

'Portrayal of Indian Culture' in Indian Television

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Television has been proved to be a boon for mass communication. Television provides masses a common experience at the same time in verifying degree. The Indian Television system is one of the most extensive systems in the world. There has been a tremendous proliferation of television channels. The Joshi Committee Report on software for Doordarshan has rightly observed: “If you want to get introduced to a country and its people watch its Television.” Waves of dramatic and dynamic changes have flashed across the horizon of television in India. The Indian television can be found discharging their duty of disseminating a progressive view of gender dialectic in diverse ways. Television is considered as a mirror of a nation’s personality. It can recall the past, dwell upon the present and peep into the future of a society. This role of television is all the more relevant to a country like India, having continental dimension and innumerable diversities. It has the capability to reach simultaneously millions and millions of our people. Since it can transmit not only words but pictures as well, the significance of television as a medium of mass communication has universally been realized and recognized. Television has acquired today newer dimensions, greater popularity much wider reach. The formats of television programs have miraculously developed in the last few years. People are found to be fond of participating in such shows. Portrayal of Indian Culture in media is always a concern when shown on the screen. It is with different portrayals the participants and the viewers will be attracted towards more participation. Media research is one the important aspects of research work done in Social Science. Content analysis is relatively a new field. Content analysis is a technique that involves measuring some dimensions of some form of communication. So, a study was undertaken to find out the portrayal of Indian Culture in various Television formats such as Serials, Reality shows, News programs, Educational Programs, Religious shows and Sports shows, as perceived by the viewers in Kutch region in relation to the age, sex, educational qualification and type of family of the viewers, so that the impact of these shows amongst the viewers can be known. The viewers were able to opine regarding the various portrayal of the Indian Culture in Television. No significant difference in the level of agreement of men as well as women on portrayal of Indian Culture in TV serials, Reality shows, News programs, Educational Programs, Religious shows, Sports shows in relation to the type of family, age and educational qualification. Competent and appropriate portrayals of Indian Culture can encourage the

producers to actively participate and express their talents in superior manner. Thus, television formats portray Indian Culture and creates its unique impact amongst its viewers.

Keywords: Portrayal, Content Analysis, Formats

Introduction:

The Indian Television system is one of the most extensive systems in the world. There has been a tremendous proliferation of television channels. Waves of dramatic and dynamic changes have flashed across the horizon of television in India. About a decade ago, there was just a handful of tele-programs, but now there is infinite number of tele-programs being shown every day. With the spread of television channels and cable network their number is likely to go up. Along with the increase in the number of programs there is a shift in the themes of the programs. The present trend set by the programs in the various channels focus on news items, sports, entertainment, suspense, situational comedies or family drama, reality shows, religious shows at time creating awareness among its viewers also depicting our culture & traditions or at times deviating the viewer's attention.

The formats of television programs have miraculously developed in the last few years. Many formats are designed which involves the common public also. Participation in such shows that involve common man is always over flooded. People leave all their work to participate in such shows. These shows also explore the hidden talents in every corner of our country. The viewer's get inspired to participate in such shows and express themselves. Some shows are competition based and at last the winner gets a handsome amount of price or may be some contract. The popularity of television programs can be attributed to the fact that TV characters almost tend to become a part of the viewer's life. They act out dilemmas emotion and situations that happen on a day to day basis. Media are known to be creators of image so media is equally responsible to reflect the Indian culture through its various formats. Television media is leaving a tremendous impact on the minds of the people. All the age groups try to imitate different characters of television which in turn affects the Indian culture, tradition, customs as well as lifestyles.

The Joshi Committee Report on software for Doordarshan has rightly observed:

“ If you want to get introduced to a country and its people watch its Television.”

Television is considered as a mirror of a nation's personality. It can recall the past, dwell upon the present and peep into the future of a society. This role of television is all the more relevant to a country like India, having continental dimension and innumerable diversities. It has the capability to reach simultaneously millions and millions of our people. Since it can transmit not only words but pictures as well, the significance of television as a medium of mass communication has universally been realized and recognized. The moving images of television fascinate people, demand

attention and eventually influence their thoughts and behaviour. The small screen has indeed turned out to be large enough to compress, within itself, India's tremendous culture diversity over rather broad social spectrum. Television has become part of our popular-part our life itself."

Media research is one the important aspects of research work done in Social Science. content analysis is relatively a new field. Content analysis is a technique that involves measuring some dimensions of some form of communication such as comic, situational comedies, soap operas, news shows, reality shows, sports shows, religious shows, educational shows etc. The basic assumption implicit in content analysis is that an investigation of messages and communication will allow some insight into the people who receive these messages. It will help us to understand how the tele-programs actually work, how it has influenced the viewers and what in turn influence them.

So a study was undertaken to find out the portrayal of Indian Culture in Serials, Reality shows, News programs, Educational Programs, Religious shows, Sports shows in Television formats, as perceived by the viewers in Kutch region.

Objectives

Following were the objectives of the study,

1. To find out the overall level of agreement of the men and women regarding `Portrayal of Indian Culture` in the Television.
2. To find out the overall differences in the level of agreement of the men and women regarding `Portrayal of Indian Culture` in the Television.
3. To find out the overall differences in the level of agreement of men on `portrayal of Indian Culture` in Television, in relation to,
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Educational level of the respondents
 - Type of family
4. To find out the overall differences in the level of agreement of women on `portrayal of Indian Culture` in Television, in relation to,
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Educational level of the respondents

- Type of family

This study will help us to know how the portrayal of Indian Culture in Television actually work, how it has influenced the viewers and what in turn influences them.

Review of Literature

Nathani (1986) found that television viewing motivated adolescents to participate in sports, drama, music and adventurous activities. Mahajan (1988) found that television helped people in increasing their familiarity with different religions.

Dhanraj (1987), conducted a detailed analysis of six prim time television serials in Hindi, telecasted in the 1980's to assist women viewers to critically examine their texts particularly of those specifically designed for their consumption. The six serials included Adhikaar, Kashmakash, Aur bhi hai Raahein, Stri, Air Hostess, Uddan. A detailed questionnaire & Interview schedule were used as tools of the study. It was found from the limited study of the selected women centered serials that the dominant image of women being constructed as the norm for representation on Doordarshan was urban, middle class, literate and upper caste. All women were defined according to this norm, making for the distortion and falsification of those coming from entirely different socio-cultural milieu. And, the power of this image, this misrecognition, was a dangerous one. Finally Doordarshan's affirmative efforts for women had been a failure because women's concerns were emptied of 'subversive potential' in both content and form. Thus, it was concluded that Doordarshan acted benevolently to do its bit for promoting welfarism for women.

A study by Trivedi (1991) showed that religious activities of the families were disturbed due to TV. Religious serials and programs on TV were looked upon by people as adding sanctity to their house.

A study was conducted in ten villages of Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh to assess the impact of television on rural folk and to see how far the present political programs on TV are useful to the masses in creating political consciousness among them. The study revealed that television created interest in knowing further about politics, parties, increased knowledge about the prevailing situation in the society, and value of voting. Personal watching news in only Telgu were politically less aware as compared to those watching in Hindi and English alongwith Telgu. There was small increase in the political awareness of the people watching for longer house.

Methodology

The sample of the study comprised of 500 men and women from Kutch region, selected by purposive sampling method. The samples belonged to Gandhidham, Adipur, Anjar, Bhuj and nearing places of Kutch Region. A structured schedule was developed by the investigator to study the level of agreement of the men and women regarding portrayal of Indian Culture in the Television. The tool was constructed in different sections with different response systems. The

three main variables of the study were sex, age and educational level of the respondents. The 5-point scale consisted of the items to measure the men's and women's opinion about portrayal of Indian Culture in the TV Television. The statistical measures used for the analysis of the data were percentages, t-test and intensity indices.

Findings of the Study

Percentage-wise Overall Level of Agreement of the Adult Men and Women in the selected aspect

N=500

Aspect	Serials		Reality Shows		News Prog.		Education al Prog.		Religious Shows		Sports Shows	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
Portrayal of Indian Culture												
High Agreement	73.4	63.7	64.3	64.2	64	65.3	62.3	53.7	62	62.5	61.9	61.3
Low Agreement	26.6	36.3	35.7	35.8	36	34.7	37.7	46.3	38	37.5	38.1	38.7

It can be seen from the above table that fifty per cent of both men and women had high level of agreement on portrayal of males, portrayal of females, portrayal of Indian culture and Impact of tele-programs.

❖ Portrayal of Indian Culture in Serials.

It was found that men and women had moderate level of agreement on portrayal of Indian culture in serials. The overall intensity indices ranged from 1.87 to 4.06. It is seen that men and women had similar level of moderate agreement of portrayal of Indian culture as, joint family system promoted, child marriages, celebration of various Indian festivals, rituals performed during various occasions, values of different family relationships and female foeticide, whereas

men and women had very high level of agreement on portrayal of traditional outfits preferred by women as a part of Indian culture.

❖ **Portrayal of Indian Culture in Reality shows.**

It was found overall men and women had moderate level of agreement on portrayal of Indian culture in reality shows. The overall intensity indices ranged from 2.54 to 3.98. It is seen in the above table that women had comparatively higher level of more to male participants, participants looking beautiful and funky and traditional folk from are promoted whereas men had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of filmy culture id adopted more in shows, western dancing and singing patterns are more popular than traditional, people participate more in singing and dancing show than any other shows and youngsters participate at any cost.

❖ **Portrayal of Indian Culture in News programs**

It was found that the overall intensity indices ranged from 2.5 to 3.99. It is seen that men and women had similar level of high agreement of portrayal of Indian culture as, mis-happening are highlighted repeatedly for hours a day, news programs directed to achieve political goals, rape cases are discussed and highlighted again and again, criminal case are picturised and highlighted again and again, exaggerates any news and present it and news related to societal development are focused less. It is seen in the above table that women had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, astrological program directed more towards superstition rather than achieving its main goal, cricket is the only sport discussed mostly in the news and viewers get a chance to directly communicate with the experts, whereas men had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, interested in provoking negative thinking among people, personal life of various celebrities, superstitious news are highlighted more with lots of mirch masala, more superstitious news are highlighted and news related to national development are focused less.

❖ **Portrayal of Indian Culture in Educational Programs**

It was found that overall men and women had moderate level of agreement on portrayal of Indian culture in educational programs. The overall intensity indices ranged from 2.73 to 3.50. It is seen in the above table that women had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, increase general knowledge among the viewers, geographical knowledge of various places is gained and importance of historical monuments is known, whereas men had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, Program like UGC lectures are telecasted by morning for name sake, Adventure based programs of outside countries are more popular and various tourist sports are visited on tv set.

❖ Portrayal of Indian Culture in Religious shows

It was found that overall men and women had moderate level of agreement on portrayal of Indian culture in religious shows. The overall intensity indices ranged from 2.83 to 3.44. It is seen in the above table that women had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, Viewers can solve their queries by direct or indirect communication with religious gurus, Dharmik puja of various gods & goddesses is shown and Aarti of various pilgrims can be viewed, whereas men and women had similar level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, Viewers get a chance to worship all pilgrims on their tv set and Viewers can listen to the speech of big religious gurus.

❖ Portrayal of Indian Culture in Sports shows

It was found that overall men and women had moderate level of agreement on portrayal of Indian culture in sports shows. The overall intensity indices ranged from 2.82 to 3.34. It is seen in the above table that women had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, Not promoting athletics or any other sports, Wastage of productivity of time, energy and money and Do not promote indoor games, whereas men had comparatively higher level of moderate agreement on portrayal of Indian culture as, Cricket given more importance than any other sport, Public emotion converted into business, Advertising/popularizing cricket more than any other sports and Playing cricket brings more name & fame than any other sport.

Implications of the Study

1. Popular formats of the tele-programs should be exploited for socially relevant themes and content to bring about the desired changes and create awareness in the society.
2. More specific, realistic and factual programs should be designed for better reach of the program to the viewers and easy perception of the message by its viewers.

Suggestions for the Media Professionals

1. More television programs having advanced formats and messages should be portrayed along with stereotypical roles.
2. Tele-programs which encourage and preserve positive aspects of our Indian culture and tradition must be produced.
3. Different themes and formats for developmental purpose must be designed, to be conveyed through different tele-programs a television is one of the popular media in Indian culture.

Suggestions for Academicians

1. Academicians can consciously provide media education in the area of appreciation and criticism of different tele-formats in terms of its content, different portrayals and messages conveyed by the program, the techniques used and the reasons for the success or failure of a program.

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