

A Study on Portrayal of Children in Tamil Television Serials

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Abstract

Television plays a vital role in the form of communication for children's. From the beginning Back from the days of media reports on how media has successfully presented and caricatured the children. In this paper we have primarily focussed on the television soaps and serials of Tamil and attempt to analyse how exactly do they present children and how successful are they in their presentation of reality? Or is this reality an imaginative one? Therein begins my analysis. The nation which claims to be in the process of "globalisation" or "modernisation" still portrays the children in meaningless masses of the group. When Children of India are progressing to be a doctor or an engineer, all these contemporary "slice-of-life" soaps are still entangled in household plots and schemes. Even with some attempts to actually portray reality, Tamil serials have not evolved beyond the monochromatic dimensions and a tricky vamp. The Study has incorporated the Content Analysis method. And we did content analysis of one popular serial from the popular Tamil television channels.

Keywords: Representation, Reality, Children, Programmes, Responsibility, Society

Introduction

Since the inception of television was introduced in India, and the start of cable and satellite channels exposed the viewers to more information around the world which in turn has affected the attitudes and behaviour of individuals (Robert Jenson, 2007). In India about 38% of population are under the age of 15 and it stands Second in world's population. This identification of children as a 'special' audience for television is thus not simply a matter of viewing figures. On the contrary, it invokes all sorts of moral and ideological assumptions about what we believe children – and, by extension, adults – to be. As histories of childhood have shown, the definition and separation of children as a distinct social category is itself a relatively recent development, which has taken on a particular form in Western industrialized societies (Ariès, 1973; Hendrick, 1997). This is not just happening in India but also in all the other countries. Women are now featuring alongside or even par to men in many fields (Maren Wellenreuther,

2015). This process has been accompanied by a veritable explosion of discourses, both about childhood and directed at children themselves.

The emergence of developmental psychology, and its popularization in advice literature for parents, for example, has been one of the means by which norms of 'suitable' or 'natural' behaviour for children have been enforced. Likewise, the production of children's literature and children's toys – and eventually of children's television – has invoked all sorts of assumptions about what it means to be a child. Thus the media and television cluster leads the channels to produce the new genre with some entertainment value on it and to attract the more number of viewers towards the channels to support economically. The television serials plays an major role in television channels to grab the audience attention towards its channel, it's also having unique way of selling proposition to sell the advertisement slots and the TRP plays the intentionally gambling role in it. The viewers are framed as a spectator

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How to cite this article: Shankaran KRS, Ilamparithi V. A Study on Portrayal of Children in Tamil Television Serials. *J Adv Res Jour Mass Comm* 2018; 5(4): 30-33.

where the content is moral or immoral to the society.

The representation of children has been a major programming theme nowadays in Tamil television channels. Many children oriented programs were been made since and loved by lakhs of Tamil audience. Television offers a wide range of budding role-models, both positive and negative. It is not inevitable that viewers accept television gender images without question, but many popular commentators tend to assume that they are more discriminating than ordinary mortals. Not all women, children or even men are reactive victims of patriarchal stereotyping. The fact that these fictional families are on television, rather than some other medium, is significant in trying to assess their impact on society. Some sociologists consider television the “new public sphere” that has unified the population in a common set of images and symbols. Some go even floater and consider television the “new State religion” that cultivates a homogeneous outlook on social reality (Gerbner 1977). In any case, there is consensus that television has a great influence in our collective life. If television is as powerful an influence as it is held to be, then we might assume the fantasy families who enter our collective awareness on a regular, recurring basis act upon “real-life” families.

They can do so by shaping our ideas and attitudes about what kind of family life is desirable, interesting, serious, or funny; they can show us how children’s are supposed to behave and how parents and children are expected to relate; and they can to us which kinds of family members should be taken seriously and which ate only to be seen as fools. Simply a famous entertainment device is connected to the ways in which family life operates in “the real world.” Beyond providing entertainment, television vastly increases both the availability of info about the outside world and coverage to other ways of life. According to David French and Michale Richiards (2000), television is something special.

It has ascribed culture, political, economic characteristics that concerns to government, education, political parties, advertisers and entrepreneurs. Both of them insist that television is having a central role in terms of fundamental socio-political process. Bandura (1969) suggested that television is a source of vicarious learning competing with parents, teachers, and other socializing agents in providing models for children to emulate. At the very least, television provides certain information that the parents would not be able to present.

The implication is that television can increase the repertoire of possible behaviours beyond what the real-life family situation might provide (Comstock, 1983; Larson, 1989). Consistent viewers may also find some general characteristics of program storylines so widespread and so often repeated that they come to believe these behaviours

characterize most of the real-life situations (Withey, 1980; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980). Gerbner and Gross (1976), for example, have reported such a phenomenon in viewers of television violence. Heavy viewers of violent programming consistently overestimate the amount of real violence that is taking place.

Heavy viewers tend to be influenced by televised content more than light viewers especially pertaining to subjects about which they have little experience. This study aims to understand the portrayal of children in Tamil television serial. The chosen sample of 50 respondents for this study was chosen through snowball sampling. And the respondents are in the age group 30-50 years across different socio-economy profiles in Chennai. Data was collected through questionnaire and open ended interviews. Based on these findings the most popular episodes of television serial were analyzed for the portrayal of Children.

Research Methodology

The study has incorporated with Content Analysis method. The content Analysis of the serial from the Tamil TV channel was taken from the year 2017-2018. The selected serial was “Mouna Ragam” from Vijay TV. A random coding sheet was prepared and used for this research. 50 episodes from each serials were been used for content Analysis.

Literature Review

The representation of children television is largely traditional and stereotypical. This serves to promote a division of gender roles. In TV, ‘good’ children’s are presented as gentle, sensitive and disciplined; ‘bad’ children are rebellious, independent and selfish. The male hero tend to be physically strong, forceful, and assertive, takes the initiative, and is independent, competitive and ambitious. TV and film heroes represent goodness, power, control, confidence, proficiency and success. They are geared to succeed in an aggressive economic system. There is no shortage of aggressive male role-models in Westerns war films and in modern-day Indian soap-operas. Soap - operas have no opening or end, no structural closure. (Pingree and Cantor, 1983). They do not build up towards an finish or closure of meaning. Viewers can watch a soap opera at any point. There are built-in devices to recap on aspect of the plot. There is no single narrative line. Narrative lines are interweave over time. The structure of soaps is complex and involves several perspectives and no consent. Ambivalence and opposition is characteristic of the genre. This leaves soaps particularly open to individual interpretation.

Soap Operas

In recent times, television has emerged as the most dominant and all pervading force throughout the world. It can publicize information with lightning speed and impact,

as well as infuse viewers with images and values in subtle and invisible manner. Because of its very inherent nature, television not only reflects the values of our society but also influence them. Indications from research suggests that TV has had a considerable impact on the personal reality structure of its viewers. (Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner and Warth, 1989).

Television programmes have lead to awareness, provide information which creates interest in the minds of its viewers. Communication is not only an essential element to the determination of social order but to look at it more positively, communication can be an efficient means to developmental change. There is no denying the fact that television is a major force to be dealt with in our society. Television in India today has acquired newer scope, greater popularity and a much wider reach. The satellite invasion of India in 1993 has contributed the most to the mutual, multilingual, and multi-channel television system, operating on an involved schedule. The moving images of television demand attention and eventually influence the thoughts and behaviour of the viewers Television has entered our life and become an always together part of our daily lives.

The exceptional expansion of Indian television in recent years have influenced people in two ways. First, those living in remote corners have been pulled and merged into the national mainstream. Secondly television has contributed to an exceptional explosion of information in our times. (Gopal Saxsena, 1996) An awareness of the socio-economic developmental plans can be ascribed to the wide-reach of television.

Waves of vibrant changes have flashed across the canvas of Indian television during the last decade. Earlier Indian television was limited to Government-controlled Doordarshan only. But currently there are more than 400 channels available on the Indian television Diaspora offering round the clock services and mixed programming to a huge, various television audience. STAR TV, ZEE TV, Sony, have been offering variegated programmes of various scope and perspectives. Invariably, Doordarshan projected some interesting programmes. They not only included programmes like "Patrika" or "Spectrum" but also many number of serials were telecast. These included well known works of literature like "Raag Darbari", "Nirmala" (Premchand), "Pratham Pratishruti" Charitraheen" and "Shrikant" (Sharat Chandra). Epics like "Mahabharata" "Ramayana" and "The Bible" have been among the very admired telecasts. Equally noteworthy has been: Gul Gulshan Gulfam: manner on the life in a Shikara in Kashmir and other aspects of its social life. (Gopal Saxsena, 1996).

Mouna Raagam Serial Plot

Karthick Krishna is a famous singer. Karthick Krishna and Mallika were in Love with each other and he marries her

secretly. Shakthi was born to Karthick Krishna and Mallika. But due to his career, Karthick Krishna marries Kadhambari and they have a daughter as well. Mallika met with an accident and she passes away leaving Shakthi. Shakthi was asked by Mallika to search Shakthi's dad and sing in front of him.

In order to save herself from the society, the little girl makeovers herself as a boy and searches her dad. The seven- year-old singing prodigy Sakthi. She lives with her mom under the care of her uncle and aunt. She was born with a great natural talent as she can sing any tune learn any music and find rhythm from any noise. But life is not that easy for her. Little Sakthi often has to face pointed questions and remarks about her father having left her mother. From her mother she learns the truth that her father is alive. She also comes to know from her that her father is an established singer.

Results and Analysis

The representation of the children in emotional status was analyzed on the basis of the particular character whether they are strong or weak. And the while analysing the content it is found that female character Shakthi of "Mouna raagam was shown the strong characters. Therefore it is concluded that TV serials have represented children as strong on how they tackle the emotional situation.

The representation of the children in Social status was analyzed on the basis of how they represented in the society and as well as in the family. And the while analysing the content it is found that Shakthi has represented well in the family.

The representation of the children in Economic status was analyzed on the basis of sophisticated houses they have in the family. And the while analysing the content it is found that the characters have been portrayed as in the middle class family.

Conclusion

Television has changed the social and cultural environment. The present study reveals children in Tamil TV serial Mouna Raagam were shown in a positive manner in all the aspects of the representation of children. The first analysis of the emotional status of children that Tamil TV serials represented strong child instead of always showing weak child as done earlier. The emotion plays a very important role in the TV Serial Mouna Raagam, The second analysis on the representation of the children in Social status Tamil TV serial were portrayed in a right manner in the family. The third analysis on the representation of the children in Economic status Tamil TV serial, as shown in various other Indian TV serials, here they have shown the shakthi's family in a middle class family. The Television has become

the most believable and insidious means of information diffusion in society. The medium of television plays a very important role in bringing about change among people. The need of the hour is to control its potential in the right direction or rather than let it be a trite reflection of society's lowest common denominator. Indian soap opera emphasize the process of decision making showing the plethora of details and nuances in the articulation of problems that advance the plot lines. If one is reading from a main perspective, one could say that children are only interested in the trivial details of everyday life, and soap operas, therefore, reinforce already problematic aspects of children's lives. Nowadays Children in contemporary soap operas are given powerful positions in different contexts. This genre of television programming can be an effective tool for creating awareness about the changing dynamics of society.

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Date of Submission: 2018-09-10

Date of Acceptance: 2018-09-30