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Television Dramas Standard in Pakistan

Abstract:

Pakistan television drama acknowledge by their innovation in past. When our drama telecast during golden age of PTV, roads would become empty. Time slot of 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm was prime time in every family. Things vicissitudes suddenly after influx of private channels and production of television dramas has negotiated the quality which was seen in dramas during the PTV era. After arrival of private TV drama channels needless serials on air on our TV screens. Nowadays if we calculate the dramas we all would soon over count the drams. But such extravagance of anything is bad in drama industry it came at price of declining standards of TV drama. The paper reviews how to bring quality back in Pakistani Dramas and what are the key factors to gain such popularity that PTV dramas used to have. This research paper is prepared on the basis of information and data acquired through meetings and interviews with several well known personalities of drama industry.

Keywords:

Pakistan Television Critical Review Popularity Interviews Drama Industry

Introduction:

Pakistani dramas zeal in Asia. Attractive characters and almost same type of storylines capture audience hearts and soul. Romantic triangles, vixen mother in laws and shy heroines are taking off our minds from more than a decade.

Television starts in Pakistan from 1964 from that day drama viewing become part of our culture. When PTV came into begin its sole purpose was to educate, to inform and to entertain. So when our drama transmission was started their prime objectives were to follow all mentioned functions of medium. Ashfaq

Ahmed , Agaha Nasir , Yawar Hayat , Fatima Suraiya Bajia , Haseena Moin and many notables names became an intractable part of Pakistan's popular culture landscape.(Nasir, 2012)

Time change and privatization of media took place in 2000. Entertainment channels established and on demand of massive production standard of dramas in regard of content, acting and presentation of culture has been compromised. This research will highlight this phenomenon which is a need of time.

Literature Review:

Taylor, 2005 studied that media is main reason behind formulation of people believes. Whatever content present on media that is slowly adopted by people and turn in norm of society. (Taylor, L. D, 2005).

According to Fitzgerald, 2010 things portrayed on media displays social existence of individuals (Fitzgerald, M. R, 2010).

Gerbner studied, 2008 studied that television drama depicts what is going on in society in natural setting. Presently television becomes main source of information (Gerbner, G., Gross, 2008).

Bandura,1986 in his study find that television content turn into a mirror of society people can relate their issue to media and sometime they want solution from television to. Now a day's our entertainment industry shows such characters that are not acceptable in our norms or we called it taboo to. (Bandura A, 1986)

Mustafa Sharjeel, 2014 highlight in his article that that in the era of nineties our drama industry was hypothetically one of the best in the Asia. Supremacy of our thirteen-episode drama serials can't be challenged. Without existence of glamour, malicious and beaten women

Bilal and Dr Riaz,2013 concluded in their study that since the arrival of television in Pakistan our drama serial enjoyed extensive fame. However our dramas are not only written by women but our majority drama viewers are women to. Drama develops woman culture on national and private channels. After era of Zia ul Haq trend has been set that women can't raise their voices against illicit of society.(Bilal Zubedi, Dr. Riaz,2013)

Hassan,2008 stated in his study that now a days during the prime time of

8:00pm to 10:00 pm almost every type of person with diverse age bracket, geographical area, culture and education level watch television (Hassan, 2008).

Nawaz 2006 studied that four functions of media are to inform, to educate, to guide and to entertain but drama and especially television industry is fail to fulfill four functions of media. Entertainment industry transmits culture and transform believes and this fact can't be denied. This is in the hands of policy makers how they reform society norms through powerful medium of television. Intellectual community criticizes today's dramas because these dramas sometimes cross the limits and present immoral things which are not acceptable in our society. (Nawaz, 2006).

Bandura ,2006 studies define drama viewers are outnumbering than male population. Television marketing staff is aware of this fact and that's why they produce attractive content to capture female audience. For this reason the majority of soap operas showed female in main character where major achievement for women are to get married and have children. (Bandura, 1986).

According to Guest , Bunce , 2006 television is responsible for presenting traditional gender stereotypes because it reflects dominant social values. (Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce,2006)

At 3rd almi mushira Amjad Islam Amjad said in his interview to that quality writer become rare today. Drama people are selling such productions which can easily sale in market. What we need drastic change in society in this regard. (Dawn Newspaper, Pg 4, 2010)

Above all the available literature on drama we came on to conclusion that standards of drama should be examine through content and production which is critically presented in this paper.

Methodology :

This research paper is based on data gathered from in-depth interviews with several well know personalities of the drama industry field. Qualitative research methods are used to collect the data. In order to attain the constraint of enormity of the topic author took sample size as per Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggested saturation of data sample according to them saturation of data regularly took place around 12 participants in regular groups. So as per random

sampling 12 participants from the drama industry had chosen. For In-depth interviews personal meetings and detail telephonic interview format have been chosen. For conclusion of data, thematic analysis approach is used.

Limitation of Study:

This study was directed with a small sample size through intensive interviews. The same type of study may be held with large sample size by using different methodology.

Discussion:

This discussion is presented on thematic analysis basis as per Boyatzis, R. (1998). The main topics discovered from the in-depth interviews participants are categorized in the following main themes and then into sub -themes:

- A- Content
 - i- Similar Story Lines
 - ii- Sensationalism
 - iii- Rating and TRP
- B- Acting
- C- Social Presentation
 - i- Glamorization
 - ii- Character Stereotyping
 - iii- Indian Influence

A- Content:

i- Similar Story Lines:

Strength of any drama content is dependent on its theme. Not so complex theme such as "Love is flower of life" or "Life is not a bed of roses" to multifaceted problem hidden in our society can be presented in theme. Currently Pakistani dramas are expiration of themes or they are mostly base on a storyline given by marketing department of entertainment channels. Drama deprived of a theme risk being ridiculous. People can guess easily what is going to be happened in next scene or episode. In order to maintain business and profit of entertainment channel marketing staff provides repetitive themes which not only T-off the audiences but also contribute in declining standard of drama.

Our stories most of the time rotate about the egotistical member of upper

class, well-off abusive girls, haunt type lover, myopic fathers, mistreated woman and manipulating temptress. Not very long ago we are grandiose of our Television Plays, their locations, marvelous acting, direction and significantly the story line stand tall during first to last episode. Now we just show broken houses all the time. A foundation of a strong drama lay upon its juicy or crunchy story and clear plot but our industry is bound to cliché and for profit gaining it is not even trying to be free from these certainties. Some times story lines were fixed by channel marketing department. It is also common practice now a day that content masters of any entertainment channel attempt to replicate successful film or drama stories. Amjad(Telephonic Conversation, Lahore, July 3,2017).

Presently our director's choose renowned stories from digest for production. These stories are already gain admiration in public this is how they ensure fame. In this scenario only few novel based dramas gain appreciation in people eyes most of them seriously disappoint readers. It is proven fact that our digest is also full of restricted romantic plots too so mostly drama story again and again came up with boring ideas.

Syed (Telephonic Interview, Karachi, August 18, 2017).

Nonetheless the younger directors and screen play writers claim that not every drama produced on old days is an epic. According to them during the 30-years only fifteen to twenty dramas out of a numerous dramas gain success on PTV we can call them classic. Today industry become too vast winning horse can't be seen so easily. So, if you compare these so called these mentioned classic the unforgettable ones than it's your fault, we are doing so well in so little time. PTV was not an emperor. Aas(Personal Interview , Karachi , October 10, 2017)

ii- Sensationalism

It is pragmatic that Pakistani drama industry wants to flabbergast the audience with its unique ideas. Their strategy is right in this competitive era but in order to gain audience attention they touch taboo issues which exists at very minute level in our society.

Penchant for excessive sensationalism in Pakistani news, similarly Pakistani dramas neglect important issues and decided to highlight issues like extra marital affairs, sister rivalry, step relations. These issues are not important in

our society. Sadistic psychopath who try marries his cousin or neighbor and subjects her to nonstop violence, dramas which highlighted the seriousness and severe consequences of 'talaq' in worse scenario, mitigate the character of the rapist as a 'decent' human and husband cheating his wife being become latest trend in industry which can't be justify at any cause. Moin (Personal Interview, Karachi, August 15,2017)

Previously ingenuity from the theater, radio and film reached into television that's why from 1970 till 1995 PTV did excellent work. During 2000 era privatization of television industry occurred. PTV screen comprise of whole Pakistan on the other hand Private Channels want to only show the saleable Pakistan, no matter how much this act can shatter the moral values and culture of the society. Consequently, private industry willingly downs the drama to B-class. By watching today's drama, we will have an impression that no woman in Pakistan is truthful to her better half. We have a custom that the eldest daughter-in-law in a household was like the mother but there has been no drama during the last five years show her in motherly role they always portray her having illicit relations with everyone. What are we teaching in our society? These type of drama increase rating but couldn't maintain quality in respect of content and culture. Pasha (Personal Interview, Karachi, August 20, 2017)

iii- Rating and TRP

TRPs (television rating points) and Pakistani Drama industry become two sides of same coins. Even though the trustworthiness, dependability and feasibility of these ratings are arguable but no producer, director, writer or even actor can contempt these ratings. These Trps gain huge profits to producers and our drama dignitaries. No one wants any loss in this setting. Commercialism of any industry is good but every great achievement came with bigger responsibility to. Not long ago when glamour, capital and recognition arrive in television world many people whose ultimate vision is profit gaining move in this field.

This system of TRPs is evidently passing on our attention and viewing patterns to entertainment channels. Presently, TRPs are the only formal method to gain viewer feedback. On the basis of Trps measurements producers, advertisers and content heads decide what people like to watch. People like formula type

dramas like formula films so drama industry people are bound to work in these boundaries. Fazal (Telephonic Interview September 10, 2017)

Entertainment channels can't free themselves from the tranquillizing effect of TRPs. Due to this these channels have not used their medium for achieving the goals and needs twenty first century. These Trps meter ratings have suppressed the talent of many geniuses. Not only some individual suffered because of ratings but also the nation suffers on account of B rated drama transmission. Today's TV drama portrays women as weak and helpless or in Cinderella type character while in the past a woman's struggle was always shown in a positive manner.

Ratings game is over passing decency on TV. It is glorifying illegitimacy and taboo issues. On account of rating we are damaging the strength of our own society.

B- Acting:

A definition of a good actor is if he or she makes us believe that he or she is suffering from what his or her character is going through. Actors can surprise us in many ways. Most of the actors from PTV golden era amaze us by being candid while playing multiple roles. Quality of a good actor is how well he follows director directives. Now a day some actors involved in ego but they are unaware the fact that face value couldn't last long their acting career. In a decade of private TV channels lots of actors came and gone but they are fail to mark their work.

Good actors aware of how to use their voice and control his body. This doesn't unavoidably mean he's or she should be tall, thin and has pretty face. It means they identifies how to move and talk in impressive ways. Khan(Telephonic Interview, October 31,2017)

Today lack of rehearsal can easily observe on screen. Wrong foot notes and separate scenes or dialogue recordings are main reason of our bad acting. Today's actor sound like they are reciting memorized lines rather than conveying them thought or feeling. Frequently they don't convey sufficient emotions in their tone of voice or some time they exaggerate emotion. Their facial expression, body language, and timing not blend with each other. One factor which couldn't be ignore for bad acting is he is provided with the script which is dead enough to dissatisfy the audience then in this condition that's really not his fault. Shahid

(Personal Interview, Karachi , September 22,2017)

C- Social Presentation:

i- Glamorization

Even though glamour is nonstop ably linked with the media but restriction at any point is necessary. Presently Pakistani dramas become unusual and non-realistic. There is a fallacy that to glamorize the things are all you need to gain potential success. Showing off big houses, luxury cars, landlords and a well maintained social hub provoking lust in general public. Sometime drama industry tries to glamorize crime to which is not ok for us. Dramas like 'Bashar Momin', 'NauLakaha', 'Khan', 'Mera Sian' , ' Khani' all are glamorized and showing wealth how can anyone is such bad as Bashar or Khan then one woman or lady love change his life and he turn into angle. It is just a one example but they are repetitively doing such act. Khawar (Telephonic Interview, August 30, 2017)

Previously when our glamorous actresses & actors have to compromise on their styling, make-up and outfits because a certain role which they are endorsing in a drama does not permit them to look glamorous but now these actors demand us to look like super models in role of domestic maids. Ahmed (Personal Interview, Karachi, September 2, 2017)

Since we all know television is different medium therefore the outlook of the characters in dramas is just as important as their dialogue delivery and the body language. So director in order to beautify screens try to portray every character in light make-up, nice hairdo and perfect dress. Taste of Pakistani audience is changed they like spices and glamour on their screens and it happened because for the period on ten years Indian Dramas capture hearts of our audience. We grab their attention slowly and steady so we need to beautify our screen and have to add little glamour to. But it doesn't mean we will glorify crime of illicit acts. Pasha (Personal Interview, Karachi , August 20,2017)

ii- Character Stereotyping :

Most of the dramas on air today portray women as weak and helpless. Women continuously shown as sacrificing puppets who bear all abuse, blame and humiliation because that is expected of a good Pakistani woman. This concept brilliantly delivered through the drama Humsafar, MerayBewafa etc.

Almost all the scripts now days are based and revolved around women life, they have same story, plot, or purpose. They portray same conventional image of women in almost every story. Pakistani dramas have pasted themselves to feminist issues only and a large audience including children, teenagers and men are being ignored.

Current drama serials are so captivated in representing women as zalim saas , mazloom bahu, jhagralo nand and Even Pakistani dramas titles become poster of weak women ie'Meri Saheli Meri Bhaabhi, SusraalMera and 'Meri Behn ka Susraal and all these dramas have nothing to address except for the conflicts between mothers, daughters and sisters-in-law. Bari Khan (Personal Interview, Karachi, September 13, 2017)

iii- Indian Influence :

On account of modern entertainment and TRPs we have to bare all kinds of meaningless content in today's dramas. Pregnancies, abortions, extra martial affair, illegitimate children, fall in love with rapist, elopements etc every type of story on air during prime time. Even respectable relationships become questionable. That is all due to copying of Indian content.

Sometime girl fall in love with her brother-in-law and uses all sorts of tricks and unfair means to make him her life-partner. Some drama shows maids being used as objects of physical pleasure and satisfaction. These are only a few examples of all the illogicality that we are being entertained with in the form of dramas. This trend was set by Indian satellite channels but now Pakistani drama industry blindly follows it. It's because of producer demand to they say they want a story which can easily sale when they observe any Indian drama become popular over here they try to adopt it as per our culture this formula most of the time become successful and list of Indian content or you can say culture influenced drama go on and on. Shah (Personal Interview, Karachi, July 18, 2017)

Conclusion:

On the basis of data collected through in-depth interviews in order to maintain qualitative standards of today's dramas some notable suggestions are:

- When you are presenting social issue in drama research is essential.
- Drama is not a name of romantic fairy tale between princess and prince

with lots of villain and vixen.

- Drama should be taught at academic level.
- Copying Indian content doesn't guarantee success.
- There is a serious scarcity of good dialogues and scripts in industry
- Dramatist can create change by breaking stereotypes regarding laws exist in society.
- Drama must be free from pressure of TRPs and marketing team.
- Our drama industry needs to present drama in different format like biographies, horror , mysteries, teen drama or political fiction etc
- Drama industry should feel responsibility and avoid un-necessary glamour because it can create greediness in mind of people.
- We need to extract stories from classic Urdu literature.
- Production of today drama is only limited to two bedrooms and dining room story. We can broaden their locations or you can say setting we have e.g. of Janjalpura which on aired with many settings but grip was not lose even in a single scene.
- We need good acting schools to.
- Exaggeration of crime like rape, sexual violence, and extra marital affairs is unbearable. If you want to touch any taboo issue it can't be on air on prime time.

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