



EXPOSING FEMALES AS CRIMINALS IN PAKISTANI TV DRAMAS

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Abstract

This research examines the bias, depiction, and role provision of women in Pakistani television dramas. Most Pakistanis think plays and movies mirror society. Over time, dramas have shown more women as criminals. Recent dramas portray women as unfaithful, liars, or cunning. These dramas may inspire females to commit crimes. Pakistani television shows have prioritized women's criminal storylines due to both gender and crime issues. Pakistani electronic media portrays female crime in this research. Content analysis and critical discourse analysis will examine how plays depict women as criminals. Three famous Pakistani shows depict women as worse offenders. Pakistani society remains morally and culturally conservative despite feminism and social progress. Despite women being powerful, liberal or smart Pakistani plays' questionable portrayal of women is examined.

Keywords: Female crime, Pakistani plays, controversial image.

Introduction

The public's knowledge of current events is being cultivated via television. Dramas provide the most entertainment for viewers of the medium. It also serves as a source of inspiration and instruction for the new moves. When it comes to promoting positive social change, television dramas are second to none. The media is crucial to any civilization because of the information it disseminates. It may influence public opinion and behavior. The media sector's ability to provide truthful and fabricated content is not questioned. Although many different types of media are available in Pakistan, the most widely consumed are those associated with the Internet and television. As a result, it has more sway in Pakistan's society, where the literacy rate is relatively low. Because of this demographic shift, the television business has altered considerably during the last several decades. The widespread availability of media has made it an important conduit for disseminating social, cultural, and political news. There is a wide variety of channels and shows available to consumers. The drama business can influence people's beliefs, behaviors, and cultural and political worldviews.

The Pakistani media is very much engaged in playing their part. The primary functions of the media may be broken down into these three categories: informing, educating, and entertaining the public. The segment of the Pakistani television business devoted to entertainment is a big and

important one. According to Nazir (2012), the media in Pakistan is enamored with the culture of the West and that of its neighbor, India. Creativity goes under many names, including drama. The audience watches dramas for amusement, during their free time, and to relieve the stress of their daily lives. The use of drama is another method that may be used to educate and persuade the audience. The entertainment sector has increased public awareness and contributed to developing new styles and trends. According to Raymond Williams, play access was not accessible to the public audience in the past. Drama, whether in serials or diverse genres, has many morals and lessons in the narrative. In addition, the term "victimization of women" refers to any act of gender-based violence that results in physical violence, sexual victimization, psychological suffering or threats, intimidation, limits for going someplace or doing something, or an impact on a person's liberty. In addition to that, it encompasses things like economic violence, emotional victimization, harassment, and verbal point scoring. Countries (2015) state that this form of aggressive conduct is done throughout society, including among families and communities. In the 21st century, women are still fighting for equal rights and to be treated equally in Western nations, although these countries are starting to think creatively about providing possibilities for women. Pakistan is the only country that is still fighting for its independence. In a culture dominated by patriarchy, it may be challenging for women to speak out for themselves and achieve independence.

Literature of review

The media in Pakistan is known for its devotion to freedom, and it is expected to utilize this freedom to advocate for and report fairly on the plight of marginalized groups, including women. Women in the media are a powerful force for promoting and undermining cultural norms and values on television. The survey concludes that Geo TV programs do not represent Pakistani culture, whereas Hum TV positive. Women in Pakistan are following the fashions shown in Urdu plays broadcast on Hum and Geo TVs. Both series also committed to encouraging female viewers to further their education.

According to the research, Brown (2010) cites that the majority of our society, on both the public and private levels, is subjected to sexual or deceptive content of female depiction in the media. Furthermore, often violate societal norms and values without being held accountable by the media. With the help of a regression model, actual consumer behavior after viewing dramas on media reveals that young girls and women are more engaged in watching these serials on television, and these results are consistent across demographics. This highlights the need for further research to guide people toward effectively using media content in the form of TV serials.

According to Ahmar's (2012) essay "Portrayal of Women in Pakistani Dramas," most of these shows feature a fascinating mashup of modernization and throwback. Subtle signals of generosity, liberalism, and sexual categories reinforce male values in these operas, such as normalizing violence against women (including slapping and assault). This standardized portrayal of women accepts this categorization as inherent to their nature. (Ahmar, 2012).

According to Awan (2013), Pakistani television dramas should be condensed into under 20 episodes, include women who play explicit and religious roles, and refrain from spreading stereotypes. Likewise, adult-oriented shows should not play during prime time when the whole

family is gathered around the TV, and based on their research, Shabeer, Safdar, and Imran (2013) concluded that Pakistani television dramas are the most significant source of both cultural uplift and cultural decline in the country. They summed it up by saying that whereas Hum TV promotes Pakistani culture, the programs on Geo TV do not. They backed up their claims with a poll showing how women in Bahawalpur have begun dressing like the models in Urdu dramas shown on Hum and Geo TV. Both television series have been shown to encourage girls and women in Bahawalpur to further their education. Their research proved that the Geo TV station distorts Pakistani culture for ratings. Instead of Hum, Pakistani culture is being shown via television plays. Urdu plays on Geo and Hum have increasingly focused on women's rights concerns and problems.

According to Malik's (2016) research, the dramatic arts in Pakistan have an outsized impact on the country's population. There is a lot of bias against Western culture on Pakistani drama channels like Urdu 1, ARY Digital, Hum TV, Geo Entertainment, etc., making it difficult for them to compete with international networks and the foreign drama business. By adopting the behavior patterns of the contemporary affluent, they are losing touch with their own cultural, social, and religious traditions. It is a first step toward change when audiences see things like male actors hugging and shaking hands with female actresses, young people dressing in an entirely Western manner, distancing from religious values, and a class struggle based on power, money, and status.

Although the stories depicted in Pakistani dramas and films often contradict reality, Ashfaq (2018) argues that they impact cultural norms because of their widespread consumption. Researchers in this study pay special attention to the sexual content of plays and films and the representation of women in these mediums. Dramas and films have been analyzed for this aim. The findings suggest that the depiction of female roles is either up-to-date or contentious. There has been a rise in the prevalence of sexual and violent material. A lot has stayed the same throughout the years regarding male characters being shown superior to female characters.

Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) claim that Pakistani television dramas promote a male worldview. Where virtuous women put their families first, value their houses above all else, and never leave the house to perform paid labor. This positive impression of women remains even when they are portrayed in stereotypical roles. Despite lacking the necessary advanced credentials, they enjoy a positive reputation. People of both sexes find them appealing. Any intelligent, independent, and well-educated woman is automatically considered rotten. This meant that no matter what they did, it would never succeed.

According to (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2019, p. 55), this is the case. Fatima (2019) stated that in "Representation of Women's Role in Pakistani Drama Serials," "normal honesty dialogue and broadcast a specific kind of femininity on the TV screen." Having open conversations about the issue at all levels is the first step toward greater gender parity, and one of the most important venues to do this is in the arena of popular culture—a Fatima 2019:20. Research by Ahmad, titled "Paradox of women empowerment: the representation of Women in Television in Drama," suggests that females are often assigned humiliating and exploitative roles in popular media. They do nothing except sit about their homes all day. The misconception that women exist only

for the sexual and emotional satisfaction of males is strengthened by this representation. p.21 (Ahmed, 2019, p. 9)

Siddiqua (2019) argues that Islamic and patriotic topics should be the exclusive purview of Pakistani theater. Dramas about Pakistan should highlight women's strengths rather than shortcomings and reject Western influences on the nation. These plays should raise kids' consciousness of the negative aspects of their character rather than fostering Westernization, secularism, and disdain for adults. Female qualification in Pakistani plays is revealed to be obedience, as argued by Javed (2020). Therefore, they advocate that women submit to the authority of male relatives like husbands, brothers, and sons. A woman's willingness to submit to authority figures is still used to measure her moral strength and character in today's society. Disrespectful women, talking back, or questioning a man's authority are looked down upon in

Pakistani society. It has generally regarded in Islam that husbands should be given priority over their wives. Because of this, men tend to believe that women will never question their superiors. Research on Pakistani theater was very scarce. The implications of modernization and the incorporation of modern ideas, especially feminism, into individual works were examined, although there has been very little research in this field. Reviews of the cast and crew and an in-depth discussion of the significant issues in modern plays in which women are portrayed as egocentric, astute, and progressive. These leading ladies are not kid-friendly Pakistani theater scene had an immediate impact on the country's culture. Urdu 1, ARY Digital, Hum TV, and Geo Entertainment are just a few Pakistani drama channels that have embraced Western cultural values to compete with their overseas rivals. They need to catch up with their own social, cultural, and religious traditions as they mimic the practices of the modern rich. As a result of seeing male actors shaking hands with and hugging female actors, young people dressing in an entirely Western fashion, a movement away from traditional religious values, and a class struggle based on material wealth and social standing, viewers become more receptive to new ideas.

Methodology

Media agenda-setting studies often use content analysis. The agenda-setting theory guided this qualitative content study of three Pakistani television shows. This study examines female characters in 2018–2020 Pakistani Urdu plays. Qualitative content analysis is versatile, broad, and effective for analyzing and clarifying various texts (Chan & Nyback, 2015; Hsieh & Shanon, 2005). This qualitative technique interprets textual data in social sciences and humanities more than others. Using similar codes, qualitative content analysis analyzes language and classifies material into themes, patterns, and categories. Weber (1990). According to Smith, Pieper, Granados, and Choueiti (2010), we examined three primary and supporting female roles. Characters must talk, have names, and be recognizable to other characters. Levies' speech pronoun, character emotion, and backstory help to determine a character's gender if the sample does not. I designate characters as boys/girls if they say so. Pakistani broadcasters aired five drama serials: Alif Allah or Insan (2017), Mere Pas Tum HO (2019–20), Jhuti (2020), Jalan (2021) and Ghar Titli Ka Par .we only selected shows with main or supporting female criminals.

Data analysis

In the drama 'MERE PAS TUM HO,' the leading role played by Mehvish is an extreme level cheaper woman. She is depicted as a criminal in the sense of infidelity. She breaks hudood ordinance law by starting an extramarital affair with a wealthy businessman and leaves her six years old child and most loving husband. Her husband belongs to a middle-class family and does a govt job. She was not satisfied with her husband's income. Therefore, she left everything to fulfill her lust for money and started her new life. She commits middle-class infidelity and starts a luxurious life.

In the drama 'ALIF ALLAH OR INSAN,' two prominent roles of females are shown as criminals. Rani's crime of prostitution plays a prominent role in the first scene. She comes from a family of beggars, and her parents make her beg. Nevertheless, she becomes fed up with her life and meets a dancer. She takes Rani into her battle house. After that, she becomes a big tawaif and earns passive income in prostitution. She is shown as a severe female criminal in the sense of deceiving; she commits the crime of sexism with males and becomes a big dancer as well, only for the lust of money.

In the drama serial 'JHUTI,' the prominent role of a female criminal revolves around a young girl named Nirma. She belongs to a middle-class family. She is shown as a criminal in the sense of a big liar, cheater, lusty or faithless girl. She deceives everyone, including her parents, siblings, husband, and friends. She does not care for her family's respect and does whatever she wants. She takes a divorce from her husband, who loves her a lot. He also takes away all gold and money in the name of 'HaqMeher' and deceives her in-laws.

Jalan is a story of jealousy of siblings. It is simple, plain old sibling drama that is highly addictive and curious around jealousy, lust and deceit. Actually this story promotes scandalous love triangle between a handsome guy his wife and sister in law. Nisha and Misha are two sisters that are opposite to each other in every matter. Misha is sweet, simple and kind hearted while Nisha is a jealous rebel who could do anything for achieving whatever she wants. Mostly she keeps an eyes on the things of her elder sister. However the things go chaotic the day when Nisha gets married to a handsome, wealthy or a perfect guy (Asfandyar). It was love at first sight for both of them and they getting married. Nisha who is already engaged to her cousin (Ahmer). Now she keeps an eye on Asfandyar as he is very rich. Infect she wants his money, his lavish home and all the luxuries as her sister is enjoying. Now she creates misunderstanding between Nisha and Asfand and start to get close with her brother in law. She fascinates him from her beauty and realize him that her decision to marry Misha is very wrong. On the other side Nisha also deceived her ex feonce as she labeled him a bad and psycho person in front of her family.

The drama Garh Titli Ka Par revolves around two college friends SHAFaq and ANJI. Shafaq belongs to a very noble and rich family while Anji is to be shown very clever and selfish girl and belongs to a middle class family. She always getting jealous from SHAFaq as she married with a very rich man. While Shafaq was very sincere with Anji and always praises of Anji in front of her husband. Anji started relationship in form of friendship with Aazir and creates a very big misunderstanding between husband and wife by telling Aazir that she has an extra marital affair with her cousin. On listening it Aazir decided to leave her wife. Meanwhile Anji also deceived her husband and in selfishness she leaves her two children. She commits crime in form of deceiving her best friend or lying. Actually this drama taught us was how one should never turn

a blind eye towards any relation. Friends, family or enemy, when exposed to enticement can change without delays. Shafaq irrelevant praises for Anji, and taking sides for Anji in front of her husband resulted in losing her own house.

There is consensus on the pervasive impact of smartphones and other handheld devices in today's society. Despite the manufactured unrest, television remains an effective tool for disseminating news, instruction, entertainment, and advocacy. Dramas, a kind of episodic television serial, are among the most-watched shows on television. Most of the plays focus on female family members, often mothers, sisters, and spouses, in various roles. Women are nearly often represented negatively. Most modern Pakistani plays feature an odd blend of progress and regression. Women are being portrayed as adulterers, prostitutes, and liars. Women in Pakistani TV plays are portrayed in a manner that is entirely at odds with reality. The question of whether it is sufficient to disapprove of Pakistani serials or even condemn those aspects that deny women's role should be carefully considered. These stereotypical depictions of women are, without a doubt, the outcome of deeply ingrained societal norms; nevertheless, it is also vital to concentrate on the whole production crew of television dramas that actively supports such representations of women.

Conclusion

This research has been invested in the politics of gender in Pakistan by attempting to demonstrate "how" women are portrayed in Pakistani television plays and to what extent their on-screen positions correspond to the predominating honor dissertations of society. The findings demonstrate that conventional honor discourses continue to bias practically every facet of a woman's life, from the personal to the social, spiritual, economical, and revolutionary. It is crucial to have debates about women's responsibilities in society, and popular culture has the potential to become one of the most significant arenas in which to do so. As a result, women in Pakistani plays are often portrayed as antagonistic and divisive. Girls are often portrayed as scheming and manipulative in Pakistani TV shows, and extramarital relationships are written into the stories of married ladies. Some people become prostitutes, while others are dishonest and self-centered. The plays also demonstrate the stereotyping of women into excellent and negative categories. Some female characters in dramas are shown to be naturally sincere and given a high status in society; other female characters are shown to be worse, and they are given no status in society and are left alone at the end of the story. Many young girls in our nation are influenced by the misleading image of women portrayed in these shows. The gender binary and the experience of intersectionality are important themes in these works. In the form of television networks, the media should end and outlaw this sexism in dramas, and Pemra should also take decisive action against these shows.

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