels. These are those channels which are based on the various languages. For instance, in the 'Tricity' i.e. Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula i.e. UT, Punjab and Haryana, the widely accepted regional language remains Punjabi. These are the cities where the migrants from other states reside in large numbers. But, only 6% of female respondents and 2% male respondents agreed that they watch regional channels. It means that people normally prefer national channels. Religious channels are also an important aspect of Indian television. However, only 6% of males and 14% of female respondents watch religious channels.

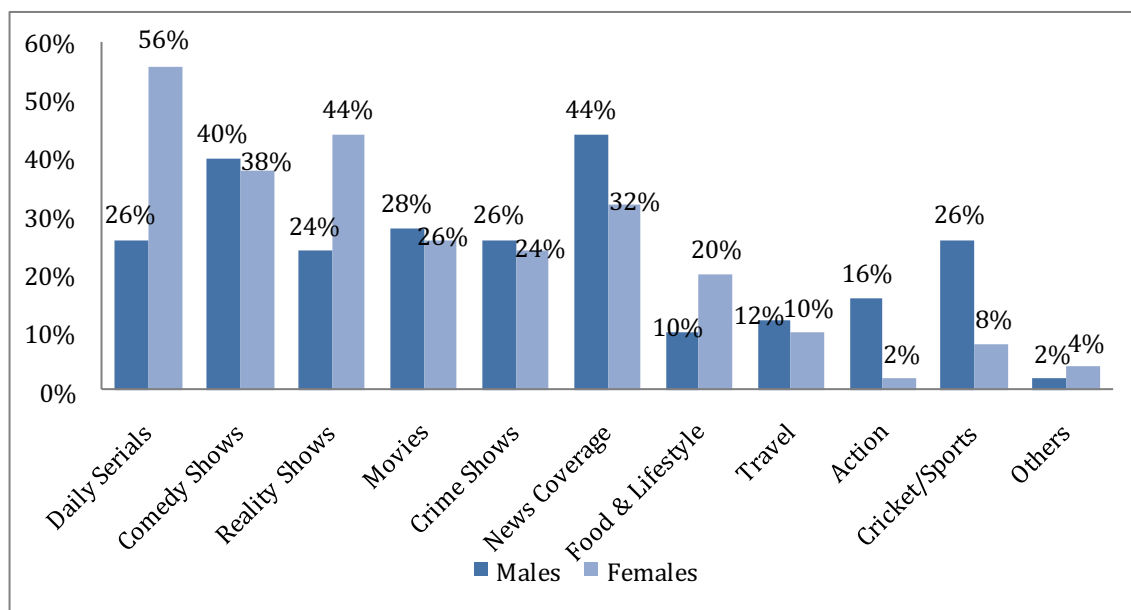


*Multiple Choices

Fig: I.2 Preferences for various Television channels

As seen in earlier fig (I.1) 62% females and 38% males watch prime time television. Fig I.3 strengthens this data further that soap operas are the most preferred television programs among the women as 56% females answered that they watch television serials as compared to males who accounts here for 26% only. In total 41% of the respondents (both males and females) watch daily serials. There is a remarkable difference in

male and female preference in reality shows category. Females (44%) watch reality shows more than males (24%). Then again men (44%) are more interested in news than women (32%). Another favourable genre of television programming is that of Comedy. 39% of the total respondents enjoy comedy shows. The most popular program of Indian television 'Comedy Nights with Kapil' which has become a phenomenon itself has helped making this genre more popular. This program seems to be adding new dimensions to entertainment industry and opening new vistas for Indian television and Bollywood as well. Most of the people who were interviewed for this survey named this program as their favourite one. Moving ahead, figI.3 further show that sports and action channels are more popular with males and food and lifestyle channels are popular among females.



*Multiple Choices

Fig: I.3 Preferred programs watched by the respondents

II.Liking towards male and female television serial characters in lead and supporting roles.

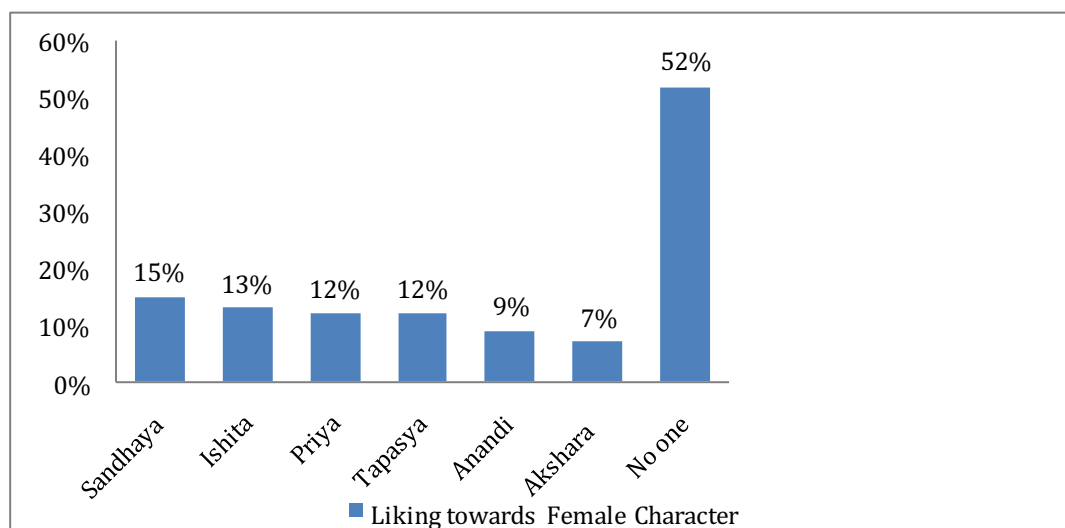
The second part of the study is focussed on how do the viewers both males and females like television characters. For studying the characters the television serials become a natural and suitable choice. Moreover the television serials fall in the most popular genre category of television programming. This is the genre which has an emotional bonding with the viewers as it is an manifestation of human emotions, drama, actions, fears, sorrows, laughter, happiness, anger, frustrations, aspirations etc. To sum up, the serials include all the 'masala' which is needed for spicing up life.

An Indian soap opera is an ongoing, episodic work of fiction usually broadcast on television (written, filmed, enacted and produced mostly by Indians for an Indian audience), with episodes broadcast on a daily or semi-weekly basis on Indian television channels/channel chains (like Star Network, Sony Entertainment). It is telecasted on television on 4-5 days.

An individual develops liking towards other person normally whom he identifies easily. This can easily be understood in terms of empathy. Empathy is most often defined by the metaphors of 'standing in someone else's shoes' or 'seeing through someone else's eyes'. Empathetic is a recent term which it comes

from empathy. The term was coined by the German philosopher Rudolf Lotze in 1858. Lotze believed that when you look at a work of art, you project your own sensibilities onto it. So if you feel sad when you see a painting of a woman weeping over a dying lover, that's because you can imagine what it's like to lose someone you love. To make the word, Lotze turned to the ancient Greek *empathia*, which means "passion."

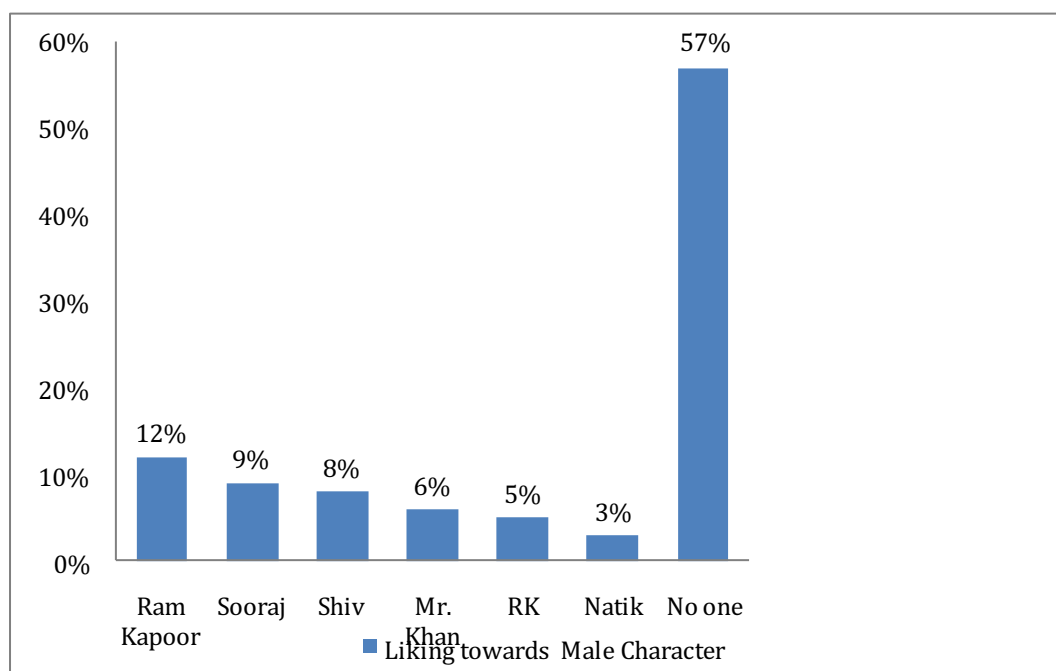
II.0 Respondents liking towards female characters



To study this the respondents were asked open ended questions regarding their liking towards male and female characters of television in lead and supporting roles. In this probe, Fig: II.0 shows the characters like Sandhaya, Ishita, Priya, Anandi, Tapsya and Akshara turned out to be the favourite ones among both the respondents. Most of these characters have been the popular bahu of Indian television. A bahu in Indian society is the wife of a son who leaves her maternal house and settles in husband family. In an ideal Indian situation it is always said that bahu will leave her husband's house only when she is on 'arthi' (coffin) i.e. when she is dead. Further, a bahu i.e. daughter-in-law in an Indian society is always thought to be an embodiment of devotedness, sacrifices, caring, loving, responsibilities and so on. They all fall in the category of family drama. They are the heroines in the prime time serials who bear tyranny of vamps. Moreover these are the characters who gain sympathy of the audience. 'Sandhya', female lead of top rated serial "Diya Aur Baati Hum" and second liked character 'Ishita', main lead of "Yeh Hai Mohabbatein" are both part of Star Parivaar and produced by Shashi Sumeet Productions. Both the characters are shown with true ambitions and dynamic attitudes. Sandhaya has a distinct career aspiration for which she is seen fighting and Ishita being barren ready to get married with a man who only wants to marry for getting his child custody. 'Priya' female lead of "Bade Achhelagte Hain" and 'Tapsya' of "Uttran" are other favourite characters of viewers. The study also finds that Anandi and Akshara are also liked by some respondents.

Indian society is primarily male dominated and has a patriarchal setup. He is believed to be having all the strengths that make him strong, powerful, dominant, masculine, decision maker, a fighter and so on. Sons and daughters are largely brought up in different manners. Gender roles are clearly defined in a family right from the birth. Men and women are no doubt two different biological entities and ought to be different. Equality never means that they behave in a similar fashion. Both masculinity and femininity have their own strengths. This is how they can maintain the balance. However it is lopsided upbringing of children in a family, oppression, denial of rights, power, education and opportunities that widens the inequalities. Media largely portrays them in stereotype roles only.

II.1 Respondents liking towards male characters



With the passage of time there has been a wind of change. Indian men are being shown on the television screen being supportive and understanding. A glimpse of positive change in male-female coexistence is readily seen these days. The male characters enlisted as their favourites by the respondents here have been found to be those who are caring, loving, charming, supporting, understanding, and ready to fight for the rights of women. They are even portrayed helping the women folk of family by going against many odds.

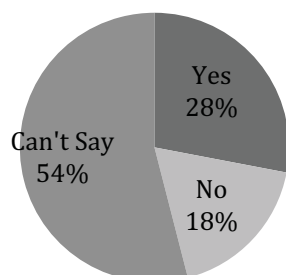
‘Ram Kapoor’ of “Bade Acche Lagte Hain” is the most liked male character followed by ‘Sooraj Rathi’ from “Diya aur Baati Hum” and ‘Shiv’ male lead in “Ballika Vadhu”. Other characters liked are Mr. Khan, RK and Natik. All the characters are male lead and protagonist of the serials telecasted during prime time. They are the heroes of Indian television screen. They no more hold traditional ideas of masculinity. They regard fatherhood and believe that taking care of child is equal responsibility of both men and women.

The important aspect to be noted here is that 52% of the respondents doesn’t have liking towards any of the female characters and 57% of the respondents doesn’t have liking towards any of the male characters.

III. Opinions of respondents regarding portrayal of male and female lead and supporting characters.

Fig. III.0 shows the opinion of respondents regarding the projection of both male and female characters in television serials. Since percentage of male respondents watching serials is less so 42% of the total respondents opted for ‘can’t say’. 42% of the female and 28% of male respondents believes that still television characters are portrayed stereotypically. Only 18% of male and 28% of female respondents feel change in the portrayal of characters. The definition of a stereotype has been given as any commonly known public believe about a certain social group or a type of individual. Stereotypes are often confused with prejudice because like prejudice, a stereotype is based on a prior assumption. Television has become an all pervasive medium. Gender stereotyping on television can reinforce gender roles in society. No, doubt the media picks the threads from the society only but it always has the freedom to weave it accordingly.

Male respondents opinion of portrayl of characters



Female respondents opinion of portrayl of characters

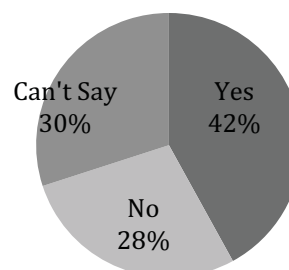


Fig: III.0

Conclusion

Time spend before television screens shows the centrality of television in our lives and homes as on an average more than 90% respondents fall in the category of moderate viewers i.e. they watch television for 2-4 hours. If we calculate it otherwise, a person normally spend eight hours on sleep may be eight hours on duty or any job, 3-4 hours on other things , it makes it 20 hours. If rest 2-4 hours one spend before the television , this means that you are open to a huge window of another world which is full of music, stories, drama, entertainment, information , education and so on . Therefore, most of the learning and de-learning also come through television. What so ever is shown on television is likely to have impact on our lives. This is the television realism and a make believe world. Going by the dictionary meaning, the realism can better be understood as recognition and acceptance of a situation so as to acknowledge its existence or its truth. This recognition and acceptance comes through the cognition i.e. knowing, learning and understanding the things. Since the television serials are the most sought after programs during the prime time, the television has the power to change the society in a way they want. This is the age of corporatization of media. The television is therefore more interested in TRPs. The growth of entertainment industry depends on how the television is able to bind the viewers emotionally. This is why that these serials hardly have any logical end to their storylines. The storylines are subjected to unexpected changes, drastic jumps, unending problems, unrealistic goals, unimaginative turns and twists in the lives of television characters. Focus is on selective cultures, focus on urban India and then focus on rich and affluent classes in a diverse country like India can be profitable for media but not for the masses across the country. This is high time that media especially television maintains the equilibrium.

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