

# **Hindi Television Serials at the Periphery: A Socio-Cultural Study of Woman Viewers in Sikkim**

A Dissertation Submitted

To

**Sikkim University**



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
**Degree of Master of Philosophy**

By

**Sujata Gurung**

Department of Sociology  
School of Social Sciences

February, 2019



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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

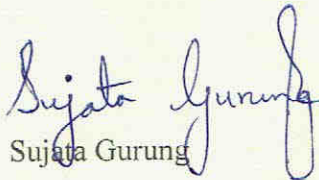
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**DECLARATION**

I, **Sujata Gurung**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the dissertation titled "**Hindi Television Serials at the Periphery: A Socio-cultural Study of Women Viewers in Sikkim**" submitted to **Sikkim University** for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work. Any content or any part of this dissertation has not been submitted to any other institution or for any academic purposes.

  
Sujata Gurung

Roll No. 17MPSC06

Registration No. 17/M.Phil/SCG/03



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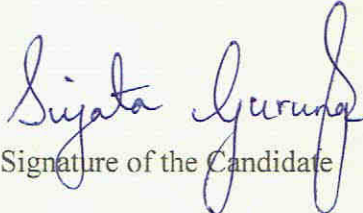
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**“Hindi Television Serials at the Periphery: A Socio-cultural Study of Women Viewers in Sikkim”**

Submitted by **Sujata Gurung** under the supervision of **Dr.Khangembam Indira**,  
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim  
University, Gangtok, 707102, India.

  
Signature of the Candidate

  
Signature of the Supervisor  
**Dr. Khangembam Indira**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
School of Social Sciences  
Sikkim University  
Gangtok - Sikkim



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**Hindi Television Serials at the Periphery: A Socio-cultural Study of Women Viewers in Sikkim**” submitted to **Sikkim University** for partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** in the **Department of Sociology** embodies the result bona fide research work carried out by **Sujata Gurung** under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other Degree, Diploma, Association and Fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

I recommend that the dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
**Dr. Khangembam Indira**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY  
6th Mile, Tadong 737102, Gangtok - Sikkim

Supervisor  
Department of Sociology  
Sikkim University

  
**Dr. Sandhya Thapa**  
Head  
Department of Sociology  
School of Social Sciences  
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY  
6th Mile, Tadong 737102, Gangtok - Sikkim

Head of the Department  
Associate Professor (Department of Sociology)  
Sikkim University

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the very outset, I would like to thank the Almighty, who has always been my great support. I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Khangembam Indira, for her continuous support, patience, kindness, motivation, enthusiasm and of course her immense knowledge. Without her guidance, time and help this dissertation would not have been possible.

I would also like to express my gratitude towards all my teachers namely, Ms. Sandhya Thapa, Mrs. Swati Akshay Sachdeva, Mrs. Sona Rai, Mr. Shanker Narayan Bagh and Mr. Binod Bhattarai from Sociology Department for always being supportive and giving their feedbacks and insights to the study. I would like to thank Sikkim University Library and its staff for helping me in accessing the books and articles needed for the study. My heartfelt gratitude towards Panchayats, government officials who helped me in accessing the data I needed for the study.

I would like to thank all the respondents for their precious time, sharing their ideas and information so generously to all my queries. Without them and their support this work would have not been impossible. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards my loving mother Mrs. Pem Choden Bhutia and my father Mr. G.B. Gurung for their constant prayer, emotional and financial support. Also heartfelt gratitude towards my aunt Mrs Tashi Drukpa and my sister Mrs. Pema Lhamu Bhutia, who are ardent viewers of serials, their major help in content analysis has made this study possible.

Finally, also thanks to my relatives, seniors, friends and all those well wishers for their valuable advice, emotional, spiritual, mental support during my time of distress. This dissertation would not be possible without their support.

Sujata Gurung

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIR: All India Radio

BARC: Broadcast Audience Research Council

DD: Doordarshan

DD-K: Doordarshan Kendra

GEC: Global Entertainment Channels

SITE: Satellite Instructional Television Experiment

TRP: Television Rating Point



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country with diverse, multilingual and multicultural population. It is also a secular country and is home to many religions. Its characteristic of multilingual and multicultural society has major diffusion on mass media culture be it cinema, radio, television, internet, music, etc. Mass media is a vital aspect of globalisation which leads to large scale expansion of global connection and a strong agency for homogenisation of culture. However, the influences generated by globalisation are selected, processed and consumed according to the local culture. At the same time a process of cultural mixing or hybrid across locations and identities are taking place (Ritzer, 2010). The unprecedented growth of media and communication industry has owed much revolutionary technological advancement as to a political economy where communication, representation and advertising increasingly define contemporary public culture (Chaudhuri, 2010). Media touches almost all aspects of our social and personal lives, be it the friendships, parent-child relations, and social stereotypes. It sometimes even manipulates our emotion. Hence, various televised cultural elements such as language, lifestyles and religious practices affect how people think, act and perceive (McQuail, 2010).

Television, in recent times acts as the most powerful and all pervading force throughout the world. It can disseminate information with lightning speed and impact, as well as impart viewers with images and values in subtle and imperceptible manner. Because of its very inherent nature, television not only reflects various values of our society but also influences them. In the multi-media world of today, television has

emerged as an important instrument of transmission of knowledge and information. Working as a complimentary agent to other sources of media, television has enhanced the process of change by providing timely information about education, hygiene, health, and customs and so on (Barker, 1997).

Television programmes provide information which creates curiosity in the minds of its viewers. In India, television today has acquired newer dimensions, greater popularity and a much wider reach. The satellite invasion of India in 1993 has contributed the most to the multi-lateral, multi-lingual and multi-channel television system, operating on an elaborate schedule. In the contemporary era, television has entered our life immensely and has become an inseparable part of our daily lives (Ward, 2008).

## **1.1. GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF TELEVISION NETWORKS IN INDIA**

In India, television made its debut as an educational tool in New Delhi on an experimental basis on September 15, 1959 with a limited transmission of three days a week. The broadcasts were entirely educational. The period between 1972 and 1982 saw a slow expansion of television in India. All India Radio (AIR), which was in charge of the broadcasts, provided the engineering and programme software. In 1975-76, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), one of the largest communication experiments in the world, brought television to villages of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa. In 1976, television

was delinked from AIR and was brought under an independent organisation called Doordarshan (Datta, 2017).

A major impetus to television came when India hosted the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi. On 15, August, 1982 Doordarshan switched to colour transmission and went about setting up low power transmitters across the country. At present, Doordarshan has many channels. It has a three-tier programme service: the national, the regional and the local. Vilanilam (2005) explains that in the national service, the focus is on national integration, communal harmony and programmes such as news, current affairs and entertainment. The regional programmes originate from the capitals of the states and are relayed by the transmitters in the respective states. The author further said that, these programmes are in the language and idioms of the particular region. The local programmes are area-specific and cover local issues featuring local people.

However, the whole of North East consisting of eight states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Assam is considered to be one region and the programmes from these states are being aired in channels like DD Bharti, DD Northeast and DD Kisan as programmes from the region. Each state is given some specific time slot to relay their programmes. Many of these states in the region are small and have population ranging from 6 lakhs in Sikkim and 31 crores in Assam according to census 2011, with multiple ethnic groups, languages, religions among the populace. Barring Assam, the smaller state like Sikkim has only one local cable channel besides Doordarshan than showcased local and regional programmes as there is limited viewers and the cost of production high.

The decade of 1990s has been one of unprecedented change as far as television in India is concerned which led to the emergence of the cable operators which was an important link in the distribution of scores of foreign and private domestic television channels. However, these channels have resulted real threat to Doordarshan. The age of 1991 was seen as liberalisation era marked by the “transition of era of statist monopoly defined by elitist autocracy and aesthetic realism to an era of popular entertainment, cosmopolitan internationalism and consumerist fantasy” (Athique, 2012). With the phenomenal growth of satellite and cable television in India, the Cable Television Network (Regulations) Bill was introduced in 1993 to regulate the operation of cable television networks in the country (Datta, 2007). The CNN was the first news channel, which made an entry into India via satellite in early 1991. After that the public television broadcasting system of India, that is, Doordarshan was challenged by forty private channels in the 1990s, which included STAR TV, SONY and ZEE TV. Responding to the competition from STAR, Doordarshan supplemented its regional language channels and the national network with five new satellite channels which provided programming similar to STAR. This gave rise to an entirely new industry of cable television operators throughout the country. There were serious questions regarding the impact of foreign programmes on the country’s value system. But few studies found that the audiences were all ‘aware of harmful effects of foreign programmes, but at the same time majority of them considered that foreign programmes could enrich their knowledge (Goonasekera, 1998).

Although television broadcasting in India was formally launched in 1959, its presence was felt only from the 1980s when Doordarshan’s network began widening its reach from the metros to urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Following this

development in the late 1980s, the educational purpose and programming on television got increasingly supplemented by the growing presence of non-educational programmes. On account of such expansion, Doordarshan began to broadcast entertainment programmes in order to attract more audience by launching soap operas with pro-development themes. Singhal and Rogers (1989) define a pro-development soap opera as a melodramatic serial that is broadcasted in order to both entertain as well as educate audience in some aspect of development. Thus, 'Hum Log', India's first pro-development soap opera based on a story of a lower middle-class traditional Hindu joint family placed in Delhi, struggling to achieve upward mobility and become middle-class was broadcasted on Doordarshan network during 1984-85 (Ahmed, 2012).

Also during 1990s Chitrahhar was also relayed on Doordarshan during weekends which showcased Hindi film songs. The interesting thing one can notice during this period was viewers waited for this program as there was no choice as there were no 24/7 music channels unlike today. The advent of Indian owned private satellite channels started in 1992 (Ray and Jacka 2002). On 15 August 1992, Zee TV beamed half an hour of Hindi songs in India through Asiasat satellite. Zee TV was fully operational from 1 October 1992. Since then India has begun to enjoy a host of other channels. In 1992, Rupert Murdoch's Star TV also began beaming into India beginning with a package of five channels, Plus, Prime Sports, Channel V, the BBC World Service, and Movie.

Among the variety of programmes telecasted in television, soap operas is one of the most popular and watched shows. The term "soap opera" was coined by the American press in the 1930s to denote the extraordinarily popular genre of serialized

domestic radio dramas, which, by 1940, represented some 90% of all commercially-sponsored daytime broadcast hours. The "soap" in soap opera referred to their sponsorship by manufacturers of household cleaning products; while "opera" suggested an ironic incongruity between the domestic narrative concerns of the daytime serial and the most elevated of dramatic forms (Pingree and Cantor, 1983). Soap operas in India are best known and understood as 'television serials' (hereafter instead of soap operas the word television serials will be used). They have become one of the most popular genres on television and also act as a cultural produce and is extremely popular among the masses and inevitably have attracted a large and loyal fan base (Himmelstein, 1994).

Television serials are said to be the main influencer on many women. The stories relayed in the Hindi television serials are mostly related to interpersonal relationships between families, love and romance. Very obviously, the characters played by the actors' showcases Indian domestic fashion. Hence, knowingly or unknowingly the viewers imitate the culture and fashion, because they become familiar to the characters as they watch it regularly and almost become habit and inseparable part of their lives. Various corporate houses and ad agencies sponsored the television serials so that those companies popularised their products in order to increase their sell. As the broadcasting and cable industries evolve, certain trends are emerged. In general, the liberalisation of television has helped to establish a consumer culture (Narayan, 2014).

The educational serial 'Hum Log' was a turning point in the very character of television programmes in India and several other serials were produced after its success. For example, 'Buniyaad' was produced by Ramesh Sippy in 1986. By 1987,

almost forty serials were produced with two serials on an average being aired each evening (Raghavan, 2008). The other popular serials on Doordarshan during this time were 'Khandan', 'Tamas', 'Rajni', 'Udaan', 'Yugantar' leaving apart the two epics 'Ramayan' and 'Mahabharat' which were very popular. The genre of serials entered Indian television only after the liberalisation of Indian economy, that is, after 1991. They began and boomed on Doordarshan and private channels like Zee, between 1992 and 1996. Following this, there was a spurt in the number of serials on Indian television especially on the private channels and they dealt with various issues. For instance, serials such as 'Saans' and 'Kora Kaagaz' depicted women coming into their own, breaking barriers of convention. There were others, which revolved around interpersonal relationships, against the backdrop of joint families, for example, 'Yeh Hai Mere Apne', 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi', 'Mehendi Tere Naam Ki', 'Babul Ki Duiyan Le Jaa' and 'Ghar Ek Mandir'. Among others, 'Tu Tu Main Main' was a satire on the much debated mother-in-law versus daughter-in-law relationship. Serials like 'Amanat' and some of the older ones such as 'Campus', 'Banegi Apni Baat', 'Challenge' and 'Alp Viram' dealt with the sufferings and obstacles faced by youngsters in friendship, courtship, in marriage and out of it, with slight emphasis on physical relationships and passions.

Hindi religious serials also developed popularity in India in the late 1990s. Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana was so popular that India came to a virtual standstill during its telecast. Indians were awed by the display of mythical, spiritual heroes on television and it created an avenue for Indians to connect with their heritage through their television screens. The serials also provided lessons and an elevation of emotions for Indian culture as Indians watched their gods and goddesses experience similar trials and tribulations as in human life (Kaur & Yahya, 2010). Presently there

are also many different mythical serials like ‘Sirdi Ke Sai Baba’, ‘Karn Sangini’, ‘Tenali Raman’, ‘Shree Ganesh’ in Sony TV, ‘Mahabharat’ in Star Plus and other historical dramas like ‘Jhansi ki Rani’ in Colors, ‘Porus’ in Sony TV (which went off air recently) are popular among viewers who loves watching mythical genres. The picture quality, look and presentation of these mythical serials have now evolved and developed more than before. The mythical stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Hanumana, Krishna, Shiva have found place in the Indian television. Thus television has also become an instrument to reinforce superstitious beliefs and practices and highly glorifies the existence and might of supernatural beings through worshipping and having faith on them by the characters (Vilanilam, 2005). In various Hindi serials fictional or otherwise, elaborate rituals and familial relationships commonly prevalent in some prominent communities of mainland India are being shown. These practices and experiences have influence the culture and religious aspects of the viewers, even those located at the periphery. The repeat telecast of the prime time slot shows most of the time comes at those time mostly during 11am to 6pm when the women especially home maker are used to be in leisure, so they can be at ease with the serials. As a result of this, television has a more profound and influential impact on its viewers, particularly women. They are treated as “special audience groups” (Ahmed, 2012).

## **1.2. TELEVISION NETWORK IN SIKKIM**

The Doordarshan Transmitter Complex in the state was inaugurated on 14 July, 1996. However the studio of Doordarshan Kendra transmitter complex was commissioned in the year 2002. The Kendra started telecasting a weekly programme



called 'Sikkim Round-Up' which is news based programme for thirty minutes duration since April, 2004. DD-K Sikkim has a specific slot for its programme in other Doordarshan channels. It has collaborated with Nayuma television, a lone cable television network of the State. The Doordarshan Kendra Gangtok produces both outdoor and studio-based programmes. It also produces programmes on developmental issues such as Swachh Bharat, health, women empowerment, legal issues, children's programme, cultural, etc. The docu-feature has also telecasted on themes such as women empowerment, organic farming, culture and tradition of various Sikkimese communities. The Kendra also frequently contributes programmes to DD-North East as well as DD-News which includes all important happenings within the state of Sikkim. Some programmes from Kendra are also telecasted in national channels such as DD-Kisan, DD-Bharti as well. The programmes are made mostly in Hindi and Nepali languages.

Earlier, the transmission of this Kendra was in terrestrial mode, it has however now come into satellite mode from 15 September, 2015. The Kendra works under the supervision of Delhi headquarter and all the programmes are funded and instructed by the headquarter. DDK Sikkim has been playing a very significant role in the process of inspiring rural masses and empowering public in the field of agriculture, customs, traditions and attempt to uplift the masses.

### **1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Feminism is a vast concept which includes all aspects of women's oppression such as political, social, cultural and economical. Feminism is theory that determines men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. There are

different types of feminism and has different demands and revelation at different places and times. These various approaches attempt to explain gender inequalities through an array of social processes such as patriarchy, capitalism. According to Giddens (2009), the distinction between the different strands of feminism has never been clear cut. There are various theoretical approaches, however, only a few related approaches are considered for the purpose of the present study.

### **i. CONSERVATIVE FEMINIST**

Conservatism is not typically viewed as a feminist theory rather it is included in order to provide a contrast for subsequent perspectives. Conservatives are satisfied with the status quo, and thus they support traditional gender arrangements. They tend to see inherent value in society's existing institutions and are reluctant to change the customs and traditions. The justification for conservatism is usually rooted in biological and religious arguments. Conservatives often take an *essentialist* position; they believe that gender differences are fixed, absolute and biologically determined. The religious argument further supports essentialism by maintaining that gender differences were created by God or other Supreme Being.

### **ii. LIBERAL FEMINIST**

Liberal feminist theory, which arose from social contract theories of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, is based on the values of rationality and reason, liberty, and equality. Liberal feminists believe that women and men are equal and have the same capacities and abilities, and thus women have the right to the same opportunities as men. Affirmative action, reproductive rights, legislation, educational reforms, and equal opportunity legislation represent important liberal feminist programs that have attempted to assure that women and other minority groups are not systematically

disadvantaged. Liberal feminists wish to achieve gender equity by working within the system, rather than overthrowing the system.

According to liberal feminist, rights should be given more importance than materialism. Liberal feminist were of the view that women should be given liberty and equality with same concentration as given to men. Legislation should be made to give more rights to women. It also tends to widely encompass men and focuses on barriers that both men and women face due to their gender. Liberal feminists pointed out that females are not portrayed as wise and learned characters in the television. They were shown as beautiful and delicate but lacking intelligence and the ability to take decision. Liberal feminist were critical regarding such portrayal of women (Bhagwat, 2004).

### **iii. SOCIALIST FEMINIST**

It focuses on the public and private aspects of women's life. It is of the opinion that unless and until the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression come to end, liberation cannot be achieved. This form of feminism states that private property gives rise to economic inequality and dependence of women on men, eventually leading to an unhealthy social relations between men and women and this very private property is the root of women's subjugation as most of the property in the world are owned by men as property is inherited through agnatic line. Socialist feminism appears to adopt some of the same tenets of Marxism, not only focuses on economic determinism as the primary source of oppression, but sees the oppression of women as having both psychological and social roots. The socialist feminist did not exclusively focus on gender for the rights of women. They were of the view that female should have the right to decide about the family. They also focused on

ethnicity, age, sexual preference and physical ability. They maintain that all forms of oppression, including sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, heterosexism, and classism support and reinforce one another. Audre Lorde's in her article "There Is No Hierarchy of Oppression, 1983" argues that in order to address any one form of oppression, we must consider all of them simultaneously. The socialist feminist revolved around taking the burden off women in regards to housework, cooking, and other traditional female domestic jobs. They perceived media to be ideological instruments presenting the capitalist and patriarchal society as the natural order which are inherently exploitative (Curran & Gurevitch, 1996). The female character analysis in the light of socialist feminist discourse shows that most of the female characters were shown as house wives. Very few female characters were portrayed as working women and they seemed satisfied with the opportunities and salary provided to them at workplace.

#### **iv. RADICAL FEMINIST**

Radical feminism is another feminist theoretical perspective that focuses on the idea that patriarchy is responsible for the complexity of relationship based on male supremacy causing the oppression of women. Radical feminism is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism. Radical feminism was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967-1975. It is no longer as universally accepted as it was then, and no longer serves to solely define the term, "feminism." Radical feminists on the left wing believe that the subjugation of women is the most basic and fundamental oppression. Patriarchy, male domination, and men's control over women's bodies are responsible for women's oppression (Enns, 1997). Radical feminists assume that all women, regardless of class, sexual

orientation, or ethnic background, share this common ground. In contrast with liberal feminists, who see value in working within the existing system, radical feminists call for a complete reorganization of society by eliminating any concentration of male power, emphasizing instead the ethics of mutuality and interdependency (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

They view the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class. This is a movement intent on social change, change of rather revolutionary proportions. Radical feminism questions why women must adopt certain roles based on their biology, just as it questions why men adopt certain other roles based on gender. They attempt to draw lines between biologically-determined behaviour and culturally-determined behaviour in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gendered roles. It challenges to overthrow patriarchy by going in opposition of standard gender roles responsible for the oppression of women, and emphasizes the necessity of reordering the society radically. The main focus of discourse of radical feminist was the oppression of women due to patriarchal system. They have criticized media on the grounds that it was promoting patriarchal social system (Bhagwat, 2004). According to radical feminist view, in most of the serials, female characters were shown as influential, authoritative and they hold the main power of decision making regarding family matters. A large numbers of female characters were portrayed in stereotyped gender roles and a few female characters were portrayed as sexual objects.

## **v. POSTMODERN FEMINIST**

The postmodern somehow undermines the traditional notion of culture as something fixed and hierarchical. They also attempt to simplify the problem by arguing for local perspectives. The postmodernist provide important cautions against privileging some women at the expense of other. It disputes contentions which hold that conflicts between truth, knowledge, and power can be overcome on the grounds of reason. The postmodern feminist claims that the media contributes greatly to inequality and the enforcement of certain images of femininity, which include unrealistic beauty ideals and certain looks and behaviour. Postmodern feminism also uses self-determination to justify the sexual representation of women and femininity in media (Stefano 1990).

In Hindi serials, often women are the central protagonist and carries 'feminine connotations' representing the mainland Indian traditional as well as contemporary culture. The codes of 'traditional Indian values' in a joint family structure carry forth the plot of these narratives. There are also new breed of serials which projects as a change agent to propagate women empowerment. How these television serials are perceived and played out in local contexts especially in a borderland needs to be pondered and analysed. Hence, for doing the present study, we will be looking from all the above mentioned perspectives especially from the conservative as well as liberal feminist and post modern feminist perspectives. As mentioned above, the liberal feminist aims at bringing equality between women and men in the framework of the existing social systems. Postmodernists on the other hand criticize the structure of society and the dominant order, especially in its patriarchal aspects. They are the ultimate acceptor of diversity and multiple truths, roles and realities.

## **1.4. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **TELEVISION NETWORKS IN INDIA**

Television acts as a powerful medium in shaping one's ideology. It has become a central dimension of our daily life. It has become more of a medium than just a source of influence embedded in the multiple discourses of life. The growth of television network in India took place with the advent and growth of Doordarshan network and subsequently after the government liberated its market and opened up other cable networks. Himmelstein (1994), Silverstone (1994), Datta (2007) provides the histories of television genres in analysing politics, culture and social dimensions. These authors also discuss how growth of cable and satellite channels has become a powerful cultural institution. They explore how television has become a profound way to intricate the fabric of everyday lives. The programmes shown in the television is being mediated by the social and cultural worlds we inhabit.

Athique (2012) discussed how mass media in India has become one of the complex fields of communication to be found. He reveals that India's media to be very vast and complex. The rapid growth in Indian media industries and the vibrancy of Indian popular culture has made scholars prerequisite for the study of media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. India with its entry to the global market has not only allowed its own market to get flooded with imported goods but also its television industry to go through a complete transformation. It was under this global influence that Indian television experienced a major shift, both in its content as well as its purpose.

## WOMEN AND THE SOAP OPERAS

The television networks have increased in India and soap operas in India have gained immense popularity. Henderson (2007) explores and reflects on the possible links between the intentions of programme makers and the audiences specifically in relation to the storylines. Chaudhuri (2010) sees hyper-visibility of gender in a loquacious and intensely mediated popular culture. The pervasive presence of gender is the logic of a culture in which self-representation, image construction and communication are important. Himmelstein (1994) discusses television soap opera as being a significant melodrama which can reinforce the dominant ideology to its viewers. Ahmed (2012) also discusses on how soap operas gained popularity in America and finally came to India. She gives an insight into Indian genre of daily soaps and how it has changed over the years in terms of content, presentation and production. She reveals that Indian soap opera also emphasizes the process of decision making, showing various details and nuances in the articulation of problems that advance the plot lines. Further, the author points out that soap operas value the fabric of women's lives.

Ramsdell (1973), on the other hand describes how soap operas try to sell for its sponsors for profit. The fulltime housewives are the major market for the sponsors' products and thus the desirable image of the families are projected to attract the mass audiences. Serials have become objects of consumption and pleasure. Women were initially targeted by the state as the catalysts of national development but have now been turned into the target audience of the commodity market.



## TRANSITION OF POPULAR SERIALS

Many Hindi serials were introduced on Doordarshan in 1984. Advertisements were allowed to sponsor these programmes which further opened the doors for commercialisation of television. With the introduction of entertainment serials, the state strengthened its efforts to set up Doordarshan in the task of creating a pan-Indian national culture. The serial 'Hum Log' (which was highly inspired by a Mexican soap opera) was used in propagating the government's message of family planning. Most narratives produced during this period had clear social message with themes relating to family planning, national integration and the status of women woven into the narratives which lasted till the 1991. Following this development the educational purpose and programming on television got increasingly supplemented by the growing presence of non-educational entertainment programmes such as serials based on family relations, love, conflict, etc. India with its entry to the global market not only allowed its own market to get flooded with imported goods but also its television industry to go through a complete transformation in its content and purpose. Till 1990, the Indian state had a monopolistic control over the medium of television through state-controlled Doordarshan. Liberalisation and the deregulation of the Indian economy impacted the structure, production values, content and viewing context of the television industry. But the educational and informative aspect, which was the initial purpose of television in India, got marginalised as entertainment took its place because educational and informative channels have been marginalised. Privatisation of Indian television replaced the development communication function and gave way to entertainment in order to attract high audience ratings and at the same time promoted consumerism, capitalism, and other western values (Rogers, 2002). The arrival of satellite channels in India forced India's Doordarshan channel, a

state owned monopoly, to renew its programming so as to compete for its share of middle class audiences (Kaur & Yahya, 2010).

### GLOBALISATION AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

The process of globalization is much broader, complex and multifaceted. Anthony Giddens (1990) defined globalization as the “intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. Kozinets (2001) on the other hand conceptualises the term “consumer culture” an interrelated system of commercially produced images, texts and objects that are used through the construction of overlapping and different practices, identities, and meanings to make collective sense of their environments and to orient their member’s experiences and lives. These meanings are embodied and negotiated by consumers in particular social situations, roles and relationships. Similarly, Appadurai (1990), Slater (1997), Wilk (1995) also describes consumer culture a densely woven network of global connections and extensions through which local cultures are increasingly interpenetrated by the forces of transnational capital and the global media. Singh (2000) focuses on the extent cultural globalization has influenced cultural identity at the local, regional and national levels. He has analyzed these impacts by relocating our historical and social structural conditions, the direction of cultural change whether it is in favour of adaptation or rejection or new to the alien cultural traits that spread through the process of globalization. He has also argued in order to conceptualize both tradition and modernization as sets of values and role, structures interact as they come into contact and between them a selective process of assimilation starts.

Modern media and mass migration have separately and together produced an increasing degree of instability in the creation of selves and identities. The near universal access to mass media images has democratized and extended the imagination of ordinary people around the world. This view is supported by Benedict Anderson's idea of the "imagined community" of the nation state toward an idea of "diasporic public spheres." Here, 'Imagined' refers in the context of both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each life the image of their communion stay alive. Appadurai (1996) in his article on 'Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization' argues that "the central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization". He points out the dynamism aspect of culture and the integration of the new cultural attributes into existing culture.

Wallerstein's (1979) theory of the global system of knowledge production characterizes a fundamentally unequal structural relationship between the 'core' and 'periphery'. According to him, core countries or centres have wide variety of entertainment like cinemas, museums, sport, music, religion, language, food, dress, etc. on the contrary peripheral regions have traditional lifestyle, little international cultural or sporting facilities and have poor levels of communication. By applying the theory of core and periphery, the present research will take the Hindi serials as coming from mainland India and see how these serials are interpreted and integrated by women in Sikkim.

## **1.5. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Media is often considered today to be a significant means for change. Television serials undoubtedly have immense potential to present positive as well as negative images of contemporary women, a potential similar or even more to that of other forms of media such as newspapers, magazines, radio forums and so on. Some television serials show gender equality that supports the status quo regarding women's place in the social order while other serials may present highly patriarchal notion. Women is often represented in its stereotypical behaviour having great notion of traditional values (Ahmed, 2012). However, television serials enjoy a momentous and immense popularity among the masses especially women. They have found a place for themselves and also allow a multiplicity of interpretations to suit the diverse tastes of the viewers. In order to attract more viewership, the popular mainstream Hindi serials often display the dominant popular culture by sidelining the culture and practices of the periphery.

Sikkim is a multiethnic and multicultural society having 610577 populations (Census 2011). Women in the state can be divided into different groups on the basis of ethnicity, class, caste, urban, rural, education and occupation but marginalization is common factor among them. Besides DD, the State has only one regional television channel that is, Nayuma which lacks in showcasing different entertainment programmes especially serials thereby making women in Sikkim depend on the popular Hindi serials shown in various television channels. The network of Nayuma channel is confined only in urban centres of Sikkim such as Gangtok, Namchi, and has not reached the rural areas.

The review of literatures reveals that the studies on the role of media in the State are limited as only a handful of studies are found. The study by Puja and Amit (2016) focuses on the promotion of Sustainable Tourism in Sikkim while Das's (2015) article revolves around the live funeral broadcast of Sai Baba. However, the present study attempts to uncover how the women in the state have perceived, interpreted and interacted the various elements of culture (food, cloths, religious aspects, language, lifestyles etc.) shown in the popular Hindi serials in their social reality.

## **1.6. OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the study is to find out the major socio-cultural influence of Hindi television serials have had on the women of Sikkim.

1. To situate Sikkim within the context of growth and development of television channels in India.
2. To critically evaluate the content and nature of popular Hindi television serials.
3. To study the perception of viewers and see how the mainstream and local cultural practices interact with each other.

## **1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the historical background behind the spread of television in India?
2. What types of stories are being narrated in the popular Hindi serials?

3. How do women in Sikkim perceive it and what kind of influences serials have on their life?
4. How do the cultural practices demonstrated in the mainstream Hindi serials interact with the local culture?

## **1.8. METHODS AND AREAS OF THE STUDY**

The current study will analyze the impact of Hindi television serials on the cultural life of the women in Sikkim. It will also study the reflections of the various types of feminist ideology disseminated through television serials on their social and inter-personal relationships.

The study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and to meet the specific objectives both primary and secondary data are used. Secondary data are based on books, articles, journals, etc. For the purpose of study, the interview technique was employed. The study was undertaken in both the rural and urban areas of East Sikkim. In urban area, Tadong, Gangtok was selected for the study and in rural area, Dikchu, East Sikkim was selected. In total 80 women were interviewed, 40 women respondents each in both rural and urban areas. Dikchu, East Sikkim comes under 46-Rakdong Tintek GPU and falls into Ward No. 2 and is located 60 kms away from the capital town Gangtok. The area has total population of 1325 persons according to 2015 data which consists of total 632 female populations. Tadong, Gangtok comes under Gangtok Municipal Corporation and falls into Ward No.12. The area has 9605 total population and consists of 4814 total women population (DESME, 2015).

The rationale behind choosing these areas is to understand the differential impact the television serials have on the viewers located in both the urban and rural

areas. Also, the study covers the women of the three major ethnic community of Sikkim i.e. Bhutias, Lepchas and Nepalis to see the cultural variations in their perceptions and influence Hindi serials have had in their everyday life. The primary data thus collected from the field have been supplemented by the relevant existing secondary sources. Qualitative analysis was used to know and understand the content, representation of the characters, storylines and the prominent cultural and religious ideologies shown in the serials. For the purpose, 10 popular serials are selected based on Television Rating Point during the time of the fieldwork.

## **1.9. CHAPTERISATION**

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter introduces the topic and situate Sikkim in the context of India and the world. It will discuss the review of literatures, theoretical approaches, objectives, methodology and rationale of the study.

### **CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS OF POPULAR HINDI SERIALS**

The chapter attempts to critically evaluate the genres of popular Hindi serials and interpret the storylines and the characters from the lens of feminists and other theories. It also discusses contents and presentations of popular serials and provides a glimpse on the achievement of television actors.

### **CHAPTER 3: WOMEN VIEWER PERCEPTION ON HINDI TELEVISION SERIALS**

The chapter deals with the perception of television serials by women in Sikkim. This chapter also discusses how the socio-cultural aspects from the core areas of mainland

India interact and at times influence the peripheral areas in terms of various social and cultural practices.

#### **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study.



## CHAPTER II

### **ANALYSIS OF POPULAR HINDI SERIALS**

The television industry in India today is an intensely competitive market. From the variety of programs telecast on television, the prime time serials are the flagship programme for Global Entertainment Channels (GECs) and a measure for their success depends on the number of audiences watching these serials. Thus, the television channels need wider audience for their success and the viewers also benefit from the competition between the different channels as they have a variety of choices to watch the serials as their favourite serials come in various different channels. In the Hindi serials, the narratives are frequently extended over a wide range of characters and a number of generations. Hindi serials are said to be greatly influenced by popular mainstream Bollywood cinema in several aspects. The sets of Hindi serials look chic and stylish and are made with filmic expertise, which is visually attractive and pleasurable to watch by the audiences. Prime time serials which are telecasted from 7 pm to 11 pm are mainly produced according to certain conventions that belong to the specific genre of producing soaps. It requires that their structure, narrative, aesthetics, the ability of the actors to perform their roles well are critical issues in their long running success. Those shows that do not make success are short lived and often suddenly removed from airing without prior information. The most successful channels showing top Hindi serials are Colour, Zee TV, Star Plus and Sony. Below are the lists of top ten Hindi GEC (Global Entertainment Channels) in July 2018.

**TABLE 2.1. TOP 10 GEC CHANNELS OF JULY 2018**

Sl. No.	Channels
1.	Colors
2.	Star Plus
3.	Zee TV
4.	Sony Sab
5.	Star Bharat
6.	SonyEntertainment Television
7.	Sony Pal
8.	Zee Anmol
9.	Star Utsav
10.	Rishtey

Source: Global Entertainment Channel ratings, July 2018

The stories in Hindi serials are conceptualised keeping current socio-economic scenarios in mind. The serials are born from stories about families that are so central to the Indian imagination. The serials are largely considered to address to issues related to women, family, importance of relationship and the competencies or in-competencies of the lead actresses and actors to handle these issues in their personal as well as public sphere. The Hindi serials often revolves around the narratives involving morality and discipline prevailing in the society, it also generally shows

multiple liaison, multiple marriages, step brothers and sisters and illegitimate children. The concept of 'good' and 'bad' woman is very much relevant in the soaps (Ahmed, 2012). The immorality, conspiracy to hurt or destroy their opponents is common in serial narratives and often they are brought fore by women or male who play negative characters. The so called good women are self sacrificing, give priority to the happiness, honour and respect of the family and its members than the happiness of the self. In prime time serials, the family mansions are large and lavishly furnished with beautiful furniture, curtains and artefacts decorate the mansion. The mansions are so big having many floors so in times of emergency, one is seen running from one room to another to help the other person and often other members of the family are not even aware of what is happening with the other. Each of the serials has separate sets dedicated to it that is, immediately recognisable to the spectators to which serials it belongs to. These sets costs millions of rupees and even the costumes, jewellery of the stars are expensive and have spawned secondary markets to copy their costumes, jewellery and even makeup (Munshi, 2010).

Indian Television broadcasts a number of channels, henceforth the numbers of channels are increasing, numbers of serials are also increasing and simultaneously day by day the competition is also on the increase. Due to this, there is a clear cut competition amongst them. But this competition is checked out at the Television Rating Point (TRP) scale, which is helpful in measuring the popularity of the shows. Academicians like Munshi have also relied on the TRPs to understand the audience. TRPs are average set of audiences watching a program. They are commonly referred as people's rating points. TRP is the criterion that indicates the popularity of a channel or program and this data is very helpful for television channels and advertisers. In a highly competitive market, because of the presence of numerous

channels with variety of programs catering round the clock to a vast and scattered population, attainment of large audiences has become a challenge for the directors and producers. Television ratings provide information about the viewers' television watching habits and the socio-economic background of the audience. TRPs not only help decide the advertising rates on different programs and which program should continue airing but has also been significant in changing the course of the direction of the narratives of some serials.

The ratings of the channels and serials are completely collected by the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) TRP India. BARC is a joint industry company founded by stakeholder bodies that represent Broadcasters, Advertisers and Advertising & Media Agencies to develop a reliable, accurate, and timely television audience measurement system for India. For the purpose of the study, the most popular top 10 Hindi serials of July 2018 rated by TRP and BARC have been taken as a baseline for the analysis. The lists of top 10 serials are given below:

**TABLE 2.2. LISTS OF TOP 10 INDIAN TV SERIALS OF JULY 2018 BY TRP AND BARC**

TV SERIAL	TELECAST BY CHANNEL	TRP RATING	BARC RATING
NAAGIN 3	COLORS	9258	9916
TAARAK MEHTA KA OOLTAH CHASMA	SAB TV	7228	5851
KUNDALI BHAGYA	ZEE TV	7074	6671
KUMKUM BHAGYA	ZEE TV	6779	5915
ISHQ SUBHAN ALLAH	ZEE TV	6283	6038
YEH RISHTA KYA KEHLATA HAI	STAR PLUS	5795	6201
KULFI KUMAR BAJEWALA	STAR PLUS	5287	5981
SHAKTI-ASTITVA KE EHSAS KI	COLORS TV	5205	5553
QAYAMAT KI RAAT	STAR PLUS	3972	4388
KRISHNA CHALI LONDON	STAR PLUS	3626	3761

Source: TRP ratings of Serial, July 2018

Every time a new serial is aired on an Indian television, nobody can predict whether the serial will become a hit or not. It completely depends on the number of viewers and what the TRP chart report indicates which finalise the actual position of the show's success or failure. Yet, there are prominent producers like Balaji Telefilms in combination with beautiful actresses and handsome actors having at least required or flawless skill of acting skills and talents usually brings out successful serials that last many years and have made many actors become popular making them earn fame, wealth and power and they are best known as TV stars or the celebrities.

## **2.1. CONTENTS AND STORYLINES OF POPULAR TELEVISION SERIALS**

### **1. NAAGIN 3 (FEMALE SERPENT)**

It is an Indian supernatural series produced by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor under their production house Balaji Telefilms. It is a weekend show that airs on Colors for 43-90 minutes. It is a genre of supernatural, fantasy, romance and drama. It has altogether 3 seasons till date. The first season telecasted on 1 November 2015. It starred Mouni Roy, Arjun Bijlani, Adaa Khan and Sudha Chandran. The season ended on 5 June 2016 after 62 episodes. It became one of the highest rated shows on Indian television at that time. The second season premiered on 8 October 2016. It starred Mouni Roy, Adaa Khan, Karanvir Bohra, Sudha Chandran, Aashka Goradia, Kinshuk Mahajan. The season ended on 25 June 2017 after 75 episodes. The third season of Naagin premiered on 2 June, 2018. This season stars Surbhi Jyoti, Anita Hassanandani and Pearl V Puri in lead roles. This season earned a 4.5 TRP rating and overall 16 million impressions in its launch week. The storylines are connected with all the seasons. It is a story of a shape-shifting serpents or commonly known as *icchadhari naagins*.

In Season 1 Shivanya and her cousin Shesha are shape-shifting serpents that can incarnate in the form of human beings and want to avenge Shivanya's parents' death. There were five murderers, but Shivanya was able to see only three of them: Ankush, Viren and Shailesh. They had killed her parents in a failed attempt to attain a precious gem with magical powers called the Naagmani. As part of her revenge, Shivanya enters into Ankush's house as a maiden. Ankush's son Ritik, a kind hearted and joyful young man, subsequently falls in love with Shivanya. Upon finding out

Ritik's feelings for her, she marries him for revenge. Later, she kills Viren and Shailesh and also knows from her cousin Shesha that Ankush's friend Suri was also involved in murdering her parents and they kill him too. Shivanya soon realises that Ritik is really a good person and he is unaware of his father's evil doings. She eventually falls in love with him which disappoints her cousin Shesha who thinks that Shivanya won't be able to kill Ankush because of her love for his son, Ritik. Later it is revealed that Ankush's wife, Yamini is also a murderer and that Ritik is her fraternal nephew. Yamini and Ankush had kidnapped Ritik's real father Sangram Singh, as only Ritik and his father could touch the Naagmani because they possess a significant sign on their bodies. Shesha begins falling for Ritik because of his loving and caring nature; however, she does not let her feelings affect her actions. Upon learning about Shesha's feelings for Ritik, Yamini finds Shesha and Shivanya are shape-shifting serpents and tricks Shesha into betraying Shivanya. This cause Shesha to become Shivanya's enemy and also gets obsessed for Ritik and the Naagmani. Shivanya manages to kill Ankush; however Ritik witnesses this and finds out that Shivanya is a serpent and begins simultaneously loving and hating her. Ritik soon learns the truth about Yamini being evil and joins with Shivanya to protect Naagmani. Shivanya and Ritik consummate their marriage, leading to losing her powers. However, she and Ritik succeed in saving the Naagmani and killing Yamini, while Shesha is jailed by the Mahishmatis named Avantika and Vikram. This season ends with Shivanya becoming pregnant.

In Season 2, Shivanya gives birth to a healthy baby girl, Shivangi, despite being six months early. A widowed Shivanya does not want Shivangi to become an Icchadhari Naagin to protect the Naagmani. A saint tells Shivanya that this can be avoided by getting Shivangi married before she turns 25. Rocky, the fiancé of Shesha

and the adopted nephew of Yamini fall in love with Shivangi. Unaware of Rocky's relation to Yamini, Shivanya arranges for him to marry Shivangi. On the wedding day, Shesha, Yamini, Avantika, Kapalika, Vikram, Amar, Manav and Nidhi kills the wedding guests including Shivangi's family and fatally stabs Shivanya. Yamini informs Rocky about the deaths, blaming them on dacoits. Rocky feels heartbroken. The saint informs Shivangi, who escaped from Yamini's gang about Shivanya, her mother's life and tells her that only she could touch Naagmani. She sees the faces of the murderers, including someone she believes to be Rocky. She attempts to commit suicide however; she survives and becomes a Naagin. She vows to protect the Naagmani and avenge her mother. After a few days, it is Rocky and Shesha's wedding day. Shivangi comes to Rocky's home for revenge. Everyone is shocked to see her alive however; Yamini and Shesha accepts her due to Shivangi being the only one who could touch the Naagmani, and Yamini has Shivangi marry Rocky. On the day of Karwa Chauth, Nidhi attacks Shivangi. Rocky saves Shivangi making her realise that he is innocent. Later Shivangi kills rest of Shivanya's murderers. Shesha and Yamini learn that Shivangi is a Naagin and that she had killed all of Shivanya's murderers. Shivangi turns Shesha into statue and kills Yamini. Shivangi finds that Yamini, Mahendra (Rocky's father) and Rocky's friend, Tanya's family included Manjusha (Tanya's mother) and Ranveer (Tanya's father) killed her father Ritik and additionally they want the Naagmani. Rocky also turns into an Icchadhari Naagin on his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. Rocky helps Shivangi in killing all the murderers of Ritik. Later, Rocky in explicably stabs Shivangi. Suddenly, Ritik who is now revealed to be alive is the one who said to Rocky that he did the right thing that he obeyed his orders and killed Shivangi. She dies without knowing why her father and husband betrayed her



by plotting her murder. However, she vows to come back for her revenge. This season ends with this.

In Season 3, elsewhere in old haveli, Ruhi another Naagin have gained the ability to shape-shift after hundred years of penance, dances with her lover Vikrant under the moonlight in the joy of their much anticipated union. However, business tycoon Andy Sehgal's spoiled sons Yuvi and Adi along with Yuvi's friend Rehan, Daksh, RJ (Yuvi's brother-in-law) and Karan (Yuvi's manager) associates arrived there and spot them. They are in drunken state, misbehave with Ruhi and attempt to rape her, while Vikrant takes his snake form scare them off but an agitated Adi shoots Vikrant who dies in the moment. Ruhi vows to avenge her lover's death from the 6 murderers along with the three tag-alongs Pratham, Gultu (Yuvi's friend), Anu (Rehan's sister) and Mahir (Yuvi's elder brother). With Shivji's blessings Ruhi performs a ritual and shed off her skin, acquire a new face to take revenge. Six months later Vishakha Khanna also called Vish who is also a revenge seeking ferocious Naagin who is revealed to be Ruhi's friend enters Andy's household as his prime investor in a construction project over the religious land covering the temple and the 3000 years old mansion in which shape-shifting serpents reside. Yuvi and Pratham's wedding have been fixed and are soon to take place with Bela and Suhani, the respective daughters of Andy's two sub-ordinates Jagmohan and Sunil. Suhani and Pratham are marrying because of Bela's request to Suhani's father, Sunil. Yuvi's friend, Daksh turns out to be Suhani's brother and Sunil's son. However, Bela is marrying Yuvi only to get her father's debts to Andy waived off. Yuvi is instantly attracted to the sassy and glamorous Vish, much to the dismay of Mahir, Bela and Sumitra (Andy's legal wife/ Mahir and Yuvi's mother). An eccentric Paulomi (Andy's live in partner/ Adi and Pratham's mother) continues on her antics, while

Vish manages to comatose Karan by throwing him off the third floor. Bela suspects Vish, but Vish destroys all the evidences against her while the police investigate. Vish tries to target Anu in her snake form, but suffers from a gunshot and rushes to the mansion to get healed, as in the meantime she is discovered by Bela to be a Naagin by seeing her portrait there. Vish with the help of Arvind who is also an Icchadhari Naagin proves Bela's accusations on her for the same to be wrong and rather absurdly in front of the family. Arvind as per the plan takes Karan form and goes to the venue accusing Adi of brutally beating him up, getting Adi arrested. Vish decides to take revenge from Adi and Yuvi thereupon. On the wedding day, Yuvi goes missing and Mahir thought he ran away. Mahir decides to take his place to save Bela's dignity. Actually, it was Vish who kidnapped Yuvi in the form of his ex-girlfriend Raavee and killed him. Mahir gets married to Bela much to her shock and sadness. However, Mahir promises Bela to be a good husband and fulfil all her duties as a husband. Pratham also gets married to Suhani. It is revealed that the real Naagin who wants revenge from the Sehgal's is Bela new identity of Ruhi. Vish is Bela's close friend and helpmate in her mission to destroy the criminal's lives. Later Bela and Vish team up to kill Rehan and throw his body off a cliff, satisfying their revenge.

Though the serial is supernatural drama fiction, the story revolves around a family and a vengeance of a shape-shifting snake and her strong will to protect the whole snake family. The show features a lot of negative characters for lust of acquiring the precious 'Naagmani', which holds a strong power. The central protagonist Bela, belonging to a royal family have to deal with all the problems and trials in order to save the whole snake family. But the irony is she also has to deal with some negative or greedy 'naags' or the shape-shifting snakes. Her husband Mahir is shown as a romantic and supportive husband whom the viewers desire for

the same. Also the show spends lot in holding parties, such as festive parties, birthday, anniversary, business parties, etc. which is organised frequently and frequently the tragedies in the storylines happens to be in these parties. The characters are beautifully groomed with a newly designed fashionable sarees and suits for men that lure the viewers. Also the jewellery, makeup is eye-catching. The houses are well furnished mansion and a huge living room with well designed and expensive artefacts placed in a proper order. Also the Sehgal's family are educated and open minded business class family, as one can see them using English with a mixture of Hindi in a upper-class accent and also the whole family whether be it older or younger is seen gambling with each other in a parties and supports each other whole heartedly. The serial story also revolves around a romance, extra-marital affairs, love and hatred relationship within step brothers living together in a big mansion.

## **2. TAARAK MEHTA KA OOLTAH CHASMA (TAARAK MEHTA'S UPSIDE -DOWN GLASSES)**

It is one of the longest running comedy-drama serials on Indian television. It is produced by Neela Tele Films Private Limited. The show went on air on July 28, 2008. It airs from Monday to Friday at 8:30 pm (IST) on SAB TV. Reruns of the show started on Sony Pal from November 2, 2015. The show is based on the column *Duniya Ne Undha Chasma* written by real life columnist and journalist Taarak Mehta for Gujarati weekly magazine *Chitrlekha*.

The story revolves around a Gokuldharm Society, a residential society in Powder Galli, Goregaon, Mumbai with four wings: A Wing, B Wing, C Wing and D Wing. Although the society has more than 50 flats, the show revolves around the lives of eight families.

Jethalal Champaklal Gada (Dilip Joshi), an electronics shop-owner from Kachchh district, Gujarat, his wife Daya (Disha Vakani), father Champaklal Jayantilal Gada (Amit Bhatt) and son Tipendra (Raj Anadkat) also known as Tapu, resides in B Wing. Jethalal often lands in trouble and takes help of his best friend, Taarak Mehta (Shailesh Lodha) and hence calls him as his personal “Fire Brigade”. The narrator, Taarak Mehta works for a trading company and is a columnist writer and his wife Anjali is a disciplined dietician who are from Gujarat and also resides in B Wing. The third family is society’s secretary, Aatmaram Tukaram Bhide, a home tutor from Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, his wife Madhavi, a business woman and daughter Sonalika also called Sonu resides in A Wing. The fourth family is a resident doctor, Dr. Hansraj Hathi from Bihar, his wife Komal and son Gulabkumar also known as Golu resides in A Wing. The fifth family also resides in A Wing, a car mechanic from Amritsar, Punjab, Roshan Singh Harjeet Singh Sodhi with his Parsi wife, also named Roshan and their son Gurucharan also called Gogi. The fifth family resides in C Wing, a Tamil scientist from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Krishnan Subramaniam Iyer and his Bengali wife Babita from Kolkata, West Bengal. The sixth family is a Patrakaar Popatlal Bhagwatiprasad Pandey, from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. He works as a senior crime reporter in Toofan Express. He has won many awards, the most important being “The Golden Crow Award”. He is a resident of C Wing, bachelor for years and is obsessed about his marriage and has his name in end number of marriage bureaus but is still bachelor. Pankaj Diwan Sahay, also called Pinku, part of Tapu Sena resides in another society (Gulmohar Apartments).

Tapu Sena is a five-member group of children residing in Gokuldham Society, except Pinku who resides in a different society. The group consists of Tapu also the leader of the group, Goli, Gogi, Pinku and Sonu. These children have played

significant roles which provide a fun young tone to the show. Usually the group becomes a nuisance for the other members of the society because of their mischief, while at other times, it draws praises from the members by doing something creditable. The society secretary, Atmaram Tukaram Bhide is especially annoyed with the Tapu Sena for playing cricket in the society compound as sometimes they break the window glasses or just cause a problem as shown in some episodes. Since the beginning of the show, the Tapu Sena has with their activities, characterised the typical playful Indian children. As the children grow up and mature, the stories are tailored to suit their ages.

There are also other recurring characters including Sundarlal, brother of Jethalal's wife Daya from Ahmedabad, Gujarat and his friends. Abdul, the shopkeeper of the provision store located outside the society entrance, reporter Rita Shrivastav from 'Kal Tak' a news channel, Inspector Chalu Pandey, Jethalal's shop assistants, Natwarlal Prabhashankar Udhaiwala also known as Natu Kaka, his nephew Baageshwar Dadu Udhaiwala also known as Baagha, who are often bent on doing the wrong job and Baagha's fiancée Bawri Dhondulal Kanpuria.

The members of the society and characters have a good psychological bond of love and sympathy for one another that make them live like members of one family. They are often seen celebrating different festivals as they belong from different states and participating in events together. Although they are shown to live the lives of typical Indian families, the character Jethalal Gada tends to put the other members of the society in trouble, cropping up from routine activities that are displayed in a comical manner.

The quirks of the individual characters seek to enhance the humour quotient of the show. Whatever the nature of the problem that a member of the society encounters, all the other members stand by them to extend every possible help. In an episode, the resolution of the problem that a character faces is usually followed by a moral message at the end by Taarak Mehta, which is meant for all the characters of the show as well as viewers.

### **3. KUNDALI BHAGYA (THE FATE OF OUR STARS)**

It is an Indian romantic drama television series created and developed by Ekta Kapoor which broadcasts on ZEE TV. The serial premiered on 12 July 2017 and stars Shraddha Arya, Dheeraj Dhoopar and Manit Joura. The show is a spin-off of popular show Kumkum Bhagya and narrates the story of Pragya's long lost sisters Preeta and Srishti, their attempt to find their mother and the relationship dynamics which lead to acquaintance with the rich and famous "Luthra" family. The elder son of Luthra family, Rishabh Luthra, owns a celebrity management firm which manages Abhishek Mehra and his younger brother Karan Luthra, a famous cricketer. Both the brothers have a strong brotherly bond. Initially Karan hates Preeta, but Rishabh begins to fall in love with Preeta's simplicity and loving nature. Eventually Karan and Preeta also becomes best friends and she wins over the affections of the entire Luthra family, except for Rishabh and Karan's aunt, Kareena. When marriage talks for Rishabh begin, he initially believes his mother has brought Preeta's alliance for him and accepts but he learns the alliance is actually for a girl named Sherlyn, the daughter of Kareena's friend. Preeta convinces Rishabh to accept the alliance and Sherlyn and Rishabh get engaged. Meanwhile, Preeta also gets engaged to a rich man named Prithvi. Soon, it is revealed that Sherlyn is only trying to marry Rishabh for his money

and that he has sent her boyfriend Prithvi as alliance for Preeta, to keep her away from Rishabh. Karan and Preeta get suspicious about Sherlyn and Prithvi, and they both team up to expose the real identity of Sherlyn. While Shrishti and Karan do not like Prithvi, they wanted Preeta to know Prithvi's real intentions. Sherlyn and Prithvi constantly get away with their lies and prove themselves worthy of their respective fiancés. Sherlyn gets pregnant with Prithvi's child and are able to hide it in front of both the Luthra and Arora family. Due to high tensions between Preeta and Kareena, the Luthra family asks Preeta to stay away from their family until Rishabh's wedding is over. It is then that Karan and Preeta start to somewhat realise their feelings for each other. In a parallel arc, Shrishti constantly feels like the baby of the family and feels like her mother does not love as much as she does Pragya and Preeta. Shristi have a constant fight with her mother on this issue. She also meets Sameer, Karan and Rishabh's cousin, whom she initially fights with. They also start to get close and eventually develop feelings for each other but do not reveal it. Rakhi, Karan and Rishabh's mother starts to suspect if they like each other, but is overjoyed with the prospect of Shristi and Sameer to being in love.

Since its launch in 2017, the show continues to rake high TRPs and is amongst the most watched shows of the year. For several months, it remained the most watched Indian Hindi TV show until the inception of Colors TV's Naagin 3 which is also produced by Balaji Telefilms.

#### **4. KUMKUM BHAGYA (VERMILION IN MY FATE)**

The show is also internationally titled: *Twist of Fate* is an Indian serial which premiered on 15 April 2014 airs on Zee TV and stars Sriti Jha and Shabir Ahluwalia as main characters, is loosely based on *Sense and Sensibility* by *Jane Austen*. The

show was also broadcasted internationally in U.K., U.S., Malaysia, Canada, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Ireland, South Africa, Indonesia, Chile, Philippines, Ghana and Singapore on Zee TV worldwide. The show has completed 1000 episodes in its Tamil version, *Iniya Iru Malargal*. The pivotal characters of this show are strong, feisty women, living together in an all-female matriarchal family. The series is produced and developed under the banner of Balaji Telefilms and is directed by Sameer Kulkarni. Due to Kumkum Bhagya popularity, a spin-off series, Kundali Bhagya which has been discussed above portrays the life of Pragya's long lost sisters, Preeta and Srishti.

The story is about Pragya Arora, a humble teacher and a rock star Abhishek Mehra. Sarla Arora (Supriya Shukla) runs a marriage hall and lives with the hope of seeing her two daughters happily married. Pragya, the elder daughter is practical, hardworking and teaches at a college. Bulbul (Mrunal Thakur), the younger daughter is outgoing and has her head in the clouds. The show follows the lives of the two sisters and their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

The series begins with a short-lived love triangle between Pragya, Suresh Srivastav and Bulbul, leading to the cancellation of Pragya and Suresh's engagement. In parallel, Abhishek is in a relationship with the supermodel, Tanushree. Purab Khanna is Abhishek's best friend and music handler. Purab owns an advertising agency where he hires Bulbul. After some fights and misunderstandings, they confess their love for each other. But Abhi expects Purab to marry his sister, Aliya. However, in a bitter twist of fate, Aliya presumes Purab loves Pragya who is assumed to have trapped him for money. Unfortunately Abhishek believes to his sister without listening to Purab's explanation. So Aliya, Abhishek and Tanu plot revenge. Abhi's



Dadi has met and liked Pragya so for revenge Abhi agrees to marry Pragya. Post-marriage, Pragya realises the truth that Aliya loves Purab and might hurt her sister Bulbul, she accepts the blame that she is Purab's love. On the day the marriage is fixed for Purab and Aliya, Purab abandons Aliya and marries Bulbul. Various situations and circumstances bring Abhishek and Pragya closer. Realising the wrongdoings of Aliya and Tanushree, Abhi reconciles with Purab and Bulbul. Desperate to get Abhishek back, Tanushree fakes a DNA report to imply Abhi is a father of her unborn child, which is actually the result of a one-night stand between her and Nikhil. Pragya realises the truth but suffers an accident and is declared dead before she could reveal the truth to Abhi.

The story takes a two month leap and Pragya returns to exact her revenge on her wrongdoers. In the meantime, jealousy and hatred begins to grow in the relationship of Bulbul, Purab and Aliya. Bulbul risks her life and dies while saving Pragya from Aliya. Pragya exposes Tanushree and wins back Abhi's trust. They propose each other. However, Abhi gets into an accident and loses his memory. He forgets the last two and a half years of his life, including Pragya. She leaves Abhi for his protection but does not divorce him.

Two months later, to save Kumkum Bhagya Marriage Hall, Pragya begins to work as a receptionist at the Love Life Music Company, where she meets Abhishek again and begins to form a deep friendship. Taking advantage of his memory loss, Aliya schemes to get Tanushree married to Abhishek. Pragya and Abhishek fall in love but he is compelled to marry Tanushree as her mother's last wish to see her daughter happy. Nikhil kidnaps Pragya on the day of Abhishek's wedding and he leaves rituals

to save her. Abhishek regains his memory, marries Pragya again, but loses her soon after when goons hired by Nikhil shoots her and she falls into the dam.

A couple of weeks pass; Abhishek is still searching for Pragya and comes across a villager named Munni, who is Pragya's lookalike. Abhi takes Munni home to save her from terrorist attacks. Aliya blackmails Munni into helping them. Pragya returns to Mumbai after being in coma, meets Munni and switch places to enter the Mehra household. In the meantime, Purab meets Disha. After Disha confesses her love, Purab feels guilty about still loving Bulbul and decides to give her the love she deserves and they consummate their marriage. Pragya saves Abhi's life multiple times from a mysterious woman who turns out to be Simonika, his secretary. She wants revenge from Abhishek for killing Dushyant, her husband. Her plans go skewed and she is arrested. She escapes police and reaches Mehra house. Tanushree teams up with Simonika to spare Abhi's life and kill Pragya instead.

In a major showdown, Dadi succumbs to bullet injuries suffered at the hands of Simonika while Pragya was on her way with police to the factory where Simonika was supposed to be hiding. Dadi feared for Pragya's safety and reaches the factory beforehand to confront Simonika. Both Aliya and Abhishek blame Pragya responsible for the family's misfortunes and cast her out from their lives. A devastated and anguished Pragya is shown attempting suicide by jumping from the top of a cliff.

Seven years later, all the dynamics between the people have changed. The Mehra family resides in New Delhi, Abhishek is married to Tanushree, Aliya manages Abhishek's career, the friendship between Aliya and Tanushree mysteriously ended, and Purab and Disha have a son, Sunny. On the other hand, Pragya resides in the United Kingdom as the manager of King Singh; a London based rapper, and has a

daughter, Kiara. King and Pragya share a bond of mutual respect. Abhishek still holds Pragya responsible for Dadi's death and Pragya still believes it.

Fate conspires, and both King and Abhishek receive a contract to work on a world music album from a Delhi based organizer. King, Pragya and Kiara come to New Delhi. Kiara meets Abhishek and they form a deep bond, unknowing that she is his daughter. As circumstances unfold, Pragya and Abhishek come face-to-face and he further blames Pragya for not putting in the effort to save their marriage seven years prior and for marrying King. Disha and Purab realises that Kiara is Abhishek and Pragya's daughter but hold the information from Abhishek.

Initially started with the low ratings, the show climbed to Top 5 most watched shows after only a few weeks of its launch. The show is popular among Indian and Pakistani women because of its story woven in the fabric of the family drama, love, hatred relationships.

## **5. ISHQ SUBHAN ALLAH (THIS LOVE OH GOD)**

It is an Indian television series which airs on Zee TV. The show is produced by Zuby Kochchar and Dheeraj Kumar. It stars Eisha Singh and Adnan Khan as a lead. The story of 'Ishq Subhan Allah' is based in Lucknow and focuses on the Muslim community. It revolves around two people, Zara and Kabir who follow the same religion, Islam and have pursued higher studies in it, but they interpret Quran differently. The two main characters have basically different personalities. One of which is Zara Siddiqui, who is an open-minded Muslim woman who fights for people's rights, particularly women. She has completed her Masters in Islamic Studies and has returned to Lucknow after 5 years. The other lead character is Kabir Ahmad, who is a culture-driven and a conservative young Mawlawi. He has returned home to

Lucknow after completing his studies in Maulvi (Islamic) practice. Kabir's traditional views and Zara's modern perspective towards Islam causes their initial spark of attraction to die out and they clash with each other owing to their different ideals on triple talaq.

The series starts with Zara Siddiqui and Kabir Ahmed coming back to Lucknow after 5 years, after pursuing higher studies on Islam. When an argument about Triple Talaq, between Zara and Kabir becomes viral on the internet, they are forced to marry each other. Zara and Kabir's discussion on triple instant talaq goes viral on social media, angering their fathers, who are the members of the Sharia Board (Islamic Board) in the city. Zara is pressured to take back her views against triple talaq, while she believes is derogatory to women. This brings on the wrath on the community of her. Kabir, who takes over the position of a Sharia board member from his father, Shahbaz Ahmed, protects Zara for the sake of the dignity of their community and gives a statement to the media saying that the video is not true. Zara believes that Kabir is responsible for the leaking of the video, challenges him that she will be making a difference to the status of women in their community. To retaliate against Kabir, Zara takes over the membership of the Sharia Board for only being the female representative. Kabir, who believes that Zara's views are against Islam, humiliates her action which ends up with Zara and Kabir having very public fights. Not wanting their community to suffer and divided on the account of their differing perspectives, the elders of the community suggest Zara and Kabir to get married. Thus, due to circumstances, they both end up in getting engaged as this match is believed to benefit the Islamic community in the city. Not wanting to be bound to each other for life, both Kabir and Zara scheme with their friends to stop the wedding. Kabir even manipulates his sister-in-law, Zeenat to bring forth the fact that his father had earlier

agreed to marry him with Zeenat's younger sister, Rukshaar, who has harboured feelings for Kabir since childhood. Unable to take the shock, she tries to commit suicide on the day of Kabir and Zara's engagement. She is eventually saved by Zara who donates blood to her and assures her that she will not marry Kabir. However, in a turn of events, Shahbaz Ahmed is able to deceive Rukshaar and convince her that he will get married to Kabir once he becomes the Sheher Qazi (Islamic Leader of the City) with the help of Zara's father Irfan, who is the current Sheher Qazi. Rukshaar who is eager to get Kabir, as well as become the Qazian (Wife of the Qazi) after marrying Kabir agrees to get Kabir and Zara married without thinking of the consequence of this alliance on her future with Kabir. Kabir and Zara are eventually shocked when Rukshaar herself steps forth and gets them engaged. Kabir and Zara resolve to say no at the nikaah, seeing no other way out, when they are asked whether they accept the marriage or not. In a moment of weakness, Zara concerned that her rejection of marriage will cause disrepute to her beloved father says 'Qubool Hai' (I accept) for the marriage. Kabir, seeing no other way out, full with anger also openly accepts the marriage at the ceremony, leaving Zara distressed as she had hoped he would say no in case she could not refuse. Fearing Kabir's favour of talaq-e-biddat (triple instant talaq), Zara includes a clause in her nikahnama (marriage contract) stating that Kabir cannot divorce her this way. Kabir angrily agrees to these terms, while giving her 'mahr' (money or possessions paid by the groom to bride at the time of marriage) of 1 crore rupees.

Although they experience a bit of a rocky road in the initial days of their marriage, the events of their honeymoon bring them closer. Zara starts to fall in love with Kabir, while Kabir is hesitant. However, Rukshaar, Kabir's sister-in-law's sister, has been in love with Kabir from a young age and tries everything to split them up. She brings in

a man named Miraj, to help her bring differences between Zara and Kabir, in the pretence of her friend's brother. Miraj is actually a brother of an underworld Don Kahmir Siraj. When he finds out that Rukhsaar is the actual reason for his brother's dead, he goes mischief. In order to save her family from Miraj, Rukhsaar brings her friend from college to be Miraj's sister, much to Miraj's displeasure. She asks her friend Nilofer to keep everyone in her family safe from Miraj, except for Zara, while she is married and sent to Dubai. Miraj eventually buys Nilofer and she joins her hands with Niraj.

A big misunderstanding happens between Zara and Kabir and Kabir divorces Zara through triple talaq. But Zara does not accept the divorce, as it is revealed that it was not in their marriage contract. Miraj reveals his true self to Zara and how he wants her on the cost of Kabir. To save Kabir, Zara tries to get Rukshaar back to India to reveal Miraj's truth. Zara asks Zeenat, Kabir's sister-in-law to help her get contact with Rukshaar, but is not able to reach her. Shahbaz strikes a deal with Kabir to let Miraj join Shariah Board and not divorce Zara, on the means of giving him 1 crore to pay back Zara's 'mahr'. Miraj press himself into Shariah Board and Irfan, Zara's father, announces that he wants both Zara and Kabir as his Vice Head. It is revealed to Kabir that Miraj is a diamond smuggler, who only joined his project to turn his black money into white. On this truth being revealed, Kabir's dream project is seized.

This show focuses on the lives of Muslim community, their cultural beliefs and practices. Zara, a lead female actress who is an open-minded Muslim fights for the rights of women but in contrary, Kabir, a lead male actor has a conservative Muslim outlook. Their ideas conflicts in the beginning later they develop feelings for each other which forms a basic crux in every serials. The serial showcases Muslim

lifestyles, their cultural practices, language, accent and even their style of dressing or the jewellery they wear are showcased in a luxurious Muslim fashion. Women are seen covering their heads with '*chunnaris*' as it is shown as a respect given to the male elders.

## **6. YEH RISHTA KYA KEHLATA HAI (WHAT IS THIS RELATIONSHIP CALLED?)**

It is a Hindi television drama aired on Star Plus. It premiered on 12 January, 2009 on Star Plus. It is the longest running Hindi Indian series by episode count. It is produced by Rajan Shahi's Director's Kut Productions. The show is one of the most often awarded shows of Indian Television. The focuses on the daily life of an Udaipur based Marwari family. The show's lead characters are Shivangi Joshi as Naira and Mohsin Khan as Kartik. The series initially focused on Naira's parents, Hina Khan as Akshara and Karan Mehra as Naitik.

The plot initially was about a young couple, Akshara and Naitik Singhanian live in a Marwari joint family in Udaipur. They adjust as a married couple, as parents of young children, and as their extended families mature. Naitik falls into a coma in an accident, four years later he returns to the family and struggles to gain acceptance from his five year old son, Naksh. Naitik's mother dies and his father marries a divorcee with two children. Later when her husband dies, Naitik's elder aunt blames Akshara and kicks her out of the house and Naitik, Akshara, Naksh and newborn Naira leave their extended family. The family resides in Cape Town for several years. An adult Naksh returns to Udaipur and counsels his great aunt, who is convinced to forgive Akshara and the family returns. Naksh falls in love with Tara and wedding plans are made but she breaks up with him minutes before the ceremony. Teenaged

Naira runs away from Akshara and lives in Rishikesh for a time when she returns a love triangle forms between Naira, her cousin Gayu and Naitik's employee Kartik Goenka. Naira considers setting aside her feelings so Gayu can be happy but after a time Naira and Kartik confess their love for each other. Later, Akshara dies in a car accident and drunken Kartik is blamed, dividing the families but Naira proves his innocence and her family accepts him. Naira and Kartik are married and later learns that Kartik's cousin Mansi was responsible for Akshara's death. The couple later work together to help his sister Keerti gain divorce from her abusive husband. Under pressure from the family, Naksh agrees to marry Naira's sister-in-law, Keerti.

Parallel with Akshara and Naitik's stories, the stories of their respective siblings also form significant story arcs in the series. Past plots have been built around the lives of Naitik's sisters Nandini and Rashmi. The series has also focused on Naitik's step- siblings. The series also paralleled the story of Akshara-Naitik with that of Varsha-Shaurya, Akshara's best friend and elder brother respectively. After several leaps, Naira and Kartik became the leads of the show. Parallel with Kartik and Naira's story, the series focuses on the story of Naksh and Keerti.

The show is basically a family drama of two families living in a joint family of various generations who has a strong bond between them and a value of kinship. The families are business class family but bonded by a strong sense and value of tradition and culture. The men are often seen wearing kurtas and pyjamas during a parties or some religious function in a house while women are always seen wearing sarees, kurtas and lehengas with traditional jewellery. The elderly women are always seen covering their head but the new generation even being married like Naira and Kriti are seen covering the head only during pujas, however these families have accepted the



modern changes but any western wear are discouraged as one can see the female characters always clad in a traditional attire only except in some functions belonging to a particular themes like parties, picnic they are seen wearing western clothes. Men are seen often wearing western clothes such as jeans, suits as they have to work in an office. However, the clothes worn by all the characters are usually Indian attire but it is seen somewhat glamour and fashionable. Women places are seen in the homes doing household chores and fixing problems of the family. But these families are shown supportive to each other. Also the marriages are shown taking place between the same families which may be the crux of the storylines or laying emphasis on kinship. The traditional food 'kachauri' is seen eating most of the times during breakfast and also offers it for the guest who visits Singhania family. While Goenka family, although being traditional in their outlook and mindset are strict for their diet. Dadi has planned the whole diet sets for the family. They eat mostly fruits, boiled vegetables, juices which are also imported and a good quality product. Any oily foods are discouraged, as Naira when she came as a bride for the first time she had a hard time to adjust according to Dadi rules. In the serial, elderly are given a most importance, any rude behaviour or harsh tone to elders whether they are wrong are totally discouraged. Thus, one can say the serial holds lots of respect to elderly, importance to traditions, beliefs and culture which is very much seen accepting notion in an Indian sense.

## **7. KULFI KUMAR BAJEWALA (KULFI KUMAR MUSICIAN)**

It is an Indian musical television serial produced by 4 Lions Films which has been telecasting since 19 March 2018 on Star Plus. The cast includes Aakriti Sharma, Mohit Malik, Anjali Anand, Myra Singh, Vishal Aditya Singh and Shruti

Sharma. It is a remake of the Bengali television series *Potol Kumar Gaanwala*. The story revolves around the journey of a young 7 years old girl called Kulfi who possess melodious musical voice and has the talent of singing can be called as singing prodigy. The story revolves around the obstacles the girl faces in order to unite with her father. Sikandar, a budding singer fell in love with Nimrat and secretly married her but left her in Chikori village to pursue his career and became a famous singer. Kulfi is the daughter of Sikandar Singh Gill but Sikandar is unaware that his first wife, Nimrat whom he left behind in village has left a daughter. He marries Loveleen as his second wife and Loveleen was already pregnant with Tevar's child at the time of marriage but her husband Sikandar was unaware of it. Sikinder thought that Amyrah is his daughter till he comes to know the truth that Amyrah is Loveleen and Tevor's, another musician's daughter. In course of time, all the members in Sikandar's family like brother, sister-in law, his wife, Loveleen are all aware that Sikandar has a daughter and she is Kulfi. Again, everybody in the family hides the truth that Amyrah is Tevar's daughter. All these hiding the truth from each other form the basis of the story. The show gives special focus to two girls Amyrah and Kulfi who are contemporary of age.

Kulfi's character shows that she belongs to a village, didn't attend school so she is illiterate and innocent but has a great melodious voice which impresses everyone. On the other hand Amyrah goes to English school, educated and eloquent with English, snobbish, has full of attitude and very jealous of Kulfi because whatever Kulfi does others including the elders especially her father often appreciates. Loveleen, Sikandar's wife, her mother and now Loveleen's daughter Amyrah, the small girl play the negative role of cheating, conspiring each other, bribing to Kulfi's aunty to hide Kulfi's identity and bribing all the possible officials in the birth

registration office to show Tevar that Kulfi is his daughter and not Amyrah. Loveleen and her mother, the two of them want to throw out Kulfi from their (Sikandar's) house. During that time Tevar came looking for his child and started threatening Loveleen that he will tell her husband about the truth and cheat Tevar again by providing evidences that Kulfi is his real daughter. Tevar believed it as he was shown with evidences and took Kulfi home. Kulfi and Tevar started staying together as father and daughter. Initially, Kulfi could not accept that Tevar is her father as she loves Sikandar like her own father. Sikandar also loves Kulfi like his own daughter and has a lot of concern but he is torn in between his wife. Loveleen and Sikandar's assumed daughter Amyrah who always tries to distract him for giving too much attention to Kulfi as Loveleen has brainwashed her daughter Amyrah by saying that if her father that is Sikandar comes to know that Kulfi is his real daughter, she will have Kulfi as her sister and her father's attention and love will be divided between the two sisters and there will be competition in every sphere of life. However, Amyrah's mother has not told Amyrah that she is Tevar's daughter but incidentally Sikandar comes to know during Ganesh Chaturthi that Amyrah is not his daughter but that of Tevar's.

This serial is presently ranking very high as it shows the lives of two young girls and the story line shown till now is slightly different from other serials and the characters till date have not yet been repetitive. Usually in Hindi television serials the wife of the hero, is usually the heroine who plays the lead role but here it shows the life of a father and daughter in the lead role and father's second wife in the negative role for obvious reasons. It also shows the story of friendship, competition, deceit, selfishness and all to protect your own child even if it harms others. Dress worn by the lead actors are a combination of western and Indian dresses. Kulfi, usually wears

simple salwar kameez whereas Amyrah wears designer salwar kameez where the colour of the dress and pattern are generally similar with her mother. Sometimes, the girls are portrayed over-maturely beyond their age in understanding things.

## **8. SHAKTI- ASTITVA KE EHSAAAS KI (STRENGTH OF FEELING OF EXISTENCE)**

It is an Indian television series aired on Colors TV. It stars Rubina Dilaik and Vivian Dsena as the lead characters of Soumya and Harman and Lakshya Handa and Tiya Gandwani and Sahil Mehta as the parallel lead characters of Varun, Lavneet and Sameer. It replaced the longest running popular series 'Balika Vadhu' on 30 May, 2016. It is also dubbed in Polimer TV as Shakti aired on 12 November, 2018.

The story is about two sisters, Soumya and Surbhi. Soumya is disliked by her father Maninder and grandmother, but is adored by her mother Nimmi. Surbhi gets all the attention from her father. Soumya is calm and quiet girl but Surbhi is a fun-loving and talkative girl. Ten years are later, Soumya and Surbhi are grown up. A troublemaker, Harman breaks into Soumya's house while running away from some goons. While there, Harman develops feeling for Soumya. Harman learns that Surbhi called the goons and decides to kidnap her but kidnaps Soumya instead. Harman releases Soumya next day but to avoid insult to both the families, Harman's father, Harak Singh orders Harman to marry Soumya. Soumya's mother is shocked to see Soumya married to Harman and worries that Harman will leave Soumya after knowing her truth. Despite the protests of Harman's mother Preeto, Soumya's father Maninder and grandmother, Soumya and Harmaan gets married. Soon, Harman falls in love with Soumya. Soumya learns that she is intersex and hides it from Harman on Nimmi's insistence.

Later, Soumya reveals to Harman that she is transgender and also reveals that her love is true for Harman. Harman becomes furious and Nimmi begs Harman not to reveal Soumya's secret. Harman and Soumya eventually becomes friend. However, Preeto finds out Soumya's secret and she exiles Soumya to a kinnar society. Preeto wants Harman to get married to a girl named Mahi, but he refuses. After facing a lot of hardships, Harman and Soumya are united again but in the meantime, Nimmi dies. Maninder warns Soumya not to enter the home and Harman takes Soumya with him. When Harman returns home, everyone is waiting for him to marry Mahi but to their shock they see Soumya with him, holding each other's hand. Mahi breaks the marriage and leaves. Later, part of the story is about how Soumya faces Preeto, Harak and transgenders' rage. Soumya adopts a child, names him Aditya and takes care of the baby. Soumya loses her baby after some time and faces many problems in her life. Finally, Preeto accepts Soumya as her daughter-in law, Kareena, another kinnar, who considers Soumya as the reason for her mother's death plots another wicked plan to destroy Soumya's life.

Soumya gets trapped in the evil plan thus creating misunderstandings in her relationship with Harman. He later meets with a severe accident. He survives the accident but he loses his memory. Later, Jasleen arrives at the Singh household. Harman makes Jasleen believe that his marriage is perfect but Jasleen learns Soumya's truth and stands by Harman's side. Harak wants to get Jasleen and Harman married considering Jasleen as the perfect match for Harman but Preeto wants to save Harman and Soumya's relationship. Jasleen and Harman prepare to marry. Soumya decides to sacrifice her love for her husband's happiness. Jasleen's father Motilal, a Canadian NRI arrives for the wedding. Soumya suddenly disappears just before the wedding ceremony leaving behind a letter which is read aloud by Preeto. In the letter,

Soumya wishes Harman and Jasleen a happy married life and bids farewell to the family. Meanwhile, Harman, who wholeheartedly loves Soumya is unable to bear the pain of separation but proceeds with the wedding only to fulfill his promise to Jasleen.

## **9. QAYAMAT KI RAAT (NIGHT OF DOOM)**

It is an Indian supernatural drama television series aired in Star Plus. It started on 23 June 2018. The series is co-produced by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor under Balaji Telefilms. The show stars Vivek Dahiya, Karishma Tanna, Sumit Bhardwaj and Saurish Singh Athwal. It is a supernatural horror genre which runs for 45 minutes.

Set in the year of 1993, the story begins with a newly wedded couple, Suhaasini and Mahendar going to a Ram temple at Raamnaamgarh to hand over Suhaasini's wedding chain to the idol of Lord Rama and receive deity's blessings. The train stops at the station and Mahender's loyal driver Birju comes to fetch them and to drive them till the temple. Not realising, Birju is possessed, they follow him. Suhaasini and Mahendar enter the temple when suddenly Mahenadar recalls that they have forgot the wedding chain in the car so Mahendar goes to fetch it asking Suhaasini to wait. Suhaasini wants to go with him as the temple seemed to be scary and also because it was the New Moon night. But Mahendar convinces her to wait for him to come. Meanwhile Suhaasini witnesses strange creepy occurrences in the temple premises while exploring the region which included absence of a bell as well as any idol of Lord Rama inside the temple and passing of a cat out of nowhere. As soon as Suhaasini goes further inside the temple she trips off a door and falls down the stairs that lead into the temple's basement that happens to be a taantrik named Kaalasar's den.

As soon as Kaalasur sees her he gladly welcomes her inside and offers to spend a night with her. This frightens Suhaasini and yells for help. This is followed by a struggle by Suhaasini to escape the taantrik's clutches and a fight between him and her husband Mahendar. Suhaasini runs away screaming for help. While fighting with taantrik, Mahendar loses consciousness and Kaalasur shape-shifts into Mahendar's form. Meanwhile Suhaasini reaches the palace of Thakur Prithvi Singh Sooryavanshi and asks them to save her from Kaalasur. Just then Kaalasur arrives there in Mahendar's disguise and Suhaasini scared out of her wits pleads everybody to get taantrik arrested at the temple.

As soon everybody is searching for taantrik, Kaalasur takes Suhaasini in a bedroom inside a palace and tries making love to her. But luckily she sees reflection of the taantrik in the glass ceiling and pushes him away. As she reaches for the door to exit the house, the Thakur's family returns with the real Mahendar, a priest and few village men because they had found an unconscious Mahendar at the temple instead of taantrik. The priest traps Kaalasur inside a circular ring of holy ash on the floor. The taantrik still does not accept defeat and continues to threaten everyone. He keeps insisting on making love to Suhaasini which annoy Mahendarto no extent. He threatens to burn Kaalasur into ashes, but the latter comments that his ashes would rise in air and come together to resurrect him. Next, Mahendar threatens taantrik to bury him alive but he says his skeleton would rise from underneath the ground to revive him. A furious Mahendar then shoots the taantrik with a rifle, but the bullet falls off on hitting the taantrik's chest without any harm. Mahendar then strangle Kaalasur and chokes him, but Kaalasur manages to get an upper hand and lifts Mahendar up in the air grabbing his throat. Suhaasini requests Kaalasur to leave Mahendar unharmed but he pays no heed and insists on having one-night stand with

her. This raise the rage and strength inside Suhaasini who lifts up a villager's axe and chops off Kaalasar's right arm that had grabbed Mahendar's throat. Next, she cuts the taantrik's head off. As a result, the beheaded taantrik curses Suhaasini's family that since he could not make love to her, no woman from her family must consummate her marriage hereafter or else death would befall on her. He also remarks that Suhaasini would never know the reason why he had chosen her and wanted to make love to her. Fearing that Suhaasini would be arrested for taantrik's beheading, Mahendar orders the village man Lakha to take care of Kaalasar and his cut off arm and head. The priest then orders Lakha to lock the taantrik's arm, head and body separately and hide them in different places so that the taantrik can never assimilate his body parts together and resurrect himself.

Twenty five years later in Mumbai, two girls Karuna and Gauri, who are revealed to be sisters, are shown walking to their car with several shopping bags in their hands. They reach their home and are revealed to be Mahendar and Suhaasini's daughters but Suhaasini is nowhere to be seen and instead Karuna and Gauri's stepmother Damini is shown to be Mahendar's wife presently. Thakur Prithvi Singh Sooryavanshi is shown at Mahendar's house with his wife Uma and friend Vikram to discuss a matrimonial alliance between his friend Vikram's son Aman and Mahendar's older daughter Karuna. While Karuna is stubborn about not giving consent to marriage, her grandmother (Mahendar's mother) is worried about the fact that Karuna would have to stay at Raamnaamgarh after the marriage.

The serial depicts the supernatural and superstitious beliefs in a Hindu family where Kaalasar tries to capture Gauri and does possible ways to harm her family and her husband Raj. The serial shows how Gauri through various rituals and religious



dimensions does possible ways to help her and her family out from the clutches of Kaalasur. She performs various rituals and pujas which is not a part of real life situations to fight back Kaalasur. This serial showcases superstitious beliefs and the rituals are also very extraordinary which are not present in the real life situations. Like in one episode when Raj soul was captured by Kaalasur, Gauri went into a next dimension to get keys to free Raj from the clutches of 'Kaalasur' with the help of priestess and the next dimension was shown entering through a 'chakra' where the place was shown filled with water where lies other people souls who were unable to come back from there. Gauri had to free them too in order to save Raj and also these souls helped her to get the keys which could unlock Raj's heart and bring him back to normal life. Thus, this serial shows superstitions and supernatural ventures in such a way which is very hard to believe and is not possible in real life.

#### **10. KRISHNA CHALI LONDON (KRISHNA LEAVES FOR LONDON)**

It is an Indian television show which premiered on Star Plus on 21 May, 2018. This show is produced by Saurabh Tewari and stars Megha Chakraborty and Gaurav Sareen. The show revolves around the leads Krishna Dubey, an aspiring doctor and Radhe Lal Shukla, an aspiring lover. Radhe lives in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. He belongs to a rich illiterate family. Shukla family holds big businesses. Radhe's uncle Shuklaji has faced much humiliation from the society for his illiteracy. Shuklaji instead of educating himself and his family wants to get an educated wife for Radhe, wishing that she answers all his societal enemies. Radhe gets the news that his uncle has fixed his marriage in neighbouring town, Malihabad with the district topper Krishna and he becomes happy with it. Shuklaji termed her as Radhe's "trophy wife".

Krishna assists her dad, Dubey at his clinic, who is non-degree allopathic practitioner. Her mother died of cervical cancer. Dubey earns a living by his clinic and milk business. Krishna wants to become a doctor. She gets motivated by her best friend, lover and mentor Prashant, who runs a coaching centre and an IFS aspirant. Krishna tries to run from her wedding. Saajan, Radhe's childhood friend, with whom Radhe shares all his secrets, motivates Radhe to marry Krishna. After giving 17 lakhs dowry, abike for Radhe, leaving aside education, ambition to become a doctor, Krishna is forced to marry Radhe. Krishna gets brutally tortured by Shuklaji and Shuklain too. Radhe saved her in some instances. Krishna's sister-in-law Laali often gets heavily beaten up by her husband, Gajanan. Krishna seeing it calls police, Gajanan gets imprisoned, but helpless Laali releases her husband. Moreover, Shuklain, who gets tortured by Shuklaji and cunning Bela supports all this. Egotistic Shuklaji tries many ways to kick Krishna out of his house, defames her father, joins hand with Prashant to defame her character but nothing works out in front of headstrong Krishna, and Radhe's love for her.

Krishna even comes up with ideas to educate Radhe, her trust on him increases. Meanwhile, Krishna clears her medical entrance exam, even offered to study in London medical college. Both Radhe and Krishna gets separated. Radhe learns later that love is also about trust, mutual understandings. Gajanan and Laali's married life gets stable. Laali suffers from cervical cancer, stage 3. Shuklaji tries to get rid of Laali but fails. Krishna also helps Laali in every possible ways. Krishna also needs 30 lakhs for studying at London medical college. Enters Lambodar Shukla and he sends Shuklaji to Dubai as a punishment. Shuklaji had visited earlier at Bela's house to fix Radhe's marriage with Tiptop. Bela, as planned by Lambodarji makes a

deal with Radhe which forces him to marry Tiptop. Krishna ties the knot with Radhe and saves him with a trick. Lambodarji also sends Radhe to Dubai as a punishment.

The serial shows a middle class girl who aspires to become a doctor faces lots of challenges in her in-laws home who are arrogant and uneducated. Krishna has a desire of becoming a doctor and receives scholarship in a London University but however has to face lots of challenges emotionally and economically. The in-laws are not in a support of sending Krishna for a further study but only her husband Radhe supports and loves her unconditionally. The serial also shows how being uneducated faces a challenges and humiliation in the society like Radhe and his family are illiterate and desires for a literate 'bahu'. But Krishna who is educated could not remain silent when her sister-in-law was a victim of domestic violence. Now Radhe's family also has to face challenges because their illiterate and ignorant thoughts could not match with well educated and versatile 'bahu' Krishna.

## **2.2. PRESENTATION OF SERIALS**

Prime time programming also requires that much greater attention to be paid to visualisation and presentation of serials. As mentioned elsewhere, prime time serials in India stand out for their lavish spectacle and glamour. A great deal of attention is paid to the lavish sets, costumes, jewellery and accessories of the stars to attract the spectators. Besides an emotional and spiritual engagement in the serials, Hindi serials have ignited a renaissance of Hindi culture and fashion. The female characters in the serials are usually dressed in fashion accessories, the latest sari designs, sometimes their hands are stained with fancy henna designs, and they usually

wear decorative 'bindis' (Kaur & Yahya, 2010). In most cases, audiences are completely familiar with the mansions and houses depicted in the serials. Such is the viewer's knowledge that one can immediately tell which family's home it is and which serial is going on. The stories in the serials have many twists and turns and are never finally resolved. At times, to keep the audience enthusiastic, serials use the ploy of 'precap', which when the evening episode ends, provides a teaser glance of an important scene from the next episode. Important events affecting the country also find reference in the serials such as Independence Day, Republic Day, festivals, etc. The participation of characters in such events enhance to the notion that the world of serial families runs according to the 'real' world outside. The serial may be for entertainment but the writers take reality as their inspiration and show Indian life in a dramatised and in an embellished way. Since serials have apparently no ending, thus their lack of closure and resolution can make them boring and repetitious.

The class also acts an important factor in the serials. Those belonging to upper ladder of sophistication are mostly shown taunting the middle or lower groups, their daily lifestyles, practices and even the manner they dress. Just as in Hindi movies, music forms an integral part of the serials. Music does not simply announce the beginning of the program. Many characters in the show are associated with popular Hindi film songs so if the audience hears some lines, they can immediately identify the characters with which the particular song is associated (Munshi, 2010). Like in the serial 'Kum Kum Bhagya' the song 'Allah Waariyan' from the movie 'Yaariyan' is played when Abhi sees Pragya. In some serials the directors also maintain the sound of animals as a background score for some of their characters. Like in Naagin 3, when Bela transforms herself in a serpent has a hissing sound of a snake.

Serials also take generational leaps when required. As in the serial ‘Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai’ the stories initial revolved in the lives of Akshara and Naitik, their marriage, love, complications in their relationships, family. But later the story took a leap towards their daughter Naira and her husband Kartik and their complications in the relationships, family, etc. Sometimes the lead actors depart from the serials if they get offers from Bollywood or if they have some conflicts with the producers, directors or if they do not like the content of the serials. The actor Hina Khan who played a role as Akshara in the serial ‘Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai’ is said to have left the show because she was not regarded as main focus when the new character Naira joined the serial that played as her daughter in the serial. But she claimed that she left the serial as she wanted to come out of the ideal bahu image and was preparing for reality shows to show the audience that she has various other talents apart from acting. The departure of well established character in the serials may create problems but interestingly, serials use multiple tracks and characters and it survives for years. For instance, when Hina Khan left the serial ‘Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai’, it was shown that she died in an accident. Many leaves the show in between as the actors want to try something new genre and does not want to get associated with one particular character. For many actors, they do not want to take the role of elderly during the generational leap of the serials. Hence, producers of serials have to concentrate on developing a sub-plot for a while before moving to another. This has to do with keeping audiences engaged and of course maintaining TRPs (Munshi, 2010).

#### **i. An Overview of the Serials**

Out of the 10 serials, 8 serials are based on the business class family which the lead male actor are generally the sons of high class sophisticated family whereas the

women are from the middle class family who struggles for various opportunities like job, education, etc. For instance in the serial 'Kundali Bhagya' and 'Kum Kum Bhagya' the lead male actors are from very high class sophisticated family while the lead female are shown from middle class background and ironically they work as teachers or physiotherapist. Like their female counterparts, male characters are also shown to be playing negative roles who are shown as crooked, sly, deceitful. The lead male actors are shown to be romantic, loving, guided by cultural and traditional values. The lead male actors also wear designer western suits along with Indian traditional attire. This kind of structure is mostly present in the Hindi serials and forms the basis of the story.

Serial like 'Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chasma' depicts the story of a middle class families living in a particular society and their relationships with each other. The serial 'Kulfi Kumar Bajewala' is about the music where viewers see that the main actor Sikandar initially struggling for a music career. But unlike other serials where the hero mostly comes from big business class family, here, in this serial Sikandar's wife Loveleen comes from a wealthy business class family where her father has his own production firm and hires Sikandar as a singer and makes him popular. All the 9 serials were depicting Hindu lifestyle but only the serial 'Ishq Subhan Allah' depicted Muslim lifestyle, their culture, ethos and value judgements.

In most of the serials when the lead actors first meet they fight and later when they started becoming closer or when they tries to understand each other after a lot of misunderstandings, they start developing feelings for each other like Abhi and Pragya of 'Kum Kum Bhagya', Karan and Preeta of 'Kundali Bhagya', Zara and Kabir of 'Ishq Subhan Allah'. The multiple marriages and divorces also form the storylines in

the serials. The extra-marital affairs, fights between families for property, also form as the basis of stories. The resurrection from death, plastic surgery and amnesia are very commonly shown in the plot, making some of the actors play double or triple role. For instance, Mahir of 'Naagin 3' is now shown suffering from amnesia which he does not remember the past six months and has also forgotten Bela, his wife. Even Pragya and Abhi of 'Kum Kum Bhagya' were also shown suffering from amnesia which they hardly remembers anything and most important. The problem of amnesia is shown benefitting mostly the negative characters as they try to divert the mind of amnesia affected persons, by creating misunderstanding between them and make all possible ways to keep the couple away from each other. Like in the serial 'Kum Kum Bhagya' Tanushree and Aliya put efforts to keep Pragya away from Abhi and by generating lot of misunderstanding between them. But the common theme in all the serials is that these characters recall the past which is shown in faded negative images which the audiences can understand easily. Eventually, they could not go away with their emotions and eventually they recall everything including their love.

In supernatural serials like 'Qayamat Ki Raat' and 'Naagin 3', it is shown that the main negative characters are kept in suspense but eventually these negative characters are mostly the mother of a hero. In the serial 'Qayamat Ki Raat' the scoundrel who was helping Kaalasur was kept in suspense for a long time who in twist turns out to be the step mother of Raj, the hero. Even in the serial 'Naagin 3', Bela ponders who was putting threat to the whole snake family and it was found later that it was her husband's mother Sumitra who is also a Naagin and ultimately found out that she is not a biological mother of Mahir. In fact it turns out that Sumitra was posing a real threat to whole Mahir and Bela's family. In both these serials it is shown that mother has control over their son and put obstacles to keep them away from their

wives. Not only in supernatural serials, also in some family dramas, are the heroes' mother shown in negative characters. Earlier, in the beginning of the serial, these mother of a lead male actor are shown kind, loving but over a period to make the shows more interesting the mothers of the hero are recurrently shown as greedy, unkind, possessive of their son/s and as step-mother in some serials. In the serial 'Naagin 3' the mother of Mahir was shown earlier loving, kind and friendly but later she was made known as the most greedy negative character who is after a 'Naagmani' which possess a very great power and does all the possible ways to kill Bela and her family and have control over Mahir, her step son.

Generally, when the generational leap takes place in the serials, the existing actors are portrayed as an elderly but their faces are shown just like before free from wrinkles, grey hairs but the style of dressing sometimes changes. In fact they work according to the looks the role demands. But they are never shown very old even they play the role of elderly. Only grandparents are shown old having gray hair. Sometimes the lead characters that portray the role of parents of married children look younger than the ones who play their children which are very unrealistic in common life situations.

The parties of various kinds like festivals, birthday, wedding, baby shower, business party are very common in the serials we have analysed. In these parties, producers spent crores of rupees to decorate a particular set in order to make attractive for the audiences and even the dresses and jewellery worn by the actors in these parties are very expensive. The central characters are mostly given designer outfits and set them apart from the rest of the characters. Even the colours, design of the parties are based according to the themes. In birthday parties one can find the whole



set decorated with colourful balloons so that audience can understand and connect to what kind of party is thrown. Similarly, during festivals like religious festivals like Durga Puja, Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmasthmi, etc, one can find the idols of various gods and goddesses, beautifully decorated with lights and flower. In a country like India where the marriage is given a huge importance, also in the serials, wedding are shown in an elaborate scale, the different rituals like mehendi, sangeet, etc are shown elaborately so that audiences can connect to what is shown. In these functions and celebrations both male as well as female characters are shown busily decorating the houses, handling the guest and many times the heroine falling from a high stool and the hero catching her from the fall. The negative character is mostly shown trying to gain benefit in these functions and make their plans work. Also the lead actors target these functions to reveal the truth of negative character among the masses who poses threat to the family. The producers also target these kinds of functions and bring more stories and tragedies in the serials because for bringing out stories in other situations may cost double expenditure in the sets.

Other scenes are also shown like hospitals, police stations, *dhabas*, *chaiwalas*, *chat-walas*, vegetable vendors, temples, etc. The role of doctor, nurses, chaiwalas, vendors, pundits, drivers, lawyers, police etc. are of very significant though their role are short as their roles are frequently weave with the storyline and becomes part of the story. Some stories of the serials revolve around the characters visiting temples frequently when they have some religious functions or is heartbroken and pours all their frustration and sadness towards the idol of the gods where they feel relaxed and rejuvenated later. Though the families in the serials are business class family or holds some profession like Karan of 'Kundali Bhagya' as a cricketer and Sikandar of 'Kulfi Kumar Bajewala' as a singer but their proper offices and the

playground or the work-place are rarely shown, although there are scenes showing them leaving for the offices to work. The story revolves mostly around family - their love, hatred and revenge.

Women are basically shown as performing decorative function and their acts are shown insignificant to national growth and development as their economic contribution is hardly ever demonstrated. Their place is seen as being the protectors of their family members, this value is reflected in the content and setting of most of the television programmes which goes in line with what the liberal feminist claimed that they are not portrayed as wise characters. Women in the serials are shown most of the times busy in kitchen and in solving problems created by some other family member or their adversity. Some women are also shown independent especially as professionally competent women but very traditional in their values and deeply attached to their families. Even if it appeared like the right time to release women from the patriarchal social structure and give them a chance to achieve the highest goals in their life, they always remained as the ideal daughters, daughters-in-law and devoted wives. Like in the serial 'Kundali Bhagya', the heroine i.e. Preeta is working as a manager in a firm but her lives revolve mostly around her home or Karan's home.

### **2.3. SUCCESS IN LIVES OF ACTORS**

Television or small screen stars are no longer small stars. They have their own big names in India's mediascape. Some actors want to climb up the ladder and act in Bollywood films like Mouni Roy, Prachi Desai, Mandira Bedi, etc. But very few succeed in Bollywood like Shah Rukh Khan, Sushant Singh Rajput who has become a

most sought after actor of the recent times. But many hardly succeed in the growing competition of Bollywood. Some often acts in Bollywood films as well regional films like Marathi, Punjabi, Bhojpuri, etc. Some does not do well in Bollywood as well and some if they do not get good choices of film offers they return to act in serials. But it does not matter to some actor whether they do not act in Hindi films because the actors in serials are also handsomely paid depending on the TRP scale of the serials. Some famous actors of small screen are paid 1 to 5 lakhs of rupees for a one single serial episode. Others may receive 10 to 15 thousand or above depending upon their characters they play and how popular they are. Many famous actors and actresses of Bollywood are also seen in a reality shows like Salman Khan hosts Big Boss which airs at Colors, Amitabh Bachchan hosts KBC (Kaun Banega Crorepati), Malaika Arora, Kiran Bedi and Karan Johar judges India's Got Talent and they are paid more than the serial actors like sum of crores of rupees. Many famous actors of serials are also anchoring and hosting various reality shows like dance shows, like singing competition, etc. as they are the main pull for TRP. Some shows are organised by the various television channels only for the celebrities and in these shows participation by the television actors and actresses are very high. They are also invited to be participants in an assortment of other reality shows like Big Boss, Khatron Ke Khiladi, and even in dance shows such as Jhalak Dikhla Ja, Nach Baliye. Most of the invited celebrities are singer, cricketer but frequently most of them are actors and actresses in the serials and the characters they portray on screen are the main pull that attract viewers to the genre and keep them coming back day to day to watch the reality shows. The popularity of a particular celebrity especially television actors or actresses combine with their skill of presentation in a particular show be it dancing, hosting and daredevil acts makes them winner of various shows. As their retention in

the shows depend on the marks and vote given by the judges and audiences, the presence of a particular celebrity brings success in the shows also. They are held in the highest regard by the audiences, often to the extent that they are better known by their screen names than their real life names.

Some small screen actors remain in the TV and hosts reality shows rather than acting in serials again. Actors and actresses in the serials and the characters they portray on screen are the main pull factor that attract viewers to the genre and keep them coming back day to day to watch the shows. They are held in the highest regard by the audiences, often to the extent that they are better known by their screen names than their real life names. The regular viewer can also keep track of entertainment industry via daily newspapers and television. In addition, magazines, news channels, websites and blogs also provide details of television industry. Viewers can easily access information about actors, their contracts and relationships with producers, directors, co-actors, family and also their financial and emotional situations.

## **2.4. SUMMARY**

In the serials, it is found that women's body are treated in a more dignified way although the accessories worn by the lead actors such as the designer sarees, jewellery, lavishly decorated and furnished sets serve as objects of visual consumption. It is also the lavish lifestyles of the wealthy soap families that give pleasure to the spectators. Commoditization of serials also takes place through advertisements that sponsored these serials, yet the success of a story depends on the content of the storylines and the talent and beauty of the main actors. The serial acts

as a fashion trend setters. The use of saris, bindis, mangalsutra by serial heroines have generated small business of tailors and other handicrafts makers and found market of its own as they copy these items which has large demand in the market. Thus, it has also created an employment opportunities to the local designers and tailors sometimes giving threat to the traditional designs and costumes. As the multiple cosmetic surgeries, innumerable marriages and generation leaps has become the order of the day, some episodes of serials are also based on social issues addressing the girl child, like female foeticide, widow remarriage, girl education and dowry harassment. They are a combination of social values and commercialism to make an impact on the viewers, to create awareness and initiate changes.

## CHAPTER III

# WOMEN VIEWERS PERCEPTION ON HINDI TELEVISION SERIALS

### 3.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Socio-economic profile is the primary aspect in doing any kind of social research. It helps to divide the population under study into a discrete number of categories and helps to know the status of population. The main aim of socio-economic profile is to understand the socio-economic background of the respondents under investigation. It helps in accessing the information of respondents on the basis of age, occupation, income, education, etc. The study also tries to compare and contrasts the role television serials play on the life of urban and rural women respondents on the basis of education, occupation, income, age and other socio-cultural elements such as dress, food, religious beliefs and practices.

As mentioned in the methods and areas, the study was undertaken in both the rural and urban areas of East Sikkim. In urban area, Tadong, Gangtok was selected for the study and in rural area, Dikchu was selected. Dikchu falls in two districts, that is, East and North separated by Dikchu River but this study was conducted on Dikchu of Old Market area which comes under East District. The area acts as an important highway for North District and main hub or marketplace for people living in Lower Dzongu. The place has also several hydro power projects located in both Teesta and Dikchu River and henceforth has attracted the masses for jobs, business, tourism, etc. It also has two government primary schools in its local vicinity and one Senior Secondary School which is located near Dikchu Bazaar. There are also two private

schools located in Dikchu Bazaar itself. There are other infrastructures such as ICDS Centre, SBI, Post Office, Multipurpose Co-operative Society, Police Station, Gram Prashashan Kendra, etc. People from several other communities from other parts of India such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, as well as from neighbouring country Nepal apart from people belonging to local ethnic communities - Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali resides in this place. Singtam which is located 36 kms away is the immediate commercial hub for the people living in Dikchu.

The study area Tadong located in Gangtok acts as a main hub because of various educational institutions located in it. There are several private schools and one Government Senior Secondary School. The place also has various other private institutions for computer training, hospitality services, coaching centres, hotels, etc. The well known Nar Bahadur Degree College is also situated in the area which has attracted the students living in both rural and urban areas of Sikkim and outside. It has also attracted many people for different job opportunities in both the private and government sectors. Members belonging to different communities reside together. They are migrated either from different places of Sikkim or from several other states of India as well as Nepal. However, the present study has been conducted on Sikkimese women belonging to three main ethnic groups, Nepalese, Bhutia and Lepcha.

### 3.2 AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE-GROUP	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE %
20-30	31	39
31-40	30	38
41-50	10	12
51 and above	9	11
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork July 2018 to September 2018

Table 3.2. shows the age group of the respondents. Age plays an important factor for deciding what kind of serials they watch and what are the ideas and messages they grasp. The findings of the study shows that the respondents belonging to the age group of 20-40 are keen and have interest in watching serials and at the same time they are more willing to adapt the rituals, practices and lifestyles shown in the serials. The respondents belonging to the age group of 41 and above are lesser concerned about the ritual practices and lifestyles shown in the serial but they love to watch the serials. In general, majority of the women informed that they enjoyed watching the serials as part of an entertainment and leisure.

Gender, household position, and age were also the crucial factors influencing viewers' styles of interaction with what they watched. In many of the serials house keys are given most importance. Those who hold the trust especially the most obedient and cultured daughter-in-law gets responsibility of the house keys from their in-laws. It is often shown that a bundle of household keys dangling from the waist of the mother-in-law who is responsible in functioning the household smoothly and later on the power shift takes place where the mother-in-law wants her house to be taken



care by the most faithful and reliable daughter-in-law but in the areas of the study such importance given to keys is not present. This may be because majority of the family interviewed by the researcher were nuclear family so there is not much power struggle. There is no common locker for keeping the valuables such as gold and money as shown in the serials wherein the wealth, jewellery are kept in a common cabinet. In reality, it was observed that each individual takes care of what they have. However, the present research found that the power relations within families were reflected in how people arranged themselves around the television set. The older generation (usually men but sometimes older women as well) would be seated on the chairs or sofas, the children would sometimes squat on the mats which was lying on the floor. Very rarely women were seen sitting with the rest of the family because they were the ones responsible for the housework. These women would take a glance of what is going on in the television from their kitchen and again go back to work. Sometimes, when they find some shows to be interesting they would watch it but would go back running to the kitchen during advertisement breaks and come back again in front of the television set. But when they engrossed themselves in front of television sets, a few of the interviewees informed that sometimes they would forget to put salt in the curry or put twice, or even at times forget to put off the gas stoves and would burn whatever was being cooked. Frequent spilling of the milk while they were engrossed in watching television is commonplace. Those who could not watch their favourite shows during prime time would often watch the repeat telecast. Many times women were found to be multi-tasking, running to and fro from the kitchen, preparing and bringing dinner to the table, helping children to study and preparing for the next day menu for food. Nevertheless, they try to see and update themselves with the unfolding of the storylines of different characters and narratives.

### 3.3. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

EDUCATION	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE %
Illiterate	11	14
Primary	15	19
Secondary	21	26
Higher Education	33	41
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork July 2018 to September 2018

Table 3.3 shows the educational qualification of the respondents depicting the fact that the more educated one could understand the storylines and characters in the serials. Majority of educated women informed that they understand Hindi well; thereby they understand the storylines, characters properly. They also revealed that they fiddled with the remote control and watched their favourite serials from different channels whenever they want. The lesser the educated, the lesser they know Hindi and one finds difficulty in understanding the storylines and characters. But a few elderly women said that since they are illiterate and not familiar with the use of remote control, they watched whatever their children and grandchildren put for them. But in one case, her husband put on a particular channel i.e. Zee TV for her during the prime time of the serials because the serials shown on this channel are her favourites. Further, she follows these serials even though she finds hard to use the remote control or even put on the television.

Respondents who were educated in both the rural and urban areas were interested in watching the serial not only as a form of entertainment but took the development of the plot and subplots as well as character depiction as a reflection of

society in the Indian subcontinent. They were not reluctant to draw value judgments about society in India based upon what was shown in these serials. They felt that the storyline portrayed in these serials was a serious reflection of the mindset of the scriptwriters who were keen to captivate the imagination of the Indian middle class by drawing on issues that were familiar to Indian society at large. The educated lot not only watched Hindi serials but also informed the researcher that they also watched English movies, fashion shows, reality shows, music channels, cooking shows, etc. in a range of channels.

### **3.4. OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE %</b>
Homemaker	20	24
Agriculture	30	38
Service Sector	30	38
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork July 2018 to September 2018

The table shows the respondents are classified into various occupational groups, whether be it agricultural workers or in the service sector, majority of women are homemakers and have to perform their household duties also. Only a few women had domestic helper in their houses. It was also found during the visit to the field area that the occupation of the respondents were the crucial factor which categorised the hours they spent watching television. The house makers informed that they are busy in the morning and evening preparing breakfast and dinner for the household members especially husband and children as they feel it is their duty and responsibility to send off their husband to the office or farm and children to schools. But after when all the

chores are over they would watch to their favourite shows be it films, news, serials, reality shows, music, etc. They also informed the researcher that they feel more relaxed and happy and spent their time watching television when their children and husband goes to school or for work because during the holidays these women would not get to watch their shows as other family members wants to see their own programmes and had to fight sometimes for the remote control. This section of women also informed that they would watch television for more than 4 hours in a day.

Those women working in the agricultural sector were mostly from the rural area and they were the ones who watched television lesser because their work was considered to be labour intensive like collecting foddors for the cattle, woods, and working in the fields and would get exhausted when the days works get completed. During night time after dinner, they watch television for sometime before sleeping. In Sikkim generally people sleeps early i.e. by 9 to 9:30pm so they watch those serials which comes before they sleep. They also informed that they watched television for leisure and they feel relaxed mentally after watching it. The study found that weather plays a crucial factor for spending time in watching television. They revealed that during rainy days, they would not have much work in the fields but only collect foddors for cattle and do household chores which gave them ample time to spend on watching television. During rainy days they watch television for around 3 hours. Hence, it was found that the time for watching television depends on the weather conditions as on sunny days they have to do more work related with fields and animals whereas in rainy days they were found to be confined at their home as they cannot venture out. During the fieldwork of the present study, most of the times were raining and the researcher found them in their respective homes watching television.

But during the sunny days, they were not available at homes because they had to go to fields to work or to collect wood or fodders.

Those in the service sector were the ones who were watching television for around 2-3 hours and at the same time they were finding hard to manage time in watching television. Those women in the service were also a homemaker and out of 30 women in services only 10 respondents had a domestic helper. The time spent on watching television depends on the kind of occupation they were performing. Some of them were busy with their profession such as doctors, teachers, engineer, lawyers, which hardly left time to watch serials because of their commitment towards their profession. But among the respondents, those women in the lower categories of profession such as clerks, peons, housekeeping staffs, etc were found to spend more time watching television in both the rural and urban areas. Thus, both in rural and urban areas homemaker spent more time in watching television than women who were in agriculture and service sectors.

### **3.5. TIME SPENT IN WATCHING TELEVISION**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE %</b>
Less than 1	5	7
1-2	15	19
2-3	21	26
3-4	14	17
4-5	20	24
More than 5	5	7
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork July 2018 to September 2018

Table 3.5 shows the time band spent by respondents in watching television. The time band in the above table not only depicts the time band for watching television serials but also the total time the respondents spent in watching television which includes movies, reality shows, news, etc. The advent of dish TV networks like Tata Sky, Airtel, Dish TV, etc and various new designs of television sets have led to a multifaceted impact on the lives of people in both the rural and urban areas. People now have choice where they can access these facilities in cheap prices in the growing market competition. There is an ample opportunity to decide what kind of channels viewers want to watch and pay for the same. In most of the houses the researcher found that respondents owned big LED television sets in both the rural and urban areas. Many of the respondents said that they had their own pride in owning big television sets and acts as a status symbol. Also many respondents in the higher economic strata owned high definition Sony television sets with internet facilities which they mentioned that Sony brand has good picture and sound quality as compared to others. Out of 80 respondents, 57 of them had placed their television sets in the sitting rooms which they revealed that when the guests visits them they would switch on the television to make them feel comfortable and not bored as they were most of the times busy in the kitchen preparing dishes for the guests. But 23 respondents placed their television sets in their bedrooms for comfort to watch their programmes during night time as they simply lean on their beds and cover themselves with blankets. But out of these 23 respondents 11 of them had two television sets; hence, they placed one in the sitting rooms and another one in the bedroom. The reasons given by the respondents for having two television sets is that firstly, they want to make their guest comfortable by watching television, secondly, they don't

want the guest to enter the bedroom and thirdly, to avoid conflict between children and parents regarding the favourite shows they watch.

Prime time programming by producers also takes into account the fact that sometimes they need to repeat prime time shows in the afternoon time band as well. Viewers are normally loyal to the serials they watch and will not deviate during the prime time band. Within the serials stories themselves, structuring and ordering of time is one of the important characteristics. Prime time programming requires that the structure, narrative and aesthetics of soaps are critical issues in their long running success (Munshi, 2010). Television channels consider 7pm-11pm as the prime time slot. Prime time programming has specific conventions which the producers need to follow in terms of visualisation, filming and narratives. The stories in the prime time serials need to be underlying with the present issues and themes should be catchy and also the actors are needed to be presentable with desirable which can be loved by the audiences.

The respondents informed even if they were watching other shows like movie, reality shows, Hollywood channels like AXN, Star World, HBO, infotainment channels such as Discovery, Animal Planet, Travel XP, NDTV Good Times, etc and they switch back on their favourite channel where their favourite serials were showcased as they preferred watching it more than the other shows. Generally, these respondents informed that they watched television with their family, friends and sometimes alone especially if there is no one around. The husband are mostly seen discouraging their wives against watching the serials as they feel it is waste of time as majority of the serials have been aired for several years without coming to an end. They also feel that their wives are neglecting their household duties as well as

children's educational and emotional needs. Moreover, they revealed that the stories shown in majority of the serials are too women centric showing extra-marital affairs and multiple marriages, hence they prefer watching movies, news, sports, etc. However, it was found that a few men while giving companies to their wives also start loving to watch some television serials which were initially influenced by their wives and in the process they also start following the stories. They further revealed that the plots and the stories are well framed and not only revolve around a family or a single woman character but there are prominent male characters which they like to see. In fact, the few men of the households were usually the most ardent viewers of the serial because they could afford not to be distracted by household tasks, which kept the women busy in the kitchen as they prepared dinner to be served to all the family members. While the men and children keeps up a running remarks on the show, the women were usually silent, instead discussing it with their friends or neighbours the next day. Though they put on the television sets, at times most of the women spent their time in doing household chores and other domestic work so they listened their favourite serials without watching them. One respondent told that she would start preparing dinner early for the night because she wanted to sit in front of the television set when her favourite serials telecasted. Another woman, much to the irritation of the rest of her family, would keep her television set at its loudest volume so that she could listen to the soundtrack while doing household chores. These women were somewhat successful in their attempts to gain some control of their time. But not all the women who were interviewed with were in a position to be openly assertive to their elderly parents or in-laws as well as husband. Very often, the younger women (especially daughters-in-law, in particular) would keep up with their favourite shows by listening to the soundtrack and by getting glimpses from the kitchen as they cooked or does



other chores. But despite the fact that most of the women half-watched, half-listened while cooking, serving food, doing dishes or sweeping the floor, they were nonetheless able to engage intimately with the story. Despite their busy scheduled, many of them spent 3-4 hours and at times 5 hours sitting around the television set.

### 3.6. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

RELIGION	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE %
Hinduism	36	45
Buddhism	30	38
Christianity	14	17
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork July 2018 to September 2018

Table 3.6. discusses the respondent's background of their different religious practices and belief systems. The respondent belong to Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, thus they have different insights in their respective religious practices. Though certain aspects of religious beliefs and practices shown in the serials are influenced by the religious sacred texts and from the practices followed by various religious institutions and also by various religious communities, sometimes people also get influenced the practices shown on the television. The television serials also make believe various religious practices to its viewers especially women. Expensive sets and decor where festivals and other celebrations regularly take place are not only pleasurable to see but has also contributed a sense of 'Indian-ness' (Munshi, 2010). In most of the serials many pujas are being performed for the well being of the household and often women are found to be worshipper of various gods and goddesses inside the house as well as

visiting different temples. Generally, their male counterparts joined them in the household puja and sometimes while visiting the temples. They are shown having various belief systems and performing different rituals thereby directly or indirectly propagating and reinforcing their belief system to its viewers. During the research it was found that a few women in the study area are now seen going to temples in the morning barefooted during various occasions to perform pujas on new moon or half moon day, which was never part of the tradition of the Sikkimese society irrespective of their religious standing. These women are not only from the Hindu community but even a few of them are Buddhist. When asked about their notion of performing certain puja, they responded that it came through either from their friends or by watching serials which the main women characters of many serials are shown to be ritualistic and spiritual. Though celebrating Diwali was not part of Buddhist culture, some Buddhist family have started decorating the houses during Diwali by lighting 'diyas' and other decorative lights. When asked, they said that it is partly influence by their friends, other communities and serials as well. Also in the serials, during festivals and various other ceremonies the houses are decorated in such a lavish fashion which gives a good impression and lures its audiences. But the Christians have remain loyal to their beliefs as any idol worship in their religion is discouraged and also they must follow the strictures written in the Bible and live according to that. Although, they are also the daily viewers of the serials but they do not practice the religious functions shown in the serials. However, one could see the decoration of houses with lights during Christmas.

The women now have started giving importance to 'karwa chauth' which was never a part of the Sikkimese culture. The researcher found that lots of importance is given to 'karwa chauth' in the serials. 'Karva Chauth' is a festival generally

celebrated in north India. It has been so popular in Hindi films and serials which are now celebrated by respondents as well. One could see its characters especially the Hindu married woman performing these rituals by remaining fast the whole day for the long life of the husband. This practice is shown in such a dramatized fashion wherein married woman fast for the whole day without food or water for the prosperity and long life of their husband which is valorised by the ideal Indian women. The fasting ritual signifies wife's love and devotion to their husband and to remain eternal bride, also signifying blessing for the woman in the belief that she will not become a widow. This practice has been seen inspiring a lot to its women viewers in the study area. Majority of the serials show wife being dependent on the husband and the 'karwa chauth' is the one way of showing love and expressing gratitude towards husband. In a few serials, now-a-days husbands especially the lead actors are also shown to be fasting for their wife to express their un-daunting love. In the study areas, 38% of women are working in service sector and they no longer have to depend on their husbands for financial support, nonetheless this festival which they got influenced from the serials has made them perform the tradition of wife's undaunted love for their husband. This festivals of 'karwa chauth' and 'teez' are one way to bring two hearts together and reminds each other that marriages are made in heaven but hearts on earth. Many women said initially, they were influenced through the serials as it shows 'karwa chauth' a must do act every year in various serials and also in various channels by giving lots of importance and significance for the married women as an inevitable ritual to be performed. In Sikkim, women have been celebrating 'teez' which is also like that of 'karwa chauth' but they have started observing both the rituals over a period of time.

Women now have started applying 'mehndi' which is also not a part of Sikkimese culture. 'Mehndi' has its own significance in North India and is used by women to decorate their hands and feet. It has a special place in the lives of women which they love to apply on the occasion of 'karwa chauth', marriages, etc. It is considered as a symbol of good fortune for women in the Indian culture. The first letter of the name of husband is given too much importance in the serials. There is also a belief that women whose 'mehndi' has left a dark colour on their palm will get plenty of love and care from her husband. In the serials, it is depicted that 'mehndi' gives a lesson to a new bride that she should do her best to delight her husband and in-laws, like 'mehndi' itself does by providing its lovely colours to her hands and feet. The application of 'mehndi' is on a boom in the festive season such as 'karwa chauth', marriages, and various ritual ceremonies which was not seen earlier in the Sikkimese society. The designs of 'mehndi' range from traditional floral patterns to geometrical shapes and abstract designs. According to many respondents it not only colour their hands but also gives them joy and ecstasy. One informant informed that in this modern era with high tech lifestyle, we are losing small moments of happiness in relationships. Small happiness is seen coming from these kinds of celebrations which brings the family together and spent time together which brings cohesive and solidarity among the group members. Women have now started doing shopping during these festivals like buying *diyas*, flowers, offerings, sweets, etc. In the Hindi serials, the women are shown preparing sweets by themselves for these religious functions but women in the both study areas were found purchasing sweets instead of preparing themselves as they did not have the knowledge and art of preparing sweets like *ladoo*, *barfi*, etc. Serials over several episodes also depict other ceremonies such

as *garba*, *dandiya*, *sangeet* before wedding, Janmashtami, etc. as well which has given an audience a source of pleasure.

Respondents who practiced Christianity and few belonging other religious community were not particularly attracted to these religious practices shown in the serials. This was due to the fact that they did not paid heed to other cultural practices and they did not have time to observe those ritual practices. Around 25% of the respondents did not pay any attention to the ritual practices shown in the serial. They also felt that it was better to observe and safeguard their own ritual rather than others and bringing confusion to their existing ritual practices.

### **3.7. FOOD HABITS**

Food acts as an important factor in the serials. The various serials are based on some communities like Marwari, Gujrati, Marathi, etc and will showcase their own cultural food. Some serials also shows eating most of the times western food due to highly globalised and commodification notion. However, these foods have impacted its viewers as viewers wants to taste the food shown in the serials. Some women who have been interviewed said that they have started cooking and trying new dishes in their home which is shown in the serial. They have now started cooking the food spicier than before which is actually not a part of the Sikkimese culture. The Sikkimese women earlier used little spices but they have now started adding more spices in their food for good taste and aroma. Mrs. S. Rai, aged 29, resident of Tadong, noted that their foods were earlier plain and bland but has started bringing in more spices, dry fruits in the kitchen. Many respondents added that they love to eat

various kinds of sweets, desserts, etc shown in the serial. Mrs. G. Thapa, aged 35, resident of Dikchu, reveals that she loves to eat 'kachori' which is very popular dish in the serial 'Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai' and would also ask to buy her husband for the same whenever he goes to the market. One respondent said the style and presentation of the 'kheer', a rice pudding, which is also common in the Nepali culture has changed. Earlier there was no use of dry fruits but in recent years they have started using various kinds of dry foods like raisins, cashews, nuts, etc. to look more presentable and tastier. Most of the respondents stated they have now started preparing foods such as 'puris', chapattis, 'alu paratha', 'hulwa', paani-puri etc. frequently in the kitchen. The interest in cooking and tasting various kinds of dishes came partly from their friends and also due to television serials. A few respondents said that they had more influenced by the serials as the various food in the serials are also shown luring the audiences.

Many respondents stated that they have now started preparing 'alu parathas', 'puris', as a breakfast in their kitchen. When asked, they said they were partly learned from their friends as well as serials and other cooking shows as well as from you-tube. Apart from the traditional foods being cooked, new food items are also introduced in the house. Thus serials have impacted women in terms of their food habits irrespective of different ethnic groups, age, religion and occupation.

### **3.8. STYLE AND PATTERN OF DRESS**

The style of one's outfit has impacted in a great manner by the serials irrespective of different ethnic groups and areas. The subject matter for television serials are based on the relationship between classes. This has incited an interest in

fashion trends among the women in both the rural and urban areas as well as cutting across the various ethnic groups. In the serials women are shown wearing fashionable and highly designed costumes and jewellery. Most of the serials shows its characters wearing a traditional attire but in very fashionable new designs. These fashion and pattern of dress has impacted the women belonging to all religious groups. A significant number of salwar kameez and sari shops have flourished to follow fashion trends of Bollywood and Hindi serials with their merchandise. These shops have reported an increase in sales especially during wedding ceremonies, festivals, parties, etc. But age also plays an important factor in deciding the impact made on women in nature of styles by these serials. Most of the respondents belonging from age group 20 to 40 has more likely to be impacted as they could handle the various styles. Moreover, education and income also plays an important factor in deciding what women are imparting. Those in the higher status want the patterns, colours and quality of the dresses to be different from their friends or co-workers and look chic and smart. Those in the lower level of income strata are seen wearing the dresses they desire but the quality and pattern does not much matter. The elderly women belonging to the age group 50 and above are less influenced in the manner they dress. They prefer mostly wearing traditional and comfortable clothes and does not desire for such lavish fashion shown in the serials. Majority of the women belonging to all three communities such as Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali are seen wearing well designed and attractive kurtis, salwar and suits and jewellery of various Indian designs. But the stylish sarees in most of the cases are worn by the Nepali women as wearing saree is also part of Nepali culture. Although the women belonging to Bhutia and Lepcha communities love to wear it but they are found to be discouraged by their family members or their husbands as it is said to be not a part of their culture. But few

respondents said that they have started wearing it during wedding parties and functions of the Nepali community.

Even the 'bindis' have found a place in the lives of these women. The Nepali women mostly prefer wearing 'bindis' matching to the colour of their dresses. Few women of Lepcha and Bhutia community were also found wearing a 'bindi' as they revealed it gave a look of traditional Indian to their attire. However, the Christian women belonging to any of these three communities were not found wearing a 'bindi' during fieldwork, when asked they said their religion forbids them from wearing it.

The 'lehengas' has also become an important part for the women of all religion, ethnicity and class. It has become a common trend that one could find in Sikkim. Women have now started wearing designer 'lehengas' during marriage ceremonies, functions, parties, etc. which the lehengas were not actually a dress of any of ethnic groups of Sikkim, thereby do not form a part of Sikkimese culture and tradition. The respondents belonging to all the three communities irrespective of any religious background who falls on the age group of 20-40 said that they love to wear 'lehengas' during various other ceremonies also especially in wedding function of the Nepalis and other groups such as Biharis, Marwaris, etc.. The 'lehengas' has now become a common trend in a Nepali wedding. The guests are seen wearing beautiful designed and attractive 'sarees' and 'lehengas' during the function. But the two communities Lepcha and Bhutia prefer wearing their traditional outfit during the wedding ceremonies of their communities. They do adore the Indian traditional attire and wears them in a Nepali wedding ceremony but they give importance to their own traditional outfit during their own communities wedding, festivals, etc as it gives them the sense of solidarity and belonging to their ethnic community.



The traditional women's outfits nowadays are also seen well synchronised with the Indian jewellerys. Mrs. P. Bhutia aged 36 resident of Daragaon, Tadong revealed she wanted to wear the design of necklace worn by Dadi of Naksh of 'Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlta Hai' and ordered for the same at the jewellery shop which the jeweller made it looking at the design of it and has come out according to her satisfaction and wears with their traditional attire 'bakhu' and even said that the design is actually an Indian jewellery design but goes with her traditional outfit. Even respondents revealed that they are fascinated with the designs of 'mangalsutras', worn in the serials. Especially, many of the Nepali women expressed that they want to wear fancy and designer 'mangalsutras' though 'mangalsutras' was not a part of the Sikkimese culture but some respondents stated that they have made 'mangalsutras' to wear in some of the ceremonies and functions of other communities. The serials according to respondents showcases the importance of 'mangalsutras' as a significant and must have item for a successful and happy marriage. In the serials the importance of 'mangalsutras' has been traditionally practiced by women of North as well as South India. It also signifies different caste and communities as different groups have different style of 'mangalsutras'. During the marriages, the husband ties the 'mangalsutras' around the wife's neck and also applies vermilion over her head taking ritualistic oath and also taking seven ritualistic rounds. Mangalsutra is worn by all married women in the serials thereby giving lots of significance and importance to a married life. For the Nepalese women, it is actually the green beads but they now have started wearing the 'mangalsutras' which is influenced greatly by the serials and other media such as movies, magazines, etc. Even the Buddhist and Christian women when asked said they would love to wear 'mangalsutras' but has suppressed many of their desires like even applying vermilion. Another fad that has been observed is that

married women in both rural and urban areas who are Hindu who bear a vermilion either in the parting of their hair or on the middle of their forehead have begun to imitate the actresses in the serials and films by applying a small design vermilion at the beginning of their forehead.

The make-up, hairstyles of serial actors has also become most talked phenomena as Indian serials mostly shows women in the long straight hair with an attractive make-up. However, the women loves various styles, fashion and glamour shown in the serials but they only opt for the viable one because too much emphasis on the other culture is somewhat discouraged by the family members and the society. The choice of clothing is selected differently by different age groups also in terms of wealth, appropriateness and trend. According to the respondents, the negative characters in the serials have made the biggest fashion splash. The characters in each serial have its own visual style even in wearing bindi or tying saree. According to respondent Mrs. G. Rai, aged 32, resident of Dikchu informed the researcher that her husband was a huge fan of Pragya of 'Kum Kum Bhagya' and he wanted her wife to wear the same style of the saree worn by her.

Not only has the Hindi serials impacted greatly on women's style of clothing but also in their daily makeup schedules, colouring of the hair, hairstyles. The respondents claimed they were more particular about their specific makeup like eyebrow, eyelashes, lipsticks, applying eyeliner, highlighting their cheeks. It is noticed that there has also been a transition in the application of makeup over the years. Earlier heavy makeup with colourful eye shadows and bindis were prevalent makeup fad of the actresses but today the makeup artist prefers their characters to look natural and more emphasis is given to every segment of makeup be it eyes, nose,

lips, eyelash, cheeks, etc. to make them look naturally beautiful. Even the hairstyle which was shown in earlier serials as wavy, curl or made into a bun has shifted into long straight hair. The respondents whom the researcher interviewed said they were keen in having this kind of hairstyle and many of them had straighten their hair into long straight hair in both the rural and urban areas irrespective of different ethnic groups. In fact, many of them were found to have coloured their hair. The respondents had also noticed that the actors in the serials are always shown wearing a new and fashionable clothes and high heeled sandals even while living in the house and even sleeps without removing their makeup and the beautiful dresses they wear which they by and large don't do in real life. The important point to be noted here is that most of the serial stories revolves around a family and most of the shots are taken in the house and also serials adds to the glamour without which the viewers may hardly watch it.

Many respondents claimed that their style of dressing has also been greatly influenced by movies, internets, fashion magazines, Hollywood, international as well as Indian models. Many educated respondents from urban areas claimed that they were also influenced by Korean drama fashions which their children watched Korean movies and serials most of the times and they were inclined to it due to its simplicity of makeup and high quality fashion. They insisted that they love now wearing overcoats which is a common fashion in Korean serials and has also adopted for the nude colours such as peach, beige, cream, etc.

### **3.9. VIEWERS PERCEPTION OF STORYLINES AND CHARACTERS**

The stories in the serials revolve around a family and these serial families are mostly business class joint families. The narrative introduction of business families in the serials has rekindled the aspirations of urban middle-class viewers like the serials of present days (Sahu, 2018). The value of family relationship is highly notified. There is a two-way relationship between viewers' lives and the narratives in serials watched. It was incredible knowing how frequently viewers linked their favourite serials with their lives. It seemed to be the easiest way for many of them to discuss not just what they watched but, more significant, their own experiences in life. Most respondents deeply identified with the characters on television and many were simultaneously able to stand back and criticize what they watched. Viewers also loved to critique the acting ability of the cast or the competence of the director. Similarly, they would often comment, the strategy of an upcoming episode, the regular viewers knows the twist and turns of the serials and what is going to happen in the next episode. Many viewers had their own opinions about what television serials ought to depict, that is, about appropriate or inappropriate subject matter, for instance, the extramarital affairs, hatred towards particular family members, etc. acts as main plots in the serials. Some experiences, stories and representations involve interactions between viewers, located in particular socio-cultural contexts, and the stories and many emotions shown in serials are produced keeping the larger audiences in mind and thereby reproducing the socio-cultural practices which are commonly found in the core regions of the country thereby neglecting the practices of the minor groups located at the periphery.

Respondents also felt that they should not believe everything they see on the television, because the serials shows overdramatized version of real life situations which is far from beyond. However, a few of them disclosed that they often do and the viewers simply gets fascinated by what they see in reel life and they construct, reconstruct and imagine it in their real life which is unable to achieve in reality. The characters in the serials are shown even wearing a good designer outfits even if they have to remain in the house and shows well groomed through out which such lifestyles is difficult to maintain in the real life situations as respondents said they wore old and comfortable clothes while remaining in the house and wears considerably good ones when they have to go out.

The respondents also felt that they should not be guided in the way the serials shows and do not follow it blindly, although they aspire for the same life shown in the serials but at the same time they are conscious enough to realise that they cannot acquire the same. For instance, most women wanted the same kind of families the serials shows and some desired their in-laws to be lovable and understanding like that of the serial 'Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai'. Many respondents also wanted their husbands to be romantic like the serials lead male characters which showcased romantic dinner, giving surprise gifts.

Viewers tend to feel capable of conceptualising TV fiction better in terms of practicality than news or current events. The serials according to them seem much closer to the lives and world they live in. Most of the respondents felt that serials deal with social issues and keep abreast of current news and events. Also the respondents felt the serials reproduced ideas and themes that may have forgotten by the younger

generation, such as the importance of family, various tradition, festivals and rituals practices like 'kul puja', importance of fast, importance of 'tulsi', etc.

Many respondents said that unlike before where emotional connect in the storylines between the characters were given due regards, the serials shown presently gives too much importance to the *suhaag raat* where in the two newly married couples consummate their marriages. Earlier the explicit scenes were not shot but today the intimate scenes of *suhaag raat*, love, romance, physical proximity of the actors are shown elaborately which the respondents also claimed that they felt uncomfortable watching them along with the elders.

According to the respondents, serials also act as agents for discussion of relevant issues. Sometimes the episode deals with social issues such as child marriage, child labour, female infanticide, corruption, etc. This in turn, underlines the accessibility of the genre. They said that serials have become popular appeal and mass reach to its audiences. The daily audiences of particular serials could distinguish tunes and songs that start at the beginning of the serials and also at the restart after the advertising breaks. Many respondents responded that this alert them when their favourite serial is beginning or the ad break is over. Music thus has become an integral part in the way audiences perceive characters and their relationships in soap operas (Munshi, 2010).

Majority of the respondents i.e. 80% of them also informed that they watched crime shows like 'Crime Patrol', 'CID' which is broadcasted in Sony and 'Savdhaan India' which is also broadcasted now in 'Star Bharti'. These shows are shown in weekends like Saturdays and Sundays but the repeat episodes are shown every weekday especially in the afternoons and evenings. These programmes related to

crime shows has helped many to be cautious about the criminals as these shows presents the crimes committed by the criminals who use many ways of violence like murder, kidnapping, sexual harassment, robbery, etc. Also according to them, it has also helped them to understand the legal knowledge of such crimes. However, some differ by saying that these crime serials had helped some thief and miscreants the knowledge of committing crimes.

### **3.10. FAMILIES**

The family is the central basis of structure in Indian serials. In India family is taken as a cultural ideal and a focus of identity (Karlekar, 1998). Levi Strauss (1971) has described family and its structures and functions in the following manner: ‘social groups that originate in marriage, they consist of husband, wife, and children born of their union (although is some family forms other relatives are included); they bind members with legal, economic, and religious bonds as well as duties and privileges; and they provide a network of sexual privileges and prohibitions, and varying degrees of love, respect, and affection’. Most of the Hindi serials revolve around a Hindu joint family system where the three generations such as grandparents, parents and children live together. Also the close related kins, aunt, uncle are also shown living together.

The endlessness of serial narratives has an effect on the construction and development of its characters and the stories. In order to regenerate the stories, serials excite its audiences with several ploys of high drama and twists and turns in the stories. An important point that needs to be noted is that while all serial stories are mostly about family, they focus largely on the problems of the family. No members want their family members to leave the family home and stay separately, one might be

thrown out of the house but they return after a brief sojourn outside. The respondents feel that it is true that there are problems in every family thus serials reproduce the same. On the other hand, if there are no problems and conflicts among the kin in the serial in order to linger the storyline, the directors introduces new characters and drops some old characters out so that there is continuous story. This kind of structure is necessary to keep the narratives going especially if the serials are doing well.

Control over the wealth or property is also a significant key theme alongside the romantic stories. The families in the serials are mostly the joint families who run big corporate business but have a great notion of traditional values. Father and sons who also play the role of lead actors usually heads these businesses and often the sons are shown as successful businessman, obedient, caring and non-interference in family affairs and are mama's boys. The control over money and property is used as a medium for control over upholding family values and tradition. Money matters are discussed openly in serials in the public as well as private spheres. The conflict over property and controlling the businesses are shown in most of the serials between the siblings or when the negative character enters the serial family to take revenge. In the study areas the conflict over property was prevalent among siblings, still most of the respondents hesitated opening them up and was informed to the researcher by the neighbours. The conflicts were less visible as their properties were distributed during the lifetime of the parents.

A close relationship exists between serials and audiences. Regular audiences of the serials stated that they have now become familiar with the serial families, stories and characters and have many times probe to their life situations and has become a pleasurable act while watching them. The serials also shows multiple



marriages by some family members and extra-marital affairs which is largely discouraged in Indian value system and is also seen criticising by the family members. The children born out of extra marital affairs are also common in the serials. According to 80 % respondents, traditionally among the Sikkimese society extra-marital affairs have been commonly prevalent. For many of them, serials showcases what is really prevalent and most debated topic in the society. Whereas a few of them differ by saying that may be serial also influences a few individuals as there is constant interaction between that is, 'real' and 'reel' life as it is a two way processes. Serial often depicts the real life prevailing in the society and people also imitate what they see from the media especially television serials and movies.

According to respondent P. Subba aged 29, resident of Dikchu, who has gained secondary education and her husband works in Dubai lives with her two children and one brother said that woman's life is hard especially the married one. She cannot fight back by being rude and having her own way. She has to behave properly in front of her in-laws and be respectful in front of her husband's family members. That is why in the serial, the lead actress life is always more difficult trying to adjust, compromise and act as a sort of peace maker agent. Another respondent B. Pradhan aged 27, resident of Dikchu, who has started now living in a nuclear family and her in-laws lives a few footsteps away claimed that she had difficulties to win over the heart of her in-laws. She did every possible way and listened to everything commanded by her in-laws but failed winning their hearts and later she had to stay separately with her husband and children and hence she informed could relate her life with the serial characters, their difficulty living together with in-laws.

### **3.11. LIFESTYLES**

Usually in the serials, the houses are big with large living rooms and well designed furniture and artefacts. Even the bed rooms are big and well furnished with well equipped and designed lights with huge bed and well furnished wardrobes. The curtains, pillows, bed covers are also well designed having attractive colours and looks spick and span giving the sense of newness. Usually the serials families are business class families like in the serials ‘Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai’, ‘Naagin’, etc and they are shown living in expensive and beautiful mansions and also the expensive big cars adds more sophistication to these serial families. These families are also shown not having problems of wealth, water, electricity and meets with every desires of their life. They are shown able to meet all the needs and desires unless they go bankrupt. In most of the serials there is a separate place or the room for the pujas to be done. One could also find the gods and goddesses placed in the living room which can be seen directly when one enters the houses. Whether in the serials the families are well educated high business class family they have great notion of traditional values and the importance of belief system in their lives.

The furniture, utensils of the kitchen is also richly selected. The serial families have a beautiful furnished kitchen and the kitchen gas table in some of the serials like ‘Naagin’ is placed in the middle. Also the dining halls are huge and spacious with large furnished dining table. Many respondents aspired for the same kind of kitchen, living room and furniture to be placed in their houses. Mrs. D. Chettri aged 59, resident of Dikchu, acclaimed that she wanted her living room to be huge and the kitchen gas table to be placed in the middle and she had done for the same in the new house. Also the respondents claimed that serials have given them more insights into

decorating the houses and also putting the things in order. Other respondent T. Bhutia, aged 26 resident of Dikchu and several other respondents added that serials has given her more emphasis on keeping the houses clean, she adds especially in the serials houses are clean, and she tries to do the same thereby also putting attractive arts and curtains in her house. During the fieldwork it was observed that most of the respondents whether be it in rural and urban had large spacious sitting rooms with expensive sofa sets and beautiful attractive cushions and curtains. They also had attractive artefacts and lights which added more attraction to their houses.

### **3.12. OTHER FORMS OF MEDIA USED**

Besides television, the respondents are also seen using mobile phones, reading newspaper, laptops and internet. But access to all those facilities depends upon the age, education and income of the respondents. Women with higher income and education had good android mobile phones, laptops and would access to the internet facilities whereas those who had lower income would have mobile phones and would access to internet but not the laptops. Though majority of the younger women had internet facilities, it was found that they liked watching serials in the television set as many of them owned big LED television sets. They informed that watching from internet is costly as well as the internet connection is not good in remote areas. Majority of the respondents claimed that they were not particular about missing episodes of the serials they watched because they felt that the plot developed so slowly that they could easily catch up with the storyline. Nonetheless, at times they watched a few episodes via mobile if they missed out some important episodes due to electricity problem in order to know the storylines. But those elderly women who had

cheap mobile phones and had no knowledge of using internet facilities see the serials only in the television set. However, serial viewers take pleasure in watching them and often serials have become a part of the viewer's daily habit. Serials had also played an important role in attracting viewers to other programs related to reality shows, new serials, television awards, film awards to be telecasted on different channel as the upcoming programs are advertised often.

### **3.13. LANGUAGE**

Language plays an important role in perceiving the serials. Popular television serials are also in Hindi (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). The TV channels mostly use Hindi programming to capture the large Indian audience. By watching Hindi cable channels, many respondents mostly those illiterate and elderly have found the space to learn Hindi. The serial actors also have to work in their accent according to the characters they play. They prepare accordingly what their roles demand them.

Many respondents even the educated ones understand Hindi well but cannot reply it back as people living in Sikkim whether belonging to any of the ethnic groups such as Bhutia, Lepcha or Nepali speaks Nepali language and is a common language in the state. Even the educated ones informed the researcher that sometimes they do not understand the nuances of the lines or the dialogues of Hindi shows and even do not bother to ask or discuss with other women whose mother tongue is Hindi since they get the overall meaning through the visual acts of television. Many respondents also claimed that sometimes they do not understand the nuances of certain Hindi words or proverbs which are being used in the shows. Yet, they continuously watch the serials as they have an overall understanding of the storylines.

The respondents further opined that they are being influenced and learn beliefs and value systems because they have found a way to express or watch their way of life being expressed on television. Watching not only serials also Hindi channels such as movies, news, has helped not only the educated ones but those uneducated and lesser educated to learn the Hindi language. Some typical form of language discourses used like 'Radhe Krishna', 'Jai Shree Krishna', instead of 'Namaste' has also learned by the viewers of all ethnic groups and also had the opportunity to understand more of Indian values and cultural codes among the various generation in rural and urban areas as well. By engaging in the developments of the serial plots they were participating in the endorsement of Indian values in their own lives and sought after justifications for their own behaviour, which they could not do within the mainstream public space.

Many respondents when asked whether they would love watching Nepali serials, 40% of them in both the rural and urban said they would have if Nepali serials were also broadcasted. Mostly, the elderly and illiterate women stated that they would have watched Nepali serial because they could have understood better than that of Hindi serials. A few of the elderly women in the rural areas stated that they also watch Nepal channel in which they watch Nepali songs, movies, news. Most of these women have stated that the absence of regional serials have made them watch Hindi serials. But many did not like the idea of watching the local Nepali serials even if it is available because they felt the picture quality of the programme also matters. Like many respondents in urban area who had access to local Nayuma channel felt that its picture quality is not good as compared to Zee TV, Star Plus, Colors, etc. Also the educated respondents living both in the rural and urban areas felt that some dialogues in Nepali accent does not match and sounds well like that of Hindi language.

### **3.14. LEISURE TIME**

Majority of the respondents stated that they watch television as part of the entertainment or to pass the time which refreshes their mind from busy schedules. The respondents not only watched serials but also simultaneously watch other channels and shows like music, news, sports, films, etc. They also informed that their husbands watched sports such as crickets, football, WWE wrestling, tennis, hockey, etc and they also sometime enjoy watching them as it kills the monotony. But most of them informed that conflict aroused when they wanted to watch their favourite serials and their husband unwilling to switch to channels where serials was shown because they were too much engrossed in the sports or other programs they are watching. Many respondents around 65% of them said that they had to fight during World Cup, IPLs and Olympics for the remote control. Mrs. G. Tamang, aged 28, resident of Dikchu and P. Lepcha aged 31, resident of Tadong informed that they demanded their husbands to get them separate television sets in the World Cup of 2018 in which during this time there is discount in television sets and above all they did not want to fight for the remote control.

Majority of the respondents irrespective of different ethnic groups, profession, education, age and religion watched serials and made time from the busy schedules to watch serials as they felt movies are shown repeatedly in various channels but in the serials everyday new episode of serial is shown thereby making them fans of some serials. Mrs. G. Bhutia, aged 35, resident of Tadong informed that she loves to watch serials over movies because everyday new story are shown which enthusiasts her to watch the next day episode. Respondents not only watched serials but also watched reality shows like dance, chat shows, singing. They also mentioned that in these

shows sometimes the participants are from Sikkim and Darjeeling which made them enthusiastic as they felt connected as they belong to the same ethnic community and supported them whole heartedly by sending votes via messages, missed calls, internets.

### **3.15. SHRINKING OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

Earlier in the rural areas, people had common place such as common pond or dhara for filling up their water pots, common ground and common forest for collecting food and fodders which gives opportunity to women to discuss about their life as well as whatever is happening in mass media such as radio and television. They not only discussed about stories of serials but also discussed about the films, news they watched. Also in around 1980-90s only a very few household owned television sets as it was not affordable to many, which the other people in the locality would come together in someone's house to watch their favourite shows such as Ramayana, Mahabharata. They were mesmerised with what they were seeing and afterwards they even discussed and talked about what was being shown. In fact, they felt connected into the characters emotionally and try to relate it together. Today, in the contemporary era, every household has an access to well drinking water facilities where water pipe from the water sources have reached in their respective homes even in the rural areas of the state, also the availability of cheaper television sets as we see every household owns a colour television sets. Earlier, only a handful, who belonged to a good economic background owned television that also black and white television set. Subsequent to liberalisation of 1991, electronic goods such as colour television set becoming cheaper and affordable to the common people saw the growth and

expansion of television industry and almost every household living in both the rural and urban areas owns television sets today. The advent of many different private channels showing variety of shows also makes the people confine to their home and sit in front of the television or the idiot box spending many valuable hours. It was found during the field study that hardly women discussed about the shows they watch which was done earlier during filling up their water pots or even basking sunlight and in the playground where their children were playing. Habermas (1964) idea of 'public sphere' is a realm of our social life in which some public opinion can be formed. A public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public policy but now-a-days there is no common space for public interaction. Today, along with the shrinking of the common space due to increased population, mass media such as newspapers, magazines, internet, radio and television have taken over the common space and acts as the public sphere.

### **3.16. CORE AND THE PERIPHERY**

The serials follow an intricate pattern that are the twist and turn of their stories, weaving together various themes and issues. They foreground discourses of consumerism while at the same time also weave together discourse of mostly the normative Hindu identity. The manifestation of lavish glamour in serials from sets, locations, costumes, makeup and accessories is a source of pleasure for the audiences. Culture is learned and shared from one's social environment. Tylor's (1870) definition of culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". According to Wallerstein (1989), the core states are in



geographically advantaged areas. Core region are also the cultural centres which attract artists and intellectuals. Core is characterised as wide variety of entertainment e.g. cinemas, museums, etc, diverse cultures (sport, music, religion, language, food, dress. etc.) and large racial mix. Periphery are characterised as having traditional lifestyle, lack of cultural mix and little international cultural or sporting facilities.

The Hindi serials stories mostly revolves around the core states such as Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kolkata, Madhya Pradesh, etc thereby showing the lifestyles and cultural practices of these states. The lifestyles of Southern and North eastern states as well as other peripheral areas are somewhat neglected and the stories does not revolve around these states. It will not be wrong to say that their cultural practices are neglected by the larger media groups. The ritual practices, lifestyles are valorised by the media which the viewers in the peripheral areas get attracted and henceforth imitate the same. Though there is an interaction between the core and the periphery but the socio-cultural practices of the peripheral areas hardly find place in the national media. The peripheral areas imitate the practices of the core regions of India and try to incorporate in their daily life as the respondents claimed they loved wearing Indian attires, following lifestyles which are shown in the television, speaking in their accent, learning their gestures, etc. Many women informed not only they have learnt these practices of the core but also amalgamated with their existing cultural practices and beliefs. The traditional dresses of three major ethnic communities is now seen somewhat more chic and stylish than before and also the material of these dresses have become more colourful and attractive. Even the worshipping of various gods and goddesses and keeping the various images and idols in the puja rooms and having a separate puja room, lighting

the whole house and having a big common room in the household are being partly influenced by higher class lifestyles shown in the television serials.

### **3.17. SUMMARY**

Serials have now gained considerable power to shape opinion, belief, lifestyles in the lives of women. The study is related about how women have learnt various socio-cultural practices from the television serials. Majority of the women, belonging to the differential age, occupation, ethnicity, religion watched serials though sometimes for hours. Majority of the respondents' families were found to be nuclear and only few were living in joint families. Women who were living in joint families had most difficulties in watching their favourite shows because they were constantly guided by their in-laws and did not had liberty like that of women in the nuclear families. Though some women were educated, their ideas were that of conservative and liberal families who were happy with the power relation and patriarchal notions within the families. Gender roles are socially constructed and television perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes because it reflects dominant social and cultural values. Many serials implicitly designed to be interpreted from a biased perspective or a perspective that commodifies women or shows them in traditional stereotypical roles and responsibilities. Majority of the women in the study areas were interested in watching serials as an entertainment and attaining relaxation from their busy schedules. The women in both the areas hardly hang-out with their friends or neighbours because they were found either busily engaged in their work or during the free time they were either busy watching television or using internets. In both the study areas women were seen practicing certain religious and cultural aspects of the mainland, such as

Dussehra, Diwali, Laxmi Puja along with their own local cultural practices. But they are hardly seen wearing their traditional attire, they now prefer mostly the clothes shown in the media which is comfortable and trendy.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Mass media has helped women to gain knowledge about the whole world and have enormously expanded their views not only on the social and cultural life but also the economic and political development happening around the world. By reading newspapers, surfing internet, watching television, engaging in social networking sites have made both women and men become more aware about different places and also the social system and the culture of those people. Through these various media platforms, they have indisputably gained more knowledge about the social and cultural life of diverse people across the globe. In India, there was a slow expansion of television networks since 1970's and after the liberalisation policy of the government its growth was faster. India with its entry to the global market not only allowed its market to get filled with imported goods but its television industry went through a drastic change. Television programmes has acquired newer dimensions and wider reach and provides information which creates curiosity in the minds of its viewers. It was under this global influence that Indian television experienced a major change, both in its content as well as its purpose. When television first came to India, few people were able to own television sets and the programmes shown were for information and education. Those who owned television sets especially colour television were considered as rich in their locality and people used to assemble to their house especially in rural area to watch television programmes. The availability of cable networks in the early 1990s and the proliferation of Hindi media channels have led to a renaissance of Hindi culture, fashion, cuisine, custom and ritual (Kaur & Yahya, 2010). Subsequently, there was transformation of the Indian media-scape

where there is free flow of media from across the world with of course certain regulation on its content by the government. Television unquestionably acts as major sources of information, education and entertainment in present-day society. It substantially influences every aspect of the viewers thinking and approaches; facilitate people in making their opinion after seeing a particular programme on the screen and function as powerful instruments of social change.

Besides entertainment programmes such as films, serials, variety of shows have been introduced such as quiz shows, reality shows, and talent quests. There are also fitness and health shows, chat shows, and game shows. A significant number of English and Hindi music channels which feature films and film-star or film-song based have been evolved over a period of time. Business programmes have emerged dealing with business news, their views, analysis and advice. A majority of these programmes might be imitations of western counterparts such as Kaun Banega Crorepati (Who wants to be a Millionaire) or even Indian Idol, Master Chef but the Indian media experiments with various genres. All these shows are shown 24/7, giving the consumers variety of choices round the clock.

Television in Sikkim came only in late 20<sup>th</sup> century along with the inauguration of Doordarshan Transmitter Complex. The Doordarshan Kendra Gangtok has collaborated with Nayuma television, a lone cable television network of the State and showcased number of programmes. The main purpose of the present research is to situate Sikkim within the context of growth and development of television channels in India; critically evaluate the content of popular Hindi television serials and also find out how the Hindi serials are interpreted and integrated in the Sikkimese social and cultural life by taking Hindi serials as the core culture coming

from mainland India and the viewers in Sikkim and their social and cultural pattern as the marginal one.

The study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and as mentioned earlier both primary and secondary data are used. Interview technique was employed for collecting the data in both urban and rural areas. In urban area, Tadong, Gangtok and in rural area, Dikchu, East Sikkim was selected for the study. Various perspectives of feminism were used in analysing the data along with the theory of core and periphery developed by Wallerstein.

The Hindi serials have created a space for themselves in the Indian television industry which was previously unimaginable. The expensive sets and decor, the plot and storylines where festivals and other celebrations take place have contributed a sense of Indian-ness. According to Munshi, (2010) prime time serials in India must be viewed and analysed within the context of other media texts, programs and discourse in the changing economic, political, social and cultural conditions in India during which they are being produced and aired. However, Indian serials have faced criticisms in both print and visual media from the scholars, journalists and activists who have rather continuously labelled them derogatory and regressive in their portrayal of women. They argued that initially, women were targeted by the state as the catalysts of national development but now have been turned into a commercialized and commodified object to attract the target audience.

The present research found that majority of the storylines in the serials are based on the business class family which one of the lead actors usually belongs to and their partner typically belonging to middle class family. In most of the serials when the lead couples first met, they disliked each other and have lots of misunderstandings

and later on they start developing soft corner for each other. The multiple marriages and divorces also form the storylines in the serials. The extra-marital affairs, fights between families and within family for property and power, the resurrection from death, plastic surgery and amnesia are commonly observed in these serials. Gender stereotyping is deeply woven in the fabric of serial stories as ideal daughter or daughter-in-law are typically portrayed in stereotypical image of being docile, kind, having good character and sacrificing. There is frequent conflict of interest, jealousy and rivalry between the roles playing good and bad women. Hence, they are shown time and again compromising and negotiating.

Though some stories showed women in a radical feminist position as assertive, bold and confident, influential, taking bold steps to bring out their family from adversity by making major decisions but most of the times, they were shown as conservative and liberal feminist in their standpoint as they were shown in support of traditional status quo and gender adjustment. Even when women are presented as power holders and decision makers, questioning of patriarchal authority and the issues of equal inheritance of property by their children is commonly found to be absent.

An overwhelming majority of the serials today are home based and typically in the very initial episodes of the shows, the discussion for marriage of one of the character starts. Working women are always shown to be so, through circumstances, not by choice, that too, unhappy circumstances. Also rarely are they happy in their jobs. Marriage is seen as natural state for woman as well as man, if single, the woman is working towards achieving that state, if widowed/divorced, she is rarely happy. She may be making a success in her life, but underlying that is her sadness at her single and lonely status. In their relationship with men, the ideal women are supportive and

dependent those who are aggressive or independent minded, are hardly considered desirable role models in the serials. Women, who try to break out of their traditional position in society and family have to compromise to some extent.

Moving ahead, most serials assumed women to be uniform and homogeneous in their needs and desires and defaulted their representation to the middle-class, upper-caste, urban Hindu families and at times Muslim family. In most serials, domestic labour of cooking, serving, looking after children and the well being of other family members is framed as an extension of woman's natural mothering role like the theory propagated by conservative feminist that ideal woman do not question for change in their traditions. The single, working women are shown like that of postmodern feminist and is portrayed as English-speaking and sexually active, which is clearly out of the accepted norm of the docile, conservative housewife. Even a woman in power is defined by the patriarchal norm which is seen necessary to downplay her sexuality. In recent years, serials have started venturing into areas of bold intimate emotional and physical scenes to suit the tastes and demands of audiences.

It is also found that the main negative characters are mostly the step-mother of the lead actor. When the generational leap takes place in the serial they are never shown as middle-aged even though they have grown up children. The parties of various kinds like festivals, birthday, wedding, baby shower, business party are very commonly displayed in the serials spending crores of rupees in arranging for designer outfits, jewellery and other decorative items. Undoubtedly, the producers also got sponsorships from many famous brands for many of the items they used as they promote these products to vast consumers.



The scenes depicting hospitals, police stations, court, *dhabas*, *chaiwalas*, vegetable vendors, temples, etc. are regularly displayed and the role of doctor, nurses, pundits, drivers, lawyers, etc. though small are noteworthy in the sequence of events. The story revolves mostly around family and their inter-relationships of love, hatred and revenge. Women who play the stereotypical good women character are basically shown as performing decorative function and rarely as professional and their acts are revealed as kind, delicate, lovable and solving problems of the family which is in line with the approach of conservative feminism. On the other hand, those who play negative characters are shown frequently as cunning, shrewd, destructive to the extent that they can even kill anyone either for love or money and are always after money. These serials often depict the extreme imaginary characters of good and bad women which are very different from reality. Nevertheless, television serials are said to be the main influencer on many women. The viewers are often influenced by the beautiful fashionable, designer sarees and kurtas worn by the lead actors, religious beliefs and practices and at times superstitious beliefs were found in the study areas.

While analysing the content of the stories, it was found that most of the Hindi serial stories revolved around female that were battling the rigours of life. The narratives of the serials have also weaved around the socio-cultural patterns prevalent in mainland India thereby promoting the cultural identity and ethos of the core Indian states. Jaggi (2011) opined that these serials have made cultural representations in the process. Serials have also become an agent for discussion of relevant social issues. Many respondents now wanted to visit the locations that have been introduced via the shooting of serials, shop for specific fashion items, participate in pilgrimage locations, visit sea beaches and react towards political, economic and social causes that affect the country. Our study found that not only the women living in urban areas has open

up their mind but women in the rural areas also want to venture out, look good and become more confident and presentable. Hence, the influence of watching Hindi serials in both rural and urban has extended beyond entertainment.

The study found that majority of educated women informed that they understand Hindi well; thereby they understand the storylines, characters properly. Regardless of their hectic schedule, many of them spent 3-4 hours and at times 5 hours sitting around the television set depending on their occupation and weather condition. A few women of them started going to temples in the morning barefooted to perform pujas, which was never part of the tradition of the Sikkimese society irrespective of their religious standing. Some Buddhist family have started decorating the houses during Diwali with lights. But the Christians abstain from such practices. Some Nepali women now have started practicing to 'karwa chauth' by remaining fast the whole day for the long life of the husband which is valorised by the ideal Indian Hindu women. However, women belonging to all ethnic and religious groups now apply 'mehndi' with intricate designs to look good and attractive. In addition, they also imitate the facial make up, hair style, jewellery and accessories. The respondents said it gives them joy and happiness. They have now started preparing various food items which were made popular by the television shows. Many women belonging to all the three communities such as Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali are now seen wearing well designed and attractive kurtis, lehengas, salwar suits and jewellery of various designs worn by the actors. But the sarees in most of the cases are worn by the Nepali women and other ethnic groups like the Bhutias and Lepchas wears their traditional dress during functions.

The role of these serials revolves around the cultural identity and ethos of the core areas of India. Through exposure to Hindi serials, the respondents are encouraged to participate in the tradition, ritual and ceremony of the majority community thereby following the social and cultural trends prevalent among the larger section of the Indian society. The respondents both in rural and urban have now come to enjoy an endorsement of the value systems, fashion and way of life that goes with the majority even to the extent of threatening the many facets of their own traditional social and cultural system.

There has been a vast increase of mega serials where previously there were only a few. These mega serials have multiple themes dealing with the mythical, historical, to becoming more family oriented dramas intertwining with other contemporary issues. Serials also focus on the complex constructions of family, tradition and gender in a never ending frames and plotlines. The staging of diverse cultural practices of the core have been glamorised in a detailed fashion that women belonging to all three major ethnic groups of Sikkim such as Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha irrespective of rural and urban location have taken a keen interest to Hindi Serials. The extremely attractive and filmy manner portrayal of the customs and traditions of the core regions has become significant influence in the lives of women in the periphery. Women in the study area feel connected to the serials they watch since they are the ardent viewers than men and relates to their own personal life. The viewers sustain a steady relationship with the characters that relate to themselves and these characters help the viewers find their own inner self. Watching serials has become more meaningful to the respondents. They are now considered to be a reflection of the life and sometimes helped the viewers deal with their own problems.

Although a variety of reports have been submitted by various government committees and research analysis done by intellectual fraternity with respect to the portrayal of women, their impact on the content of the television programmes has remained insignificant and short-lived as the story in the serials continues as usual without any sign of change. Serials being broadcasted now have become more polished and production values have improved as a result of the intense competition. But very rarely any attempt has been done by the makers to know and incorporate what the audience really want and deserve making TRPs as the main source. Even for the makers, due to large socio-cultural variations among the audiences as they represent the heterogeneous groups, it is too complicated to understand and integrate the recommendations based on micro surveys or research. In the mad rush for commercial success, they made the programmes that represent the majority by sidelining various social and cultural practices of the marginalised groups.

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Top 10 serials by TRP and BARC ratings

[https://www.google.com/search?ei=7SJZXLqCNMWm9QPptbLYAQ&q=top+10+serials+by+trp+and+barc+ratings&oq=top+10+serials+by+trp+and+barc+ratings&gs\\_l=psy-ab.3..33i22i29i30.136197.156866..159916...6.0..0.340.8858.0j28j13j4.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0..0i71j0i67j0i131j0i10j0i22i30j0i22i10i30.9wWpF3e-F2w](https://www.google.com/search?ei=7SJZXLqCNMWm9QPptbLYAQ&q=top+10+serials+by+trp+and+barc+ratings&oq=top+10+serials+by+trp+and+barc+ratings&gs_l=psy-ab.3..33i22i29i30.136197.156866..159916...6.0..0.340.8858.0j28j13j4.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0..0i71j0i67j0i131j0i10j0i22i30j0i22i10i30.9wWpF3e-F2w) data as retrieved

on 18 July, 2018

## ANNEXURE

### Hindi Television Serials at the Periphery: A Socio-cultural Study of Women Viewers in Sikkim

#### **Interview Schedule**

NAME:

BLOCK:

PANCHAYAT:

VILLAGE:

ADDRESS:

AGE:

CONTACT NO:

EDUCATION QUALIFICATION:

CASTE/COMMUNITY:

RELIGION :

INCOME:

PROPERTY:

- i. Land
- ii. House
- iii. Gold
- iv. Electronic items –tv/computer
- others

TYPES OF HOUSE:

- i. Pucca
- ii. Semi-pucca
- iii. Kutcha

1. Do you watch television? i. Yes ii. No  
Time: i. Morning ii. Afternoon iii. Evening iv. Night
2. What are the other forms of media you are using? i. Newspaper ii. Radio iii. T.V. iv. Internet
3. What type of programmes do you watch in T.V.? Please specify.
4. Do you watch television serials? i. YES ii. NO iii. Sometimes
5. At what time do you watch it? Time: i. Morning ii. Afternoon iii. Evening iv. Night
6. With whom do you watch with? i. Parents ii. Siblings iii. Friends iv. Alone v. Along with family members vi. Others
7. Name any five serials you are watching presently.  
i.                      ii.                      iii.                      iv.                      v.
8. In which television channels these serials are broadcasted? Please specify.
9. Which serials do you like the most and why?

10. If you missed out any of your favourite serials what do you do?
11. Given the movies and TV serials which do you prefer the most? Why?
12. Do you discuss serials with family and friends? i. Yes ii.No  
Where?
13. If yes, what type discussion you do and where do you discuss? Mention.
14. How many hours do you watch serials?  
i. less than 1 ii.(2 to 3) iii. (3 to 4) iv. (4 to 5) v. More than 5
15. Don't you think serial is a wastage of time? Mention.
16. What type of storylines is your favourite? Examples: i. Community based ii.  
Family, iii. Love/Romance/ Affairs iv. Violence/ Crime/ Revenge v. Career/  
Power vi. If any other, please mention.
17. Has serials influenced in any of the following given. Please mention.
- (a) Dressing/ Fashion
  - (b) The way you speak/ Language
  - (c) Food habits
  - (d) Customary beliefs
  - (e) Religious Practices
  - (f) Festivals

18. How significant is serial to you? Please mention the following given.

- (a) Entertainment
- (b) A tool for advocating social change
- (c) A reflection of contemporary life
- (d) An art form
- (e) Education
- (f) Timepass

19. How realistically do the serials portray the following? Please mention.

- (a) Women
- (b) Work or job situation
- (c) Family relationships
- (d) Contemporary social values
- (e) Men
- (f) Extra marital affairs
- (g) Children, Teenagers and Youths

20. How do you feel women are represented in serials?

21. Name one good representation of women in a serial and one bad.

22. Do you believe women are stereotypically presented in serials? Give examples

23. Do you think serials are intended for female audience?

24. Why do you feel women are being portrayed as victim in the serials?

25. What are your views on the representation of intelligent, smart women in serials?



26. To what extent do you think the serials reflect or shape predominant values of society? How and why do you think so?

27. Why women act against women in most of the story? Do you think in real life situations it is the same? How?

28. Do you also watch Nepali serials? i. Yes ii. No iii. Sometimes iv. Not at all

29. If there was a presence of Nepali local serials, have you ever watched Hindi serials? Why please mention.

30. Besides watching T.V. how do you spent your time?

i. Going out ii. Talking with friends iii. Shopping iv. Surfing internet in mobile or computer v. If any others please mention

31. Why in majority of the serials there is conflict between mother-in law and daughter-in-law?

32. Besides the serials, what are the other shows you watch?

33. Do you ever want to be an actor because of the influence?