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FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE: APPEARANCE AND STEREOTYPE OF SOCIALISTIC WOMEN CHARACTERS IN DUBBED TAMIL TELEVISION SOAPS OPERAS OF POLIMER CHANNEL



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ABSTRACT

In the hypermedia world of today, television has emerged as an important tool of transmission of facts and evidence. The major part of television is to entertain its viewers and it has that capacity of bringing visual movement into the living room with great authenticity and efficiency. As a result of this, Television has a deep and influential impact on its viewers, particularly women, where they are always treated as a “special audience group”, which measures their tendencies and leanings. Soap operas are one of the most popular entertaining genres on Television and as a cultural produce, which is extremely a trend setter in channels among Indian women in the present scenario. Stereotyping in serials is widely prevalent though there has been some increase in the modern, liberated images of women but her role is just confined within four walls of the house. Researcher felt nation which claims to be in the process of “globalisation” or “modernisation” still portrays its women in worthless loads of costume jewellery and jardousi sarees. When women of India are progressing to be IPS and IAS Officers, all these contemporary “slice-of-life” soaps are still knotted in familial plots and schemes. Even with some attempts to actually portray reality, Indian serials have not evolved beyond the monochromatic dimensions of a faithful wife and a devious vamp. They are not projected according to



the stereotypical image existing in the society leading to strengthening of conventional roles. This research paper primarily focuses on the appearance and portrayal of women in seven dubbed Tamil serials of Polimer channel. Content analysis technique is used to study the stereotype of women (feministic perspective) to find out the outlines of ethics and ideas used in the script regarding women appearance enablement. It has been seen that these soaps represents women often in stylish way and not as a brainy, confident and

boundless women.

KEYWORDS : Television, Polimer channel, Dubbed Tamil Soap operas, Women, Stereotype and Appearance.

OBEJECTIVE

Television does not only portray the leading social values but its role in educating or guiding the people regarding various social issues and problems is not secret. The thought shown by media, attempts into the society and gradually becomes the part of it and eventually people start involve the ideology. While focusing on the problems faced by women in our society and the role played in dubbed Tamil soap operas of Polimer channel in identifying social inequities faced by women and reflecting the positive changes related to the status of the research study will mainly focus on the following aspect.

- i.To analyse the kind of feministic ideology in the appearance and the characterisation.
- ii.To analyse the female characters portrayed by dubbed Tamil soap operas whether women are portrayed in socialistic role or as a sexual or liberal object.
- iii.To evaluate whether female characters are portrayed as capable of making decisions or just contrary to it.

INTRODUCTION

Women are considered as one of the most troubled segments in the developing countries like India in the present scenario. If we discuss about the rights of women are taken as threat to man's position in the culture. Womenfolk are burdened not only at social, political and economic level but also at ethical level. Women are often depicted as morally dishonest, rarely virtuous and mostly as objectified as tempting others. The Repudiation of Dignity, respect, honour and justice 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).

CONCEPTS OF FEMINISM

It is marked that in ancient times the position of women in Hinduism was not less than just a subject or slave. When a Hindu husband died, his wife was forced to pledge Sati on his funeral pyre or retired into a life of social damnation, religious inspection and constant loneliness. Later, during 1800, women were not allowed to caste vote. They were neither allowed to get university education nor could they own a property. Wood (1999) defines feminism as an active commitment to equality or respect of Life. In mid-80's India reoriented its developmental agenda to link the idea of empowering and emancipating with development, where the empowerment here means making someone powerful, facilitating the weak to earn strength and to make someone eligible of confronting oppression and injustice and to fight against violence, and exploitation, where emancipating means liberation from both natural and manmade series. But it is to be said still women has not been achieved this image in millennium also.

PORTRAYAL OF FEMINISM IN MEDIA

Feminism can be classified as liberal, radical and socialist. This study points out the socialistic women where the researcher links the study with media. Though many research studies are already came across with more priority study on women and their social issues. Most of the study cases with the media and the way they portray the women in different genres of programmes. It is actually to be considered more in the present world. It is because "women are equal to men" has become an older story. Now it is to be switched to question how much the women are secured, when they are equal to men and involving in socialistic work. One of the socialistic works is undoubtedly acting or being a

modal in media. When women ramp walks or been an actor, media has the responsibility of portraying them in culturalistic way. It also supports and adds essence for moralistic and social value for women image in the society. The socialist feminist did not exclusively focus on gender for the rights of women. Socialist feminists were of the view that female should have the right to decide about the family. They also focused on ethnicity, age, sexual preference and physical ability (Curran & Gurevitch, 1996, p.33-37). It is quite depressed that most of the channel or film, especially soap operas are not in this dimension of telecasting women on moralistic way both in their characterisation and in the dressing style. As a feminist the researcher feels that in most of the cases media forgets their responsibilities in stereotyping women in the honourable viewpoint.

SOAP OPERAS AND POLIMER CHANNEL

Media is well-thought-out to be an important device for change. Keeping this in view the current study will analyse the patterns, values and ideologies used of Polimer channel dubbed Tamil soap operas in presenting their female characters. Recent study has revealed that 86% of women, specifically housewives entertained more by the TV serials in India by different channels. Sometimes men also engaged in watching it with their wives switching off to work earlier. Current trend is most of the channel started to concentrate on telecasting dubbing serials of Hindi versions. This creates eagerness and the audience attitude towards the soap operas which is to be considered as the greatest impact of Television.

According to Wikipedia, Polimer is a Tamil-language satellite television channel based in Chennai, India. The TV has evolved as a 24 hour Tamil entertainment satellite TV channel founded by P.V. Kalyana Sundaram in 1985. Currently it runs 8 basic cable TV channels in various parts of Tamilnadu. This Channel primarily consists of more Dubbed Tamil family and fictional dramas which mainly present more women antagonist and few protagonist and relationships of joint families and problems and also the relationship of mother in laws and daughter in law. Usually the story of Polimer soap operas resolves around the revenge and sufferings of some prominent of female characters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steeves (1987) said that U.S main stream media research is mainly based on or characterized by liberal feminism. Liberal feminism mainly discusses the issue of white, heterosexual, and upper class women. It doesn't address the problems of rest of the women. The researcher concludes that socialist feminist provide detailed framework to address the devaluation of women in communication but more empirical and theoretical work is required to be done in this context.

Larson (1996) examines the role of soap operas in representing the role played by a single mother. The researcher compares the perception of soap opera viewers and non-viewers. 163 junior and senior high school students were selected as subjects. Findings suggest that the image portrayed by soap operas have greater impact on the adolescent viewers.

Davies (1997) examines the relationship between the men who viewed sexually explicit videos in a non-experimental setting and their attitude towards feminism and rape. The main purpose of the research was to evaluate whether men who viewed more sexually explicit movies displayed more negative attitude towards feminism. The findings suggest that sexually explicit videos do not generate the calloused attitude. Such an attitude is deeply embedded in our society.

John (1998) discusses some alternate routes to address feminism in India as western concept of feminism is not appropriate in Indian context. The divergences in the conceptual legacies of western and Indian feminism are also discussed.

Kumar and Varghese (2005) state that Indian media represents docile image of women. She is presented submissive and easily manageable. They are of the view that mass media should begin the process of women empowerment in modern world. For this women should participate in the production of various programmes. The more women participate in decision making the more they'll be able to smash the old stereotypes images of women.

Kaul and Sahni (2010) analysed the portrayal of women in TV serials and the impact of these serials on the viewers of Jammu. The researchers selected the interview method to collect the data. Their findings suggest that very little variety of realism was found in the projection of women by Indian media. The qualitative analysis revealed that many women respondents were agreed that serials had great impact on their thought. Respondents also admitted that fact that they gained confidence and learnt the way to organize their homes.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to analyse how dubbed Tamil soap operas of Polimer channel exactly do present women and how successful are they in their presentation of reality? Or is this reality an unimaginative one? Therein begins researcher's analysis. Thus the Content analysis was chosen to discover the pattern of the study. Totally seven serials of Tamil dubbed versions in Polimer channel has been selected as the sample of the study.

- a) Moondru Muduchu (Sasural Simar Ka)
- b) Kalyaana Kanavugal (Doli Armaanon Ki)
- c) Uravea Uyirea (Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi)
- d) Pudhu Pudhu Arthangal (Ek Nahi Pehchaan)
- e) Irumalargal (Kumkum Bhaghya)
- f) Mouna Raagam (Itna Karo Na Mujhe Pyaar)
- g) Ullam Kollai Pogudhada (Bade Achhe Lagte Hain)

This research analyse by dividing into equal categorization based upon the female characters depicted in the those 7 serials, such as (i) number of female character (overall age group)(ii) Authority of decision making (ii) Demand in role (iii) housewife/ Working women (iv) equal priority of gender (v) stereotype (vi) Dressing style

RESULT

This research study presents the overall data of the stereotype and appearance of women in sampled seven serials. The data was collected using the categories and percentage analysis was used to calculate the overall percentage of each category to result the study.

Percentage analysis = (total number of numbers/ average) x 100

Totally 77 female characters was played in selected seven serials of Polimer channel and they were split up under each division of the category in the table form depending on their way of portrayal.

TABLE 1

Serial Name	No. Of Female roles	Authority power	Demand In Female Role	Stereotype			Equal Priority Of Gender	portrayal		Dressing Style	
				House wife	Dependent	Working women		Antagonist	protagonist	ethical	Glamour
Moondru Muduch	13	4	3	2	8	3	0	4	2	11	2
Kalyaan a Kanavugal	10	2	4	5	2	3	0	4	1	6	4
Uravea Uyirea	5	2	1	3	1	1	0	3	1	2	5
Pudhu Pudhu Arthangal	7	4	4	2	3	2	1	2	2	6	1
Irumalargal	15	4	5	7	6	2	3	4	4	1	3
Mouna Raagam	9	3	3	7	0	2	1	3	1	5	3
Ullam Kollai Pogudh ada	18	6	2	4	12	2	8	1	8	5	8
Total	77	25	22	30	31	15	13	21	19	36	26

Calculation of Percentage Analysis:(i) Authority power = $(25/75) \times 100 = 33.3\%$ (ii) Demand in role = $(22/75) \times 100 = 29.3\%$

(iii) Stereotype

(a) Housewife = $(30/75) \times 100 = 40\%$ (b) Dependent = $(31/75) \times 100 = 41.3\%$

(c) Working women = 20%

(iv) Equal priority of gender = $(13/75) \times 100 = 17.3\%$

(v) Portrayal

(a) Antagonist = $(21/75) \times 100 = 28$ (b) Protagonist = $(19/75) \times 100 = 25.3\%$

(vi) Dressing Style

(a) ethical = $(36/75) \times 100 = 48\%$ (b) glamour = $(26/75) \times 100 = 34.6\%$

The result reveals from the table 1.1 for each category that 33.3% of women are characterised as having a commanding or authority power towards opposite gender, 29.3% of female plays a lead and demanding role. The second category analysed that 40% of women are portrayed as housewife, 41% as dependent on male and 20% as a working women. In overall only 17% of female are given equal priority to men in their role. Most of the women that are 28% of them play as an antagonist (enemy) and comparatively less of showing them as protagonist (leading role) is of 25%. The last category data results that 48% of women dressed ethically like jardousi sarees or decent and grand salwars and sarees, where it is 35% of the female wear glamour dress and also sometimes vulgar and their

characters are moreover a student or modal or women having illegal affair or a teen age girl.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research study considers the stereotype of women by Polimer TV channel Dubbed Tamil soap Operas in feministic viewpoint. Therefore the researcher selected 7 serials being telecast in the Polimer channel to analyse all the female characters stereotyped in different way. The sample serials result 77 female genders which narrates story with different depiction of characterisation. All these soap operas are portrayed women in untrue outfit and immoral relationships and bonds in the illegal and negatively figured in the concepts of the story. When the research studies in the feministic point of view, it was analysed that female character holds the authority to take decisions in less numbers. In one of the sampled serial "Irumalargal (Kumkum Bhagya)" grandma character leads the authority power in the whole family such as taking bold steps to bring out their family from adversity. Where at the same time the heroine of the serial in character name "Praghya" has been shown as an innocent and homely and dominated by her husband and "Tanu" who is a modal, so glamourly dressed shown like having an illegal affair with praghya's husband. In the same serial "Aaliya" is out sketched completely as an antagonist where her role is adamant, influential and revenge taker, Selfish, physical assault, creating problematic situation impersonally and shown wearing glamour dress in all episodes. Thus we can observe this serial depicts women as a sexual object, victims of violence and confident less, negative image and dominated by men. Also in the serial "Pudhu pudhu Arthangal (ek nahi pehchaan)" female characters were shown as the victims of violence but most of the female characters who became the victim of violence (physical assault or sexual harassment) took legal action to expose or punish the guilty. All the above mentioned facts are related to radical feminism discourse. This is the serial which figures female in ethical way in dressing style, and the behavioural attitude towards the family such as motivating herself as an entrepreneur, family authority, confidential and traditional housewife with in bond skills. Also depicts the good relationship concept between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Most of the female characters are of socialistic as well as liberal such as housewives and also as business women. Poonam Dhillon plays as mother in law named "Shardha" who clearly pictures the traditional, innocent, lovely, well skilled and dominated housewife. Krystle D'souza, role as "Shakshi" who suffers with love failure and later forced to marry with shardha's son and then faces with different victims of violence and family problems. Simultaneously in the same serial Kavita vaid who plays a negative role in the name "Eashwari" act as an illegal wife for shardha's husband and take revenge over shardha to get her properties. Therefore 35% of the serial episodes were scripted true image of the women where 55% of the female characters are untrue and no reality in the moral and relates socialistic problems with the happenings of day to day life of women. From this we can be deduced that Polimer channel soap operas in the light of liberal feminism discourse reveals that few characters were shown demanding or getting equal social rights where most of the female characters were shown as demanding unequal educational and political rights. This shows that Polimer channel soap operas are stereotyping women often in stylish way and not as a intelligent, self-confident and boundless women and only in rare cases women are depicted as decent and powerful roles and in this cases even they are the victims of violence were also shown as taking legal action to punish the criminals. It can thus be said that Polimer Channel soap operas are focussing on the ideology of liberal or radical than of socialist.

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