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SURVEY OF TELEVISION STUDIES IN INDIA: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGY OF AUDIENCE

Srinvas Panthukala

Department of Communication
The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad, Telangana State, India

Introduction

Is a survey of television studies in India feasible?

What is the text? Depth and Diversity of the Content?

The following article is a survey of television studies in India: Television in contemporary culture and the sociological study of audiences and analysis of television programmes as ‘texts’. Television Studies in India is a new, dynamic and rapidly changing field of work in the academic discipline. Like any academic subject, Television Studies is diverse and evolving, and there are strongly held and articulately presented points of view within it that differ greatly in aims, assumptions, emphases and conclusions. The diverse approaches to Television Studies are not a set of tools, but more like a group of different languages. In the Indian context these languages take the form of communicating with the masses. This paper is concerned with the most commonly studied theoretical issues in television studies courses and how these issues are reflected when it comes to the Indian context. To begin with research would like to touch on the various aspects of Indian television using the following approaches:

- Television history and developments in broadcasting policy
- The television industry as institution and its production practices
- Television in contemporary culture and the sociological study of audiences
- Analysis of television programmes as ‘texts’

In this first part of survey of television studies in India, touched on the important books that throw light on what Television studies in India is all about. Secondly paper, focused on television culture, textual analyses and sociology of audiences.

The historiography of Indian television can be divided into the pre-SITE and post-Satellite period. The story of the pre-satellite period is fairly simple: television was a cultural and political instrument of the State, simultaneously implicit in the creation of a consumerist middle class. Its various manifestations have found able chroniclers - from former broadcasters to satellite communication experts, professionals and critical media and communication scholars like Vikram Sarabai, Rabi Narayana Acharya, Binod C.Agrawal & Arbind K. Sinha, Nilanjana Gupta, Bhasker Ghose and Deepa Dhanraj. The post-satellite period in the history of Indian television began with the liberalization era in the nineties with the broadcast of satellite TV by foreign channels such as the CNN and Star TV followed by domestic channels such as Zee TV and Sun TV. Below is a survey of the literature in Post-Satellite period the important eras in the history of Indian Television. The literature has exposed Global Communication platform as Television Medium and Television culture has become popular culture, Music and cricket culture among urban youth, epic serials and soap operas impact on urban middle class housewives. Communication experts and media critics like Sevanti Nenon, Vamsee Juluri, Purnima Mankekar, Arvind Rajagopal, Nalin Mehta, Boria Majumdar, Shoma Munshi has analyzed television medium, the reshaping of Hindu nationalism, womanhood, sports and sociology of audience in India.

Although television as a form of mass communication did not emerge until the late 1940s and early 1950s, much of the technology of television developed during the 1920s. As with many forms of media technology, the promises and expectations of the medium were optimistic and propitious. For instance, one of the often-overlooked inventors in the United States, Philo Farnsworth, was clearly hopeful about the future of television. One of his biographers explains:

Philo began laying out his vision for what television could become. Above all else...television would become the world’s greatest teaching tool. Illiteracy would be wiped out. The immediacy of television was the key. As news happened viewers would watch it unfold live; no longer would we have to rely on people interpreting and distorting the news for us. We would be watching sporting events and symphony orchestras. Instead of going to the movies, the movies would come to us. Television would also bring about world peace. If we were able to see people in other countries and learn about our differences, why would there be any misunderstanding? War would be a thing of the past. (Schwartz, 2002, p.113)



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Obviously, Farnsworth’s full vision has not yet been realized, even though some parts of his dream have been more than fulfilled and expanded further. Television has become a common household appliance that serves as a source of news, information, politics, entertainment, education, religion, art, culture, sport, weather, and music. Television is an industrial system that produces and distributes products, as well as promoting other commodities and commerce. Hence, television is not only a technical device, but also a social, political, economic, cultural force and communication tool.

Television continues to be a centrally important factor and an inescapable part of modern culture. Many would still call it the most important of all the mass media. As one television program about television concludes: From its Indian public marketing in the 1960s to the present day, television can be listed as one of the most profound, if not the most profound, influences on human history. Television has affected every aspect of our lives including history, science, politics, culture and social mores. It is impossible to imagine a world without television, and most of us take for granted the way television has shaped and defined our society, and our lives. (The History Channel, 1996)

The State-owned media “Doordarshan” has 60 years of history and historical background in the upgrading the equipment and financial support from the State. The year of 1975 is the milestone in the history of Indian Television which started Satellite Instructional Television Experiment. Indian state also took initiatives for technological enhancement and producing programmes on diverse culture and traditional methods on Television. “*Doordarshan Days*” is book which will give us an understanding and cultural dimension of the Indian state and society. *Doordarshan Days* written by Bhaskar Ghose. He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1960, retiring from it after thirty-six years. He has held the posts of Director General, Doordarshan, Secretary, Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. In this book “*Doordarshan Days*”, Bhaskar Ghose recounts with disarming frankness and characteristic humor his struggle to bring about change, revealing in the process the tragic tale of the public television in India. This book is a historical and cultural record of television in India.

“*Who’s News? The Media and Women’s Issues*” initially was edited by Kalpana Sharma and Ammu Joseph in 1994. It is composed of two different parts. The first one is written by the major authors in terms of researches on women issues in Print Media. They focused this study on four important and terrifying issue “about women” life and about their media coverage. The cases are the Dowry Deaths, Rape, Sex Determination Test, Sati and the Shah Bano controversy which took a political and religious dimension. They noticed the paradox between the will of the newspapers to cover these cases of crimes, and more specifically against women crimes, but without emphasizing the debate on the feminist and social issue. They refuse to draw parallels with this latest issue which doesn’t concern journalists by themselves, even if sometimes there are polemic articles. Finally, the analysis highlighted the fact that the Media area is not exempted from the influence of the patriarchal society and from the one of systems of women representation. They are not concerned by taking a concrete humanist position in the debate and just follow the institutional decisions, represented with the State. This stays for the first part of the book; another part is dedicated to a study on Television programmes.

“*Critical Focus on Doordarshan soap operas*” written by Deepa Dhanraj, Media Critique and Documentary film Maker. She wrote an analysis about the series telecasted on State owned media Doordarshan in the mid-eighties. All of them had been produced and proposed by the Doordarshan national channels, specifically during the period when sponsors and advertisements entered the Doordarshan sphere. It was a new step and the opportunity to give more space to the liberal ways of customers living. Doordarshan, which was supposed to develop a national feeling and a medium to communicate the value of democracy and citizen equality, failed in its mission. According to the 1985 report from the “Working Group on Software for Doordarshan”, the national objective for women’s equality is not reached, in the programs as well. This is the postulate of Deepa Dhanraj in developing her analysis.

Author article starts with the women’s social and personal life in India. 36 percent of the working forces are related to women’s work, according to the capitalist mathematical and economic value of work. But Indian society is not ready to admit the daily care of family to be full time work. In the book she explains what is the national program of woman’s quotas to get jobs and adds that definitely, the “delivery of agricultural resources continues to be directed by men”. She points out that power relations are entrenched within institutions. She agrees to say that “women’s subordination has to be investigated rather than assumed because its various cultural expressions are dependent on the intersection of class, caste and regional factors”. She describes the affirmative action of the government “women’s needs” with a generalization of needs, without taking any consideration regarding castes, classes, ages, groups, etc. This is a similar attitude in the press. The final targets of media are middle class, upper-caste, and educated women. Also, the goal of institutions such as Doordarshan is, and finally of the State, is to transmit a homogeneous ideology “based on middle class assumptions”. Deepa Dhanraj, focused her analysis on seven serials telecasted by Doordarshan. *Adhikaar*, *Aur Bhi Hain Raahein*, *Udaan*, *Stri*, *Kashmakash*, *Air Hostess* and *Swayamsiddha*. These series deal with women’s issues, women’s fights to



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improve their social way of life as women workers, divorced persons, and fictive activists. One important point is the attraction of stereotypes. The most known and the simplest of them are “sex object”, mother and housewife”. These stereotypes are easy to draw in images. This is basically pseudo-emotional stories and a repetitive relation with the father’s or husband’s authority. The women’s world gravitates around the men’s desire and expectations.

She is also introducing the notion of identification argued by Christian Metz. The identification is composed of narcissistic and voyeuristic pleasure. The comparison of the audience with the protagonist and his exciting life purposes to the audience a false representation of its own life. Spectators have the feeling of living such important things and that their freedom is increasing at the same time as the protagonist does. But this is a fake idea and the oppression, when the Television box is switched off, is still present in the house. The voyeuristic part of the identification process is another important notion argued by Laura Mulvey. The “visual pleasure” is given by the exposure of beautiful people, actresses and actors. The large number of beautiful sexy actresses is imposed by this need of voyeurism from the male audience. The point is also women want to watch sexy actress to satisfy their need of identification. This is an identification related to male viewers, to satisfy their appetite.

Deepa Dhanraj agrees to say that the field of research is closed but they can emphasize that Doordarshan’s target is the urban, middle class, literate and upper caste women. This dominant image is driven as a norm. This norm is proposed as an answer to women’s issues. The advertisements which try to sell “the better life concept” into familial house are well chosen. The objects of desire should be able to unify society by unifying women’s desires. “The values of materialism are constructed as a uniting factor. All these serials are homogeneous. This fact is imposed by a limited choice of actress and a wish to create Pan-Indian culture to fight against rising caste, religious and ethnic conflict. Finally, Doordarshan’s affirmative efforts for women failed because women are used for their subversive potential. The final critique of the author is regarding the government which to propose a “progressive” view of women in current India. But in fact, these series reflect attempts the attention of viewers from the continuing and gross neglect of women in other spheres. She is insisting on the fact that television producers are not alone in this process, but programmers, blue-collar workers, advertisers and audiences have converged to create the middle-class women.

“*Becoming Global Audience: Longing and Belonging in Indian Music Television*” is written by Vamsee Juluri. This book talks about the rise of a Television in India during 1990’s and the coming of Music Television channels and shows in India. This book discusses how the Television scenario has changed in India since 1990. “The picture of the global audience that invoke in this book is therefore not one of the masses of anonymous eyes in the dark fixed upon an American pop music video; it is perhaps better describes as a resistive elegy to the appropriation of an Indian sentiment mighty enough to represent the possibility of global condition by an imperialistic injunction that has fractured the conditions of existence of the Indian sentiment” quotes the author in a beautiful manner in the introduction chapter. This book is considered to be a good piece of work which helps to understand the Indian audience and what represents them. It’s as if someone’s looking at them. The book also says how MTV and V channel have an impact on change in the television field. There are many music regional television channels and special audiences for music lovers in Television Industry. Especially, diverse traditional music and folk music have become a popular music culture giving enough space on television. Now, there is a music channels boon in India, which has audience, market and television rating points of youth audience.

“*The Commercial Context on Music Television in India*”: talks about growth of Music Industry in India and the taking down of Doordarshan by Zee Television and Star Television. The response to these channels was energetic and gave a good competition to Doordarshan though it monopolies the Indian Television Network. Zee TV was the first private Indian Channel and with its innovative entertainment factor took down the effect of Doordarshan on the mass audience. Though Doordarshan tried its best to get the audience using various formats it couldn’t reach the heights of private Television channels. These channels started to compete in achieving maximum audience in the field of Music, precisely music countdowns. Doordarshan’s “Super hit Muqabla” was a massive hit but at the same time Zee network came up with its own countdown Philip’s Top Ten, which went on gathering some of the highest viewership in those times. Both the channels featured latest Hindi songs by experimenting with variety of formats over the years. These shows established film music-based shows as the back bone to the post liberalization of Television programs in India. M TV and Channel V concentrated on exclusively on Music and their target audience have become youth though the demand of mass audience has continued to affect growth and competition in music channels. Satellite television has changed the way music is marketed in India. Music companies thought that music videos are the best way to promote their products, which in turn lead to a step ahead in commercialization. These music televisions, has changed the way the consumers purchase music albums, instead of recording, people started to buy the whole album, within no time Television viewing has become a great part in people’s life with the arrival of satellite television channel.



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In “*Music Television and its Audiences*” the author tries to discuss the issues and consequences in the reception of music television in India. He also says what music television is and what being music television audience means for the participants in this book. It also says that the viewer’s not clearly acclaims the new identity as music television audience but they try to negotiate new curiosities and conventions in present day music television. The audiences are not enjoying the common pleasure of watching the film songs but are trying to explore something beyond that; the demands placed on them for authenticity and how the visual are projected in the shows and tries to create a certain identity for the viewers. The way audience watch music has changed because of the music television; they are not just watching the film songs but are trying to derive knowledge, interest, and attention (contemporary way of watching music television). Western or Indian pop music countdowns are taken down by Indian language music countdowns. Music channels have increased gradually due to low production costs and the large reach of the audience.

Music television has played a vital role in India to create an idea and understanding among the people about the concept of Globalization. The most popular music album on India screen ‘Made in India’. “Most middle class participants categorized globalization as India, Indian people, Indian culture, Indian products, and Indian services going out into the global world”. The music video made in India, sets the stage for a princess to turn down suitors from all over the world and finally choose an Indian man. It actually tries to say that India has shown progress in the field of Globalization. This chapter raises the question of globalization through made in India Music album. Vamsee also says that self-orientalism creates globalization, for example Indian producers have chosen this way of representing India by making films and music videos outside India but meant for Indian audience.

This book says how India got into global market and how music channels played a key role in shaping the Indian audience into global audience and was helpful in making Indian media global. The Privatization of Indian Television lead to change of audience behavior and the change of the way audience look at the music television. How films and products used music television for the promotion of their movie or products. How India turned into a global market. Post-colonial episode about global audience and change in the scenario with the coming of music television. The author mainly talks about the Indian music television and how it made India global. In What way music television meant middle class audience and how they connect and related to countdowns and shows to their day-to-day life is discussed.

The shooting of a film, especially of a sound film, affords a spectacle unimaginable anywhere at any time before this. It presents a process in which it is impossible to assign to a spectator a viewpoint which would exclude from the actual scene such extraneous accessories as camera equipment, lighting machinery, staff assistants, etc- unless his eye were on a line parallel with the lens. This circumstance, more than any other, renders superficial and insignificant any possible similarity between a scene in the studio and one on the stage. In the theater one is well aware of the place from which the play cannot immediately be detected as illusionary. There is no such place for the movie scene that is being shot. Its illusionary nature is that of the second degree, the result of cutting. That is to say, in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology. (Walter Benjamin, 1936)

Television in India: Satellites, Politics and Cultural change book edited by Nalin Mehta. This book is an amalgam of various articles written by eminent persons who have studied the field of television studies, especially in India context. This book is outcome of the three conferences in Shanghai and Melbourne that brought together renowned scholars and practitioners to discuss the ‘television architecture’ of Asia and the impact of television on various societies. This book includes the edited version of the papers on India and attentively studies the development of television in India since the 1990’s New Economic Reforms period (LPG). It touched up the satellite politics, social issues and cultural change in India. The history of Indian television can be traced back to 1991, when India had only one channel, Doordarshan, which was state-owned. With the rapid growth in technology and the advent of satellite television, various other channels were introduced. One could notice the alarming growth in viewing figures. This book explores how, over the years, Indian television has transformed to adapt to different needs of viewers. Satellite television, which was brought to Indian to promote global capitalism, was soon Indianised by Indian businessmen and various entrepreneurs.

Nalin Mehta tried to give an overview of understanding the impact television has had on the Indian society and how it has brought together a nation with such a vast diversity in culture and its encounter with globalization. Also, the effect of television on social practices, politics, democracy, popular culture and identity formation is studied in the various articles that together form the book.



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The book contains nine articles by different scholars that help us in understanding the various sides of television. The following is a short summary of each of the article. *Introduction: satellite television, identity and globalization in contemporary India* by Nalin Mehta. This article talks about how satellite television has played a very big role in bringing the nation together as a nation. Citing, ‘Indian Idol as an example’, Nalin Mehta brings to our notice how the show has brought the north-eastern states closer to the mainland. *The Mahatma didn’t like the movies and why it matters: Indian broadcasting policy, 1920s-1990s* by Robin Jeffrey. Through this essay, Robin Jeffrey maps the transformation in the Indian broadcasting policy from pre-independence times to post-independence years. The article strongly argues that the Government failed to use television and radio to their fullest because of the following three reasons. The impact of the restrictive policies imposed on a colonial state, the Puritanism of the Gandhian national movement and the fear of any internal conflicts, only made strong by the partition in 1974. The policies formed during 1940s and 1950s shaped the structure of Indian television for years, till it was changed, yet again, with the advent of satellite television.

India talking: policies, democracy and news television by Nalin Mehta. In this essay talks about the impact of satellite television on 24-hour news and further, the impact of news television on democracy. After four decades of state monopoly, when satellite television brought in private channels, the face of Indian television changed forever. The essay is divided into two parts: the first links democratic culture and television. It states that the rise and success of Indian news television is linked with India’s ‘argumentative tradition’ of debate. The second part of the essay highlights the relationship between news television and Indian politics. It shows how political leaders adapted their lives to the 24-hour publicity provided by news channels. *Politics without television: the BSP and the Dalit counter-public sphere* by Maxine Loynd. This chapter examines throughout the revolution in Indian television and newspapers, where in Dalits have found little or no representation. Dalit culture and politics have been left out of mainstream media since times immemorial. Having to face under-representation and stereotyping, Dalits have not benefited so far. In such a situation, BSP knew that in a media industry dominated by upper castes, Dalits will find it hard to be part of the media because of caste bias. Their mobilization strategy revolves around blending the cultural identity of Dalits with their political ideology. *Muslims on television: news and representation on satellite channels* by Roshni Sengupta. This article tried to identify the role of Muslims in the television news industry, particularly in Hindi news channels. Hindu-Muslim relations have always been an important issue in India and therefore, it is essential to study the manner in which Muslims are represented in Indian television. In this article, Roshni Sengupta reveals through her research that Muslims have been a huge part of the television industry itself, that is to say that one can find many Muslims in editors, production and management position within the industry. Also, the article suggests that Muslims are certainly not under-represented in television. The essay also deals with the issue of stereotyping of Muslims on television focusing on the period of communal tension during the Ram-Janambhoomi agitation. Citing various ‘headlines’ in the newspapers during this time as an example, the essay traces the link between news reports and the rising public violence. Further, it highlights the representation of Muslims in government service sector pre- and post-independence. Also, it states that Muslim media professionals often have to deal with dodgy situations, especially while dealing with issues related to communal strife.

The concept of aura which was proposed above with reference to historical objects may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things “closer” spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object equality of things” has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. Thus, is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception. (Walter Benjamin, 1936)

Give me a vote, and I will give you a TV set: television in Tamil Nadu politics by Maya Ranganathan. When it comes to Tamil Nadu, one cannot help but notice the relationship between films and politics. Time and again, superstars from the film industry have ventured into politics. Maya Ranganathan, through this essay, explores how television has become an important medium through which political parties not only influence the voters but also use it to spread propaganda. Where the state’s major political parties own various satellite channels, it is very interesting to note the impact of television on the audience. It is obvious that, TV has become a



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political communication tool for the political parties in India. *Soaps, serials and the CPI(M), cricket beats them all: crickets and television in contemporary India* by Boria Majumdar. This essay explores the growth of interdependence of television and cricket in the past few years. In a country like India, where cricket is ‘worshipped’, one cannot ignore the impact it has on its audience. During the cricket tournaments, the television channels benefit a lot from the advertising revenue. Boria Majumdar takes up two case studies in this article. The trination one day series played by Australia, West Indies and India in Malaysia in September, 2006 and the television coverage of Cricket Association of Bengal Elections in July, 2006.

Bowling with the wind: *a television producer’s view on cricket and satellite TV in contemporary India* by Peter Hutton. In this essay, Peter Hutton traces the history of cricket on television. It tells the story of how India went from being an amateur in the sports business to overtaking Sky to become the main funder of world cricket. It also follows the feud that ensued when Doordarshan along with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting refused to allow foreign broadcaster to telecast matches in India, calling BCCI and CAB ‘anti-national’. What followed soon was the Supreme Court decree in 1995 stating that airwaves could no longer be solely owned by the state. This changed the face of Indian Broadcasting forever. The essay further talks about the joint venture of ESPN and STAR Sports called ‘ESPN-STAR Sports’, the crucial birth of Ten Sports and the Goodwill Series, 2004 that strengthened the hold of Ten Sports on Indian television. *Changing context, new texts: “inserting” TV into the transforming text of post 1980 Bengali Cinema* by Sharmishtha Goptu. In this essay, Sharmishtha Goptu analyses the regional-language cinema in Bengal stating that around 1980s one could notice a sharp change in the type of movies being made and calling them an imitation of ‘Bombay cinema’. The new ‘masala’ movies made can be attributed to the creation of a television-watching public in Bengal. The trend can be traced back to the setting up of a television centre in Calcutta in 1975 as part of the expansion of Doordarshan. The popularity of the channel grew and it created a class of television-watching people. By 1980s, TV became an indispensable part of a Bengal household. Women preferred TV as it gave them a break from regular household chores and gave them a choice of watching old movies that were not screened in theatres. At the same time, Bengalis were also getting attracted to the colorful and extravagant Bombay films. Also, soon with the advent of satellite television, their ideas about what they want to watch also changed gradually. This book is a very good collection of different essays that give an insight into different perspectives. Providing detailed examples, history background and case studies that make it easier to understand the different aspects of television, this book gives a knowledge-enriching experience. Television is a huge industry with various issues.

Screening culture, viewing politics: *ethnography of television, womanhood and nation in postcolonial India* by Purnima Mankekar. Author has begun her research in New Delhi in 1990, in the context of heated protests against the Indian government’s Mandal Commission Bill, which aimed to set quotas for the so-called ‘backward castes’ in both education and civil service employment, and of a brutal wave of Hindu right-wing violence of womanhood, community, belonging nation and culture emerged as inter-linked sites of violent contestation, and in both women and representations of women were foregrounded. Mankekar keeps this broader social and political context in focus as she looks at both the production and reception of representations of women in the programming of Doordarshan, the state-run television network. She takes the time at three levels: to ‘read’ the representational codes and discursive systems at work in a variety of Doordarshan narratives; to explore the relationship between these discursive productions and narratives that viewers weave of their own lives; and to track the articulation of both cultural production and reception with the broader structure of power and inequality.

Author has analyzed four key areas: family, community, violence, and the transnational connections through which these themes, as well as notions of the local and the national, ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ are being reconfigured. A recurrent theme across these areas is the problematic way in which women are simultaneously foregrounded as key players in producing and sustaining national, class, caste and religious identities, and constrained by the gendered hierarchies embedded in prevailing definitions of those identities. Purnima argues that, from its earliest productions of television serials, Doordarshan promoted the configuration of its national audience as a ‘viewing family’. In both the serials and the closely coordinated through which themes such as national integration, development and modernity, middle-class aspiration and consumerism are elaborated. Within this, the positioning of women is key, not least as consumers, who, through their choices, are being called upon to hold together tradition and modernity and to consolidate the family’s class status and aspirations through its acquisition of consumer goods. Similarly, Doordarshan’s ‘women-oriented’ serials stress the centrality of family to discourses of Indian culture and nationhood. The ‘New Indian Woman’ at the heart of these discourses is both accommodated and subsumed with master narratives of family and nation: she participates in the nation’s march to modernity and at same time, preserves all that is unique and authentic about ‘Indian culture’. Women’s agency is at once enabled and domesticated by these narratives of nation and family. Nationalism creates the horizon for women as it constitutes them as citizen-subjects, leaving little room for radical critiques of women’s position within the family and nation, and importantly, also foreclosing discussion of inequalities among women along axes of religious identity, caste or class.



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“Prime Time Soap Operas on Indian Television” written by Shoma Munshi. Soap operas have been popular in India ever since the introduction of television set. Not only has the number of television channels been increasing over the years, but at the same time has the number of different soap operas. The genre has become more and more popular. Nowadays, approximately one third of India’s inhabitants watch soap operas regularly, “Prime Time Soap Operas on Indian Television” by Shoma Munshi examines prime time soap operas in academic context. The author starts with a short and useful introduction of soap operas in general. First of all, Munshi describes the differences of soap, serial and series. This basic distinction is of great important when studying soap operas as it defines the object of investigation. In contrast to serial and series, stories in soap operas are never finally resolved. Instead, soaps lack a narrative closure. Once this distinction I made, the reader gets an insight into the origins of the genre of soap operas: soap Operas have their origin in 1930’s America. In that time, serials were broadcasted on radio, sponsored by soap manufacturers. Seventy years later, on 3 July 2000. The first Indian soap opera “Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” was shown on Star Plus. As the authoress is trying to develop a theory of genre for Indian prime time soaps, she focuses on the different fields that Indian soaps borrow from: melodrama and realism, the influence of the Ramayan and Mahabharat epics, US prime time soaps, Bollywood as well as tradition and modernity. After this first introduction, each chapter in “Prime Time Soap Operas on Indian Television” deal with a generic feature of Indian prime time soap opera. Although the different Indian soaps share some of those features, there are fundamental differences because of the social, economic and cultural context in which they are produced and telecasted. The authoress examines five prime time soap operas, that is, analyses and compares them with each other. It is the following soap operas that are chosen to illustrate the genre of soap operas in India: Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi (3 July 200- 6 November 2008, Star Plus, Monday-Thursday, 10:30pm-11pm), Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii (16 October 200 – 9 October 2008, Star Plus, Monday-Thursady, 10:00 pm- 10:30pm), Kasautii Zindagi Kay (29 October 2001 – 28 February 2008, Star Plus, Monday-Thursady, 8 pm- 8:30 pm), Sapna Babul Ka...Bidaai (8 October 2007-13 November 2010, Star Plus, Monday-Friday, 9pm-9:30pm) and Saat Phere...Saloni Ka Safar (17 October 2005 – 28 May 2009, Zee TV, Monday- Thursday, 9:30pm- 10pm). All of them have in common that they are not state-sponsored but produced by private production houses. At the end of the book, in the appendix, a useful synopsis of the five soap operas discussed in the book is provided.

In the second chapter, Munshi focuses on the milieu of production. The reader gets information about the importance of soap operas in prime-time programming for television channels and television rating points (TRPs). Apart from that, the production houses that produce the soaps discussed in “Prime time Soap Operas on Indian Television” are introduced, including their similarities and differences with production in the West. Finally, the changing relationship between television channels and production houses in India is presented. The chapter gives a great overview on the importance of the genre of soap operas within the Indian television industry and creates a theoretical framework essential for the understanding of the popularity of soap operas. Topics such as consumerism, themes of “Indian-ness”, strong women and real issues are focused on. The part “Stooping to Conquer: Strong Women” questions the role of the woman and demonstrates the influence of soap operas. Munshi states that soaps may function as entertainment- education and as persuaders in empowering women. The authoress concludes with some interesting thoughts about future directions. Moreover, the authoress analyzes narrative structures of soaps and typical themes.

Conclusion

These are very limited research studies on Television in India. There is huge demand and need to do more diverse aspects research on Television. Television studies are an emerging field in India and television content and impact on society. Spaces on satellite abundances but channels are not able to fill the content gaps and fulfil the software. So much recorded programmes and dependency on film content, clippings and movies. As noticed in earlier studies Dalits, Advasis and religious minority’s space are limited in the new rooms and television productions. Regional news television channels are more democratic space when we compare to national and international news and entertainment programmes. 18 diverse languages plays vital role for dissemination of information, education, entertainment, infotainment and knowledge when we compare to western media theories and practices. In India each language has its own audience and television rating points for building capacity of the Television Industry. Now, In India Regional Television boon and rising TV channels networks concentrating on regional market and audience. Television genre has more and more aspects like Health, Education, online Shopping, Women, Culture, Movie, Music, Sports, Devotional, 24 hours news channels and entertainment channels. There is no discussion on television studies in India when we compare to film studies in India, television is depending on film industry and text for sustaining television medium and studies. Earlier stage of Television (Doordarshan) was discussed about the audience interest and got feedback. In the new economic reform period 1991, there no space for audience, everything is content has commoditized, audience have transferred has consumers, commercial elements have taken place. It is a difficult task for survey on television studies in Indian context due to very less studies on Indian television that to urban centric, consumer orientation, middle class perspective. There is a huge demand and need on diverse studies for exploring text, context, industry and spectatorship. Above mentioned studies have attempted an overview, there is need of in-depth analysis on each



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and every soap opera and its impact on mass audiences. For television studies there is lack of methodology and media theories, we need to follow content analysis, textual analysis, case studies and survey methods for research on television studies. State should follow scientific methods for analysing media theories in Indian context. At present TV Studies has limited space and there is scope and need for focusing on TV studies in India. Especially Television Journalism has drastic change on ground realities and influence on masses. 24 hours news channel dissemination of information, education and debating social issues on screen. Of course, there are many issues are diverting due television medium sensationalism and corporate agenda for news.

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