

**An Analysis on the Portrayal of Identity in
Hindi Crime Genre Web Series in India**

A Thesis Submitted

To

Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Smriti Rai

Under the supervision of:

Dr. Pooja Basnett

Department of Mass Communication

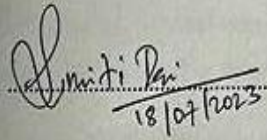
School of Professional Studies

July 2023

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DECLARATION

I, **Smriti Rai**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the thesis titled “**An Analysis on the Portrayal of Identity in Hindi Crime Genre Web Series in India**” submitted to Sikkim University for the award degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.


18/07/2023

Smriti Rai

Ph. D Registration No.: 19/Ph.D/MCM/03

Department of Mass Communication

School of Professional Studies

Sikkim University



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय

(भारतीय संसद के अधिनियमद्वारा स्थापित केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)
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“An Analysis on the Portrayal of Identity in Hindi Crime Genre Web Series in India”

Submitted by Smriti Rai under the supervision of *Dr. Pooja Basnett*, Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, School of Professional Studies, Sikkim University, Gangtok.

Smriti Rai
18/07/2023
Signature of the Scholar

Smriti Rai

Pooja Basnett
18/07/2023
Countersigned by Supervisor
Dr. Pooja Basnett
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
सह - प्रध्यापक
Department of Mass Communication
जन सञ्चार विभाग
Sikkim University, Government of India

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Sikkim University

6 माईल, सामदुर, तादोंग, गंगटोक - 737102 सिक्किम, भारत
दूराभाष : 00-91-3592 - 251067, 251403, फैक्स - 251067/251757

6th Mile, Samdur, PO Tadong 737102, Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Phones : 00-91-3592-251067, 251403, Fax - 251067/251757
website : www.sikkimuniversity.in/www.sikkimuniversity.ac.in
Email : sikkimuniversity@gmail.com

हल, साम्दुर, तादोंग - 737102
क, सिक्किम, भारत
-03592-251212, 251415, 251656
फैक्स - 251067
इट - www.cus.ac.in



6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong-737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax : 251067
Website : www.cus.ac.in

सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

(भारत के संसद के अधिनियम द्वारा वर्ष 2007 में स्थापित और नैक (एनएएसी) द्वारा वर्ष 2015 में प्रत्यापित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Thesis titled "An Analysis on the Portrayal of Identity in Hindi Crime Genre Web Series in India" submitted to Sikkim University in the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication, embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by Smriti Rai under my guidance and supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, association or fellowship.

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

I recommend this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Pooja Basnett
18/07/23

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

सह - प्रध्यापक

Supervisor
Dr. Pooja Basnett
Assistant Professor
Department of Mass Communication
Sikkim University

Department of Mass Communication
जन संचार विभाग
Sikkim University, Government of India
सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय, भारत सरकार

अध्यक्ष

Head

जनसंचार विभाग

Manoj Kumar Das
18/07/23

In-Charge of the Department
Dr. Manoj Kumar Das
Assistant Professor
Department of Mass Communication
Sikkim University

Department of Mass Communication
सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय

University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my sincere and profound gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Pooja Basnett, Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Sikkim University, for her immense support, guidance and keen interest in guiding my research. I am able to complete my work today with her help of her scholarly suggestions, cooperative effort with constant monitoring. My deep sense of gratitude to our teachers, Dr. Manoj Kr. Das, In-Charge of the Department, Dr. Jasmine Yimchunger and Dr. Niharika Buragohain for their valuable suggestions and inputs for my research. My sincere gratitude to Mr. Dorjee Sherpa and Mr. Khush Narayan Basnet, Department of Mass Communication, for their support. I offer my sincere gratitude to the staff members of library along with the administration staff and official members of Sikkim University for their provision and support to help me complete my research.

The people who have significantly helped me throughout my PhD research journey and made this journey fruitful and productive through constant guidance, approach and support are Ugyal T. Lama Yolmo, Research Scholar, Department of Mass Communication, Sikkim University and Alisha Chettri, Guest Faculty, Department of Psychology, Sikkim University. My honest and sincere gratitude and thanks to both. My heartfelt thank you to my son Atharva, my aunt Kalpana, my mother Usha, my husband Birju, uncle Suraj and siblings Minerva, Mrinalini, Ananta, Sunny, uncle Dhiren Lama, aunt Rani Lama and my in laws who have been my biggest support and encouragement.

I am grateful to Fr. Dr. Donatus Kujur, Principal, St. Joseph's College, Fr. C. Pragasan, Director of Self-Financed Courses, Komal Gurung, Meenakshi Pradhan,

Vikram Rai and members of staff and students, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling for their support during my research. Sincere gratitude to Mr. Ashish Chettri, Department of English, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling and Dr. Binu Sundas, Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, Miranda House, Delhi for their valuable inputs and suggestions for the research. I thank my friends Vindhya, Pema and Sanchaita for motivating me during my crucial moments as I struggled to complete my research.

My gratitude to Dr. Anand Pariyar, Department of Chemistry, Sikkim University and Dr. Rajani Dewan, St, Joseph's College for their friendly approach and suggestions. I thank the members of Indian Red Cross Society, Darjeeling District Branch, KKRSS Darjeeling and Darjeeling Toastmasters International Club for their support in times of need. I also extend my thanks to Professor D.R. Chettri, Department of Botany, Sikkim University, Dr. Sumnima Rai, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Sikkim University, Sir Sunil Shrestha, Dr. Sarda Adhikari, Prema Dolma Lama, Nima Tamang, Deepika Thapa, Rohini Giri, Ragini Giri, Krishna Ghatraj, Nirmika Subba, Prativa Yolmo and Devika Rai who have continuously lent their support in my journey of completing my PhD research.

Lastly, I thank the Almighty and everyone who supported me in this research for providing me with the strength, rigour, and tenacity to complete my research and by providing provisions required for the study.

Sincerely,

- **Smriti Rai**

July, 2023

CONTENTS

Contents	Page No.
1. Chapter 1- Introduction	1
1.1.Identity, Crime and the Critical Realism	1-5
1.2. Over –the- Top Television and Web Series	5-17
1.3.Crime Genre in the Web Series	17-18
1.4. Statement of the problem	18
1.5 Social Significance of the study	18-19
1.6. Aims	19
1.7. Research Questions	19
1.8. Objectives	20
1.9. Theoretical Framework	20-30
1.10. Operational Definitions	30-32
2. Chapter 2- Review of Literature	33
2.1.Globalization and OTT platforms	33-39
2.2. Web Series as the New Story Tellers	39-41
2.2.Crime and its Representations in Crime Series	42-54
2.4. Identity of Heroes, Victims and Villains	54-78
3. Chapter 3- Research Methodology	79
3.1.Research Design	79-81
3.2. Sampling	81-86
3.3. Data Analysis	87-100

3.4. Coding the data	100-108
4. Chapter 4- Individual and Collective Identities	109
4.1. Identity in Paatal Lok	109-113
4.1.1. Language and Identity in Paatal Lok	113-114
4.1.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations	114
4.1.1a.i. Positive Connotations	114-116
4.1.1a. ii. Negative Connotations	116-122
4.1.1b. Quoting verbs	122-127
4.1.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	128-133
4.1.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	133-138
4.1.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Paatal Lok	139
4.1.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	139
4.1.2.a.i. Classificational Process	139-141
4.1.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	141-145
4.1.2.b. Semiotic Choices	145-146
4.1.2.b.i. Gaze: Demand	146-149
4.1.2.b. ii. Gaze: Offer	149-151
4.1.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	151
4.1.2.c.i. Saliency	152-154
4.1.2.c. ii. Framing	154-158
4.2. Identity in Special Ops	158-162
4.2.1. Language and Identity in Special Ops	163
4.2.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations	163

4.2.1a.i. Positive Connotations	163-166
4.2.1a. ii. Negative Connotations	166-170
4.2.1b. Quoting Verbs	170-173
4.2.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	173-176
4.2.1d. Hyperbole and metonymy	176-179
4.2.2. Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Special Ops	180
4.2.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	180
4.2.2.a.i. Classificational Process	180-182
4.2.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	182-184
4.2.2.b. Semiotic Choices	185
4.2.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	185
4.2.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	186
4.2.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	187
4.2.2.c.i. Saliency	187-188
4.2.2.c. ii. Framing	189-191
4.3. Identity in The Family Man	191-196
4.3.1. Language and Identity in The Family Man	196
4.3.1a. Vocabulary Choice of words and connotations	196
4.3.1a.i. Positive Connotations	196-199
4.3.1a. ii. Negative Connotations	199-202
4.3.1b. Quoting Verbs	202-204
4.3.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	204-205
4.3.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	205-207
4.3.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in The Family Man	208

4.3.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	208
4.3.2.a.i. Classificational Process	208-210
4.3.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	211-2213
4.3.2.b. Semiotic Choices	204
4.3.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	214
4.3.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	215
4.3.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	216
4.3.2.c.i. Saliience	216-218
4.3.2.c. ii. Framing	219-220
4.4. Identity in Sacred Games	220-223
4.4.1. Language and Identity in The Family Man	224
4.4.1a. Vocabulary Choice of words and connotations	224
4.4.1a.i. Positive Connotations	244-225
4.4.1a. ii. Negative Connotations	215-228
4.4.1b. Quoting Verbs	228-229
4.4.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	229-232
4.4.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	232-235
4.4.2. Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Sacred Games	236
4.4.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	236
4.4.2.a.i. Classificational Process	236-237
4.4.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	238-239
4.4.2.b. Semiotic Choices	240
4.4.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	240
4.4.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	241

4.4.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	242
4.4.2.c.i. Saliency	242-245
4.4.2.c. ii. Framing	245-246
4.5.1. Shaping individual and collective identities in Hindi crime genre web series in India	246-251
5. Chapter -5 Creation of Centers and Peripheries	252-255
5.1. Centers and Peripheries in Paatal Lok	255
5.1.1. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations	255
5.1.1a. Positive Connotations	255-257
5.1.1b. Negative Connotations	257-260
5.1b. Quoting Verbs	260-263
5.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphor	264-266
5.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	266-267
5.1.2. Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries	268
5.1.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	268
5.1.2.a.i. Classificational Process	268-269
5.1.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	270
5.1.2.b. Semiotic Choices	271
5.1.2.b. i. Image act: Demand gaze	271
5.1.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	272-274
5.1.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	275
5.1.2.c.i. Saliency	275-276
5.1.2.c. ii. Framing	277-278

5.2. Centers and Peripheries in Special Ops	279
5.2. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: Special Ops	279
5.2.1a. Positive Connotations	279-280
5.2.1b. Negative Connotations	280-283
5.2b. Quoting Verbs	283-285
5.2c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	285-287
5.2d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	288-290
5.2.2. Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries	291
5.2.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	291
5.2.2.a.i Classificational Process	291-292
5.2.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	293-294
5.2.2.b. Semiotic Choices	295
5.2.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	295
5.2.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	296
5.2.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	297
5.2.2.c.i. Saliency	297-298
5.2.2.c. ii. Framing	299
5.3. Centers and Peripheries in Family Man	300
5.3.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations	300
5.3.1a. Positive Connotations	300-301
5.3.1b. Negative Connotations	201-306
5.3.1b. Quoting Verbs	306-307
5.3.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	308-309
5.3.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	309-311

5.3.2. Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries	311
5.3. a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	311
5.3.2.a.i Classificational Process	311-312
5.3.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	313-314
5.3.2.b. Semiotic Choices	315
5.3.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	315
5.3.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	316
5.3.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	317
5.3.2.c.i. Saliency	317-320
5.3.2.c. ii. Framing	320-322
5.4. Centers and Peripheries in Sacred Games	323
5.4. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations	323
5.4.1a. Positive Connotations	323-325
5.4.1a. Negative Connotations	325-329
5.4b. Quoting Verbs	329
5.4c. Rhetoric and Metaphors	330-331
5.4d. Hyperbole and Metonymy	331-332
5.4.2. Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries	311
5.4.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations	333
5.4.2.a.i. Classificational Process	333-334
5.4.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process	335
5.4.2.b. Semiotic Choices	336
5.4.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze	336
5.4.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze	337

5.4.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals	338-339
5.4.2.c.i. Saliency	338-339
5.4.2.c. ii. Framing	340-341
5.5.1. Creation of Centers and Peripheries in Hindi crime genre web series in India	341-346
6.1. Chapter 6- Conclusion	347-364
6.1.1. Over-all findings	364-368
6.1.2. Limitations of the study	369-370
6.1.3. Scope for further studies	370
References	371-404

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables		
Tables	Description	Page No.
Table 1	Samples of the study	83
Table 2	Awards, nominations and IMDB ratings of sample web series	86
Table 3	Individual Identities	101
Table 4	Collective identities	102
Table 5	Interrelationship between crime and identity as per socio- economic status, ethnicity and sexuality	102
Table 6	Stereotyping and discrimination	103
Table 7	Crimes as seen through religious violence, caste-based crime, terrorism, and corruption	103
Table 8	Characteristics of Heroes	104
Table 9	Characteristics of villains	104
Table 10	Characteristics of victims	105
Table 11	Interchange of social roles	105
Table 12	Creating centers and peripheries of ethnic group in a social circle.	106

Figures

Figures	Description	Page No.
Figure 1	Tope Singh as a lower caste mocked and taunted by upper caste villagers	139
Figure 2	Tope Singh ridiculed by upper caste villagers	140
Figure 3	Man worshipping the slippers of the community leader Donullia Gujjar	141
Figure 4	Cockroach under the foot, representing a metaphorical significance of trampling the weak	142
Figure 5	Horrifyingly squashing the skull, portraying extreme hatred and vengeance	143
Figure 6	Hammer symbolizing the transition of Vishal Tyagi to Hatoda Tyagi as a criminal	144
Figure 7	Dog licking ice-cream, signifying the social status of the characters in the web series	145
Figure 8	Police constable slapping a transgender while slurring racial comments of her ethnic background	146
Figure 9	Upper caste Jat community, symbolically holds, a Manjaar, lower caste man's head on his hand to showcase power and dominance	147
Figure 10	Power display by Sanjeev Mehra on Hathi Ram Chaudhary executing his authority	148
Figure 11	The gaze offers a revenge by Hatoda Tyagi after he commits his first murder	149

Figure 12	Represents the accolades of Hatoda Tyagi, as it stands rusted on the walls of his house	150
Figure 13	Depicts the folly of Hatoda Tyagi as a blind follower of Donullia Gujjar	151
Figure 14	Hatoda Tyagi proves his identity	152
Figure 15	Hatoda Tyagi sits behind the dead boy as he gazes with contempt	153
Figure 16	Focuses on CBI Building, making them the center of power	154
Figure 17	Portrays chasing of suspected criminals	155
Figure 18	Scornful look at the suspected criminals by police	155
Figure 19	Dirty water represents unclear future for Hathi Ram Chaudhary	156
Figure 20	Metaphoric significance of the villain and hero as they both try to shift the power dynamics	157
Figure 21	Exercising power and dominance by Himmat Singh	180
Figure 22	Dominance and control over suspected terrorist by Indian Forces	181
Figure 23	Agreeing to take collective action by Himmat Singh and Surya Kumar against terrorism	181
Figure 24	Suggests members of Muslim religion preparing for terrorist attack	182
Figure 25	Ikhlaq Khan eyeing to attack the Indian Parliament house	183
Figure 26	Indian Parliament building, signifying the center of	184

	strength of India	
Figure 27	Indian Parliament on terrorist attack	185
Figure 28	Powerful figure looming over weaker man as he fails his mission	186
Figure 29	Labelling of suspected terrorists	187
Figure 30	Muslim women preparing for terror attack	188
Figure 31	Ikhlaq Khan escapes through the hands of Indian security forces	189
Figure 32	Abu Hassan being trampled by camels on the instructions of Ikhlaq Khan	190
Figure 33	Indian special agent dying in the hands of Ikhlaq Khan	191
Figure 34	Suspected criminals tied and brought into custody	208
Figure 35	Srikant Tiwari cornered by Muslim men	209
Figure 36	A group of Muslim men attacking Srikant Tiwari	210
Figure 37	Shooting down of suspected terrorists by Force One member Imran Pasha	211
Figure 38	Montage of terror attack in waiting	212
Figure 39	Suspected terrorist crosses the Indian Border	213
Figure 40	Meticulous eye on the suspected terrorist	214
Figure 41	Battered and betrayed by Major Sameer's own country Pakistan	215
Figure 42	TASC logo represents the fight against terrorism	216
Figure 43	Surveillance by Indian Army over terrorist camp	217
Figure 44	News about Pakistan PM changing sides thus shifting	218

	the power dynamics	
Figure 45	Police van under terrorist attack	219
Figure 46	Wanted terrorists planning their next attack after failure	220
Figure 47	Jojo Mascarenas dragging herself on the floor to save herself from Ganesh Gaitonde	236
Figure 48	Sartaj Singh discriminated at workplace by his colleagues	237
Figure 49	Dog thrown down the building represents lower social hierarchy	238
Figure 50	Sartaaj Singh defending his territory	239
Figure 51	Ganesh Gaitonde looks helpless at Dilbaag Singh through the prison bars	240
Figure 52	Insolvent gaze of Ganesh Gaitonde	241
Figure 53	Sign board of Sathyanarayan Shukla Hindu Hotel Pure vegetarian	242
Figure 54	Identity of Ganesh Gaitonde revealed through Malaysian passport	243
Figure 55	Nayanika being revengeful on her abuser Bunty Sharma	244
Figure 56	Pakistani passport of Zoya Mirza	244
Figure 57	Ganesh Gaitonde shoots himself	245
Figure 58	Display of social hierarchy	268
Figure 59	Changing sides resulting in shift in power	269
Figure 60	Vishal Tyagi's signature murder style with hammer	270

Figure 61	Displeased SHO Virk as Hathi Ram Chaudhary finds prominence at work	271
Figure 62	Uprise of lower caste	272
Figure 63	Labelling of criminal Hatoda Tyagi from Vishal Tyagi	273
Figure 64	Rajbir Gujjar pleading Gwala Gujjar to save Hatoda Tyagi	274
Figure 65	Sanjeev Mehra dominating the discourse	275
Figure 66	Narrative of Indian media	276
Figure 67	Discrimination due to ethnicity	277
Figure 68	Punishing the traitors	278
Figure 69	Dominance in dicourse by Himmat Singh	291
Figure 70	Creating periphery in group by punishing the traitor	292
Figure 71	Disguised terrorists escape the eyes of police	293
Figure 72	Protected by another group when made a periphery	294
Figure 73	Dominance in work hierarchy	295
Figure 74	Female terrorist prepares her attack	296
Figure 75	Half Burnt Pakistani passport of suspected terrorist	297
Figure 76	Sonia as a sacrificial victim to safeguard greater interest of the nation	298
Figure 77	Farooq Ali gets corned	299
Figure 78	Atrocity on suspected terrorist by Force One Officer Imran Pasha	311
Figure 79	Mob lynching of Muslim man by group of Hindu men for carrying beef	312

Figure 80	Srikant Tiwari giving safe passage to suspected terrorist Moosa Rehman	313
Figure 81	Army as working repressive machineries in Kashmir	314
Figure 82	Hindus demonstrating power and dominance	315
Figure 83	Gazes portray invasion of freedom of Kashmiri Muslims	316
Figure 84	Indian army repressively on guard in Kashmir	317
Figure 85	Slogans supporting ISIS in Kashmir and demanding freedom	318
Figure 86	Pro-Pakistan slogans	318
Figure 87	Slogan of terrorist as martyrs	319
Figure 88	Slogan unwelcoming Indians	319
Figure 89	Parallel representation of division of power	320
Figure 90	Gay men used for achieving goals	321
Figure 91	Othering of ingroup members as outcast for personal gains	322
Figure 92	Ganesh Gaitonde's first murder marks the beginning of his dominance	333
Figure 93	Ganesh Gaitonde establishes supremacy in Gopalmath	333
Figure 94	Ganesh Gaitonde captures Kukoo to begin domination	334
Figure 95	Isa's shinning red car represents power	335
Figure 96	Dusty red car portrays Isa's downfall	335
Figure 97	Discrimination of ethnic minority belonging to lower	336

	social economic class	
Figure 98	Victim due ethnicity	337
Figure 99	Seeking justice for victim	337
Figure 100	Bunty Sharma shows hatred towards Muslims	338
Figure 101	Bunty Sharma abusing Nayanika	339
Figure 102	Kukoo dies as victim due to sexuality	340
Figure 103	Anjali Mathur dies as a victim out of organisational discrimination	341

Chapter - 1

1- Introduction

1.1. Identity, Crime and the Critical Realism

Belief or set of principles representing an individual's view of the world helps to establish the relationships between the existence and reality that exists in world. A paradigm is the set of rudimentary beliefs that help in the growth of knowledge and navigates a researcher in the ontological and epistemological ways. Human behaviour needs understanding through meanings and its related references and thus generate its purpose related to its actions. Hence, a paradigm in qualitative research upholds and emphasises on uncovering intricate and intrinsic details about human behaviours. A paradigm helps to guide and follow the appropriate methodology to conduct research. The paradigm helps to understand appropriate perspectives to get clarity towards the approach and therefore guide the study while helping to maintain the flow of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Paradigms supports in the production of one's knowledge that help to build the requirements for the research. It also helps to come with a perspective for viewing and interpreting data. It helps to direct and develop the frame that holds the language, theory, principles as well as values related to the study helping to achieve a specific and logical approach to the study (Weaver & Olson, 2006).

In relation to the types of philosophies followed in research, the positivist, constructivist and critical have often been used in carrying out research to shape and give definite and specific guidelines to achieve the epistemology, ontology, and methodology of a research. The paradigms, have been distinguished as positivism,

interpretivism and realism. Positivist approach focuses on empirical research, whereas interpretivism helps in understanding the social construct of the interpretations and principles that are acceptable through problem solutions. Realism however has been bifurcated into direct and critical realism. Direct realism is how an individual has direct connections to his senses including sight, touch, and hear, smell and taste. Critical realism on the other hand is based on the discussions about an individual's experiences in certain or specific situations as one attempts to validate one's personal principles and views (Žukauskas et al., 2018). While understanding the philosophy and science of Critical Realism, it does not deny the reality of the social world but rather understands it with various theories that finds the relationships between various events, activities, and phenomenon. Realities being interdependent with the activities that take place in the world, human beings have their fundamental relationship with experiences and constructions of meanings out of those objects. Hence, reality of the real world cannot exist nor can it be observed independently without the perception, theories, and constructions of human (Fletcher, 2016.).

Introduced by Bhaskar (1975), the Critical Realism approach has been adopted in numerous fields of study. The most important principle of Critical Realism is that it is based on the ontology and not reducible to the epistemology. The ontology and the epistemology of Critical Realism depict the human knowledge of reality to demonstrate the limitations of epistemic misunderstanding and confusions about the paradigm. The critical realism has approached the philosophy of the existence and being that draws connection to reality. He argued that the production of knowledge has two sides of it. One on how an individual directly produces it and the other, the meanings he derives out of it. In the discourse, the understanding and interpretations of the text are in reference to the dialogues used in a common field of understanding

and conversations where meanings are explored using one's logic. As Bhaskar (1979) puts forward that one's identity in the social world is not independent of the activities, where a person's basic exposure to the beliefs and principles controls one's identity. The social structures themselves are the result of what humans do and exercise in a society which reproduce the fundamental instruments that exist within the phenomenon for social structure on the experimental level. Hence, society exists only because of the human activity and therefore, society and power exist if it is being exercised in the society.

Identity, as put forward by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014), comprises as social construct and social identity. The approach and differences between the two, has led to divided approaches about what identity truly is. Therefore, the ontology of critical realism approach helps to form a relational connection between how an identity is socially constructed and helping understand identity the formation of identity on an individual or collective level. Sanchez (2006) puts across that identity has been subjected to invoke the voices of the oppressed in their struggles especially in the social construct of politics, gender, and class as the politics of power and dominance tries to define the prominence of identity on a daily basis where the embedded concepts are challenged thereby leading to social change.

The societal structure exists with human existence, human existence is not dependent on social structure. This resolves to transform the detailed analysis of the text into research relating to social change. Therefore, in social research, while using Critical Discourse Analysis, the critical realism discourse exemplifies the usage of texts and the meanings generated by those texts, rather than just considering language as the main element of discourse. This enables the research to provide a detailed analysis

into both texts and language with regards to social changes within the social structure (Fairclough, 2005). Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) puts forward that by observing the semiotic modes of multimodality in the form of visuals, sound, signs, symbols and language in perceiving texts develops a relational meaning between the semantic relations. As a result, the critical paradigm helps to unearth the latent meanings through the semiotic modes.

On the contextual level of crime, the critical realism approach deals with the distinction of good vs evil, human beings are bound by meta-ethics. Meta ethics are ethics which are grounded in individuals, thus helps to define the moral values and helps in distinguishing between the right and wrong. Therefore, critical realism helps to establish how the process of thinking of how the good and evil thoughts in crime can be understood in the forms of its usage or exploitation on the moral values in the social structure (Norrie, 2012). The perception of texts via mediums such as television builds various assumptions about crime and delinquency through the usage of intertextuality and codes to create a sense of realism in the texts produced. The crime genre programs often create stereotyped notions about crime and its related social actors like police, villains and victims which defies the realism (Jermyn, 2013). As put forward by Khitrov (2019), in digital communications, such as crime genre web series, streamed online, the reality has often been compromised through multiple layers of presentation of reality which distorts the actual image of the police and criminals. Similarly, the emergence of the offender in crime is often a consequence of various emergence of an individual's reality which is stratified into gender, identity, socio-economic conditions, socio-cultural conditions and religious dimensions. The understanding of crime through critical realism, therefore delves between actual to empirical in the research (Wilkinson, et al., 2022).

In this study, the Critical Realism paradigm will therefore help in exploring the various stratified relations of identities, which determines the intricate social structure, while exploring the reality and perception through crime and identity in the web series in India. This study follows the critical realism paradigm approach to achieve its objectives of the study also answering the research questions formulated.

1.2. Over the Top Television and Web Series

Peirce (2011) says that as media transforms from traditional to the new, the structural elements of the television program content has become more internet friendly than the traditional television. However, both distribution patterns have unique advantages and disadvantages. The adaptation and remodelling of the style of distribution has been inevitable as no media these days have been able to work in seclusion from the other media. It is imperative to assume that the viewers of online media expect similar familiarity of programs like the television. However, television functions on different structure than an online streaming platform but the parts of television will also be produced, programmed, and aired through the online medium.

In 1997, CNN broadcasted their news with the help of the CNN website with immediacy similar to the television broadcast with the help of graphics, texts and videos hyper mediating to create a new experience of television viewing among its viewers. The technological remediation since the twentieth century has helped us to understand that no medium can work independent of each other. The new media is only remodelling itself to prepare themselves for the challenges and refining by through diversity and variety (Bolter & Grurin, 2000).

As Miller (2017) puts forward that the new media has offered entertainment as well as interaction which traditional media fails to offer. The inactive audiences now have the facilities to choose, see, and interact which have the impact on the art of storytelling. The web series have developed a pattern which encloses the audiences in fully interactive and involving surroundings.

The online streaming platforms have also been streaming networked television series on their streaming platforms. This facility has provided the multiple viewing of these programs on these online platforms where the viewing patterns, time and space has been dictated by the audiences watching these networked shows on the streaming platforms. The major networks like ABC and NBC introducing and selling their episodes on iTunes and Google's video stores etc. have been an outcome of the technological convergence. The free streaming of popular shows on their websites shows the popularity of the platform enabling easy accessibility and not determined by the network timings. Observers however see these streaming platforms as a response to the popularity of digital recording devices and piracy issues which the network houses had been facing. The rapid expansion of the web distribution of television shows paved a new way of television viewing. The web distribution has in fact accelerated and stimulated the demand for traditional television viewing (Waldfogel, 2009).

The content of television remained traditional for an extremely long period of time. The introduction of innovative ways of storytelling methods with technological improvements had been noted as since the beginning of the twenty first century. The beginning of television series in the network with the notion of continuity without the end at every episode has been a popular television format. However, these solid

interlacing of several story-line which develops concurrently has garnered significant, faithful, and dedicated viewership for these series. However, television series, unlike the soap operas now resort to eight to ten episodes with different storytelling with a cliff-hanger similar to soap operas (Allrath & Gymnich, 2005).

Television was introduced in 1959 in India. It began as a part of the UNESCO's pilot project. The broadcast was done only twice a week for one hour in a week. The national channel was named Doordarshan which focused majorly of development, dissemination of information and education. Hence, its focus was on educational television programs like School Education Television (STV), were introduced in Doordarshan basically catering to their primary agenda of education. India's first television soap opera Humlogin 1984 was instrumental in paving way for other soap operas like Buniyaad in 1986, Ramayan in 1987 and Mahabharata in 1988. As the religious soap opera reached new heights on Indian television, family-oriented soap operas concentrated on focusing the daily middle class life of Indians and reflected on the burning issues of society with the element of women empowerment, which resonated with the audiences on a greater scale (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2001)

The state-owned channels' domination was challenged when Peter Arnett, CNN in 1991 broadcasted the Gulf War live on Indian channels. This piloted the cable television network in India in 1992. With this, the entry and penetration of foreign media content in Indian channels were inevitable. The news controlled by the state-owned media now found its way to reach the Indian audience by private companies then disseminated among the mass. The inclusion of foreign investment in pumping up these private satellite channels led to hasty and swift growth of private channels in the country which saw humongous expansions in the days to come (Rajagopal, 2014).

The launch of ZEE TV and STAR TV both launched in 1992 further heightened the spread of cable television and India now had its media visibility around the world (Aggarwal& Gupta, 2001).

India had one state owned channel from 1959 till 1991. The satellite television channels since then has seen television as an agent of socio-cultural changes. It has been seen as a linkage between the main stream culture and the regional culture promoting development of identity in a country like India where the division of the country is based on caste, religion, languages, ethnicity, and income status (Mehta, 2008). From one state owned channels to cable channels mushrooming in India, the Indian Television distribution system divided the system into Broadcasters of Television Channels and content creators for television channels. According to Organization Structure (2023), of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Indian television distribution system in India consists of Broadcasters Television Channels and content creators. This further is divided among the Multi System Operators (MSOs) Local Cable Operators, DTH Operators, IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) Service providers and Digital Addressable Cable Television (DACT) and Headend in the Sky (HITS). As per the records of Press Information Bureau (2015), Headend in the sky was launched in India in 2015 as multiple carriage technologies that will provide consumers with wider choice. One button led to access of more than 500 channels with the national and regional contents.

As per the research by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (2020), India had 197 million television viewers which has a dedicated everyday viewership of 600 million people where Rs. 30,500 crores were consumed by the television industry owing to the highest viewership data making it still the best medium for advertisements and

marketing. From 800 licensed television channels in 2015 (Mehta,2015) to 900 licensed channels in 2020, where 600 channels have daily viewership maintained by Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), maintains its weekly report of viewership Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. India has already made the digital leap with the introduction of the Direct to Home services, Multiple System Operators, Internet Protocol Television, and mobile television has swiftly ushered in the switching of the television from analogue to digital. The growth of the television, a medium catering to class, race, languages in the nation, has its exponential growth through the internet and mobile phone users with better broadband and internet connectivity (Bhat, 2012).

The report by Pretosyan (2023), published in Statista, the world's total population is currently 5.18 billion people using the internet which will also change the dynamics of the online users. It also states that around two third of the world is now connected and are online. India' active digital population consists of 692 million internet users making it the second largest online market globally next to China. It has a penetration of fifty percent comprising of both rural and urban population as the mobile internet services provide affordable tariffs and plan in the Indian market (Basuroy, 2023a).

According to Chan-Olmsted (1998) the integrated convergence of voice, video, and data with the help of the internet provided services changed the entertainment industry. The introduction of Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu etc have become the new aggregators which now allows broadcasters and TV producers to go directly to their consumers bypassing the traditional network gatekeeper and access providers (Marshall & Venturini, 2012).

The *OTT (Over-the-top)* (Park, 2015: p. 4646) television is a polysemic term which has been defined as an online video service which is distributed through network of computers and other electronic gadgets like smartphones and smart television via the broadband and internet services. This service does not always come with the subscription of the television provider. As the users for the online streaming platform increases, so are the subscribers who are rapidly progressing towards unsubscribing their television services to switch to the online platforms (Park, 2015). Therefore, the term OTT or Over-the-Top television can be defined as videos, audios and texts which is streamed with the help of internet and can be accessed through electronic devices such as phone, computers, tablet, smart television etc (Taylor, 2019).

The concept of web series came from watching television series over web or internet via a computer (Williams, 2012). The network operators use OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms which provide the network services and content for delivering the broadcasting services to the audience (Mack, Vince & Samant, 2017). Web series were produced as a part of the television series where they would release some episodes which were not available on television broadcast as the media producers are creating content which are suitable for both the medium. Television viewing requires dedicated time and place but much of these are changing where the flexibility has been introduced by the online streaming platforms (Pierce, 2011).

Web series on the OTT platforms have redefined the way how contents are watched as this is no longer dictated by the time, choice, place, and monopoly of traditional television program content providers (Taylor, 2015). The distribution and deliver services of programs is now extended to other units other than the network distributed over a cable system. The application of OTT platforms in the communications sector

encompasses valuable approaches and insights to describe, characterize and understand the digital creative economy. With the rapid proliferation of Internet-based services, especially with Web 2.0, digital TV, social media and wireless communication, the convergence phenomenon has attracted even more attention since the beginning of the 21st century (Latzer, 2013). The digital era questions whether the advent of digital technology has categorically changed the social practice of watching television (Tay & Turner, 2010). The Streaming Service Providers (SSPs) like Amazon and Netflix has a growth in their streaming services owing to the Web 3.0 services. The accepted way of accessing the television by the current generation has been through online streaming platforms (Arazzi, et al., 2023).

Launched by Amazon in December, 2016, Amazon Prime Video in India bundled the membership subscription with original content along with Amazon online shopping experiences which would cater to the Indian audiences. With the launch of Amazon Fire Stick in Hindi and English, it allowed streaming on a smart TV. Amazon Prime garnered subscribers as the prime membership also allows subscribers free delivery in the online shopping cartel Amazon. The subscribers of Amazon Prime Videos get access to global, national, and regional content in the form of web series, films and documentaries which has been especially targeted and designed for Indian viewers. As Amazon continues to strengthen their positions in bringing original content to Indian audience, it however has not rolled out their original production on films and dramas as Netflix does. However, with various language options, it has captured the regional segment in India (Sabharwal, 2018).

Home Box Office (HBO) was originally called Green Channel in 1971 by its owner Charles Dolan who was then the owner of Sterling Communications. HBO was the

new concept for television as it started the subscription television service that would offer films and sports events to its subscribers. Since then, HBO has continuously tried to define television and its viewing patterns. When HBO started its brand identity, the marketed the channel with the tag line, *“It’s not TV, It’s HBO”* (Edgerton & Jones, 2008: p. 9) has been an important slogan for HBO where the specials and the series produced by HBO, the first in the industry, presented on HBO’s quality to produce program which has been a cut above the rest of the television series available. Programs like *The Sopranos*, *OZ*, *Six Feet Under*, *Sex and the City*, *Band of Brothers*, to name a few have established these original series as not to miss it TV series where they have exemplified the television content (Edgerton and Jones,2008). As HBO entered the streaming platforms with HBO Go and HBO Now and future launch of HBO Max, the subscribers have more choices with their content selection as it came well-suited with available electronic devices (Digital Trends. 2019).

Apple TV Plus and Disney Plus being added to the streaming platforms with fresh content and greater price subscriptions added more competition in streaming market (The New York Times, 2019). Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) services like Amazon Prime, HBO and Hulu have established a relationship between SVODs and the product features of old-style network channels. Hence, it has often been said that the new media forms have not replaced the old media, but it is rather the mixture of existing content and future contents and its continuous negotiations between what has already been established and its emerging practices. Amazon with its e-retail business and starting the SVOD services are co-related with the beginning of television networks in growing its e-retail business. In 2014, Amazon started by acquiring much of HBO’s original content increasing the consumer interest and thus leading to Prime membership subscriptions. On the contrary Netflix has been able to create a niche

market for them where they have created contents in the form of web series, films and documentaries keeping in view while replacing the television programs on television. Hence, the company has been able to produce and promote exclusive content as “*Netflix-branded originals*” (Wayne, 2017: p.726) in the form of web series, films and documentaries available only on Netflix instead of promoting content of existing television networks (Wayne, 2017).

The changing conditions of television have always been a debatable topic and in academic diaspora, new aspect emerges constantly. The chief executive officer (CEO) of the online TV streaming company Netflix, Reed Hastings, in 2015 argued that in over a decade the traditional television will die a natural death as internet streaming OTT services will take over like landline telephone became obsolete with the introduction of mobile phone (Syvertsen & Enli, 2015). SVOD services like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon had raised a growing concern among the cable networks due to the switch over to SVOD services from traditional cable services. The SVOD services are the business model which charges subscribers to watch unlimited access to programs on the OTT platforms (Wayne, 2015). The SVOD providers like Amazon and Netflix avoid the weekly viewership and released all of the episodes of a season at once. The traditional television on the other hand as been fully depended on the grabbing the audience on a daily or weekly basis broadcasting the content. The dependence of Netflix on monthly subscription eliminating the middle men and thus avoiding the advertisements created commercial free contents which the viewers pay for it catering directly to the audience. There is no need for Netflix to reveal the number of times the series has been viewed because the series are sponsored by advertisers and therefore, is does not have an obligation towards the advertisers for revealing such numbers (Ebersole, 2013).

India has their own share on OTT platforms where the first dependent Indian OTT platform was BIGFLIX started by Reliance Entertainment in 2008; BIGFLIX immediately established itself as amongst the leading SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand) provider with 3.9 million registrations. It offered video content in categories such as feature films, short films, devotional, and movie trailers (India, 2017). This was followed by NexGTV in 2010 by Digivive, a group company of Media Matrix Worldwide which both provided the video on demand services and offered entertainment across multi-screen devices -mobile, tablets, laptop and PCs. (The Economic Times, 2016). Ditto TV was also one of the first online content aggregators to create which were integrated services with ZEE TV in 2012 (DNA, 2018). Another game changer which aggressively changed the market of OTT platforms in India is Sony Liv, launched in 2013 by Sony Pictures Networks India Private Limited. This allowed users to access to wide variety of Sports, TV Shows and Music, LIV Kids, LIV FIT etc. SonyLIV also launched India's first-ever original web series exclusively for the online platform. With #LoveBytes, in 2015, it became the country's first digital video-on-demand (VOD) platform to introduce an innovation of this nature (Sony Liv, n.d.). In India, Amazon was launched in 2016 and Netflix too was launched in the same year. Other popular paid OTT subscription platforms are Disney + Hotstar, Zee 5, Voot and SonyLIV. The web series in Indian OTT platforms often deal with bold and audacious content, hence in 2021 Indian government has passed a self-regulatory law on the contents of web series which would offer warnings and suitability to audiences of different ages (Dhiman, 2023). The web series in India is popular among the Indian audience owing to its content and availability of internet (Gupta, 2021).

There has been a steep rise in the number of availabilities of OTT platforms in India. Across 40 OTT platforms in India according to Mehta (2019) the Indian OTT video market comprises of 424 million users in 2023 and 119 million under paid OTT subscription-based platform in India (Vidya, 2023). Indian OTT market comprises of both Indian and international platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Indian services like Hotstar, ZEE5, VOOT, Eros Now and ALTBalaji etc (Mehta, 2019). The OTT market generates revenue through advertising on free platforms providing contents. These advertising-led platforms are a Rs.4, 500 crore industry compared to Rs.1, 500 crore for subscription services which are incidentally growing faster. The rise of the OTT platforms has changed the market for TV viewership drastically and this may be fatal and disruptive for both cable and DTH Operators. As per the Boston Consulting Group (2018) report, about 80 per cent of consumers in India have up to three video/OTT apps on their smart phones. By 2022, India was forecasted to have 840 million internet users which is 60% of the population and 829 million networked smart phone devices which will account for 38% of the total population (Cisco Systems, 2018).The study by Chattopadhyay (2020) indicates that web series are popular amongst the youth in India, who engages in the platform through web series. However, they are also subjugated to advertisements creating unnecessary needs and wants amongst the youth impacting their psychological space.

The recent report by PWC (Price Waterhouse Coopers) a global accounting firm has released a report where India's video streaming industry is at a growth of CAGR 21.82% which is estimated to reach Rs.11,977 crore by 2023. The Over-the Top video industry will record the highest growth rate among all segments. India is the tenth largest market for OTT in the world with overall revenue standing at Rs. 4,462 crores.

Subscription-based video-on-demand platforms are projected to grow at a CAGR of 22.6% to reach Rs. 10,712 crores between 2018-2023 (Livemint, 2019, para 1 & 9)

According to the Eros Now – KPMG report, the finding showed the average viewing time by an Indian is approximately 70 minutes on day. The viewers are accessing more than 2.5 platforms where movies are the preferred choice for smart TV and larger screens. Almost 96 per cent of the viewers preferred Eros Now on large screen compared to 92 per cent for Netflix and 89 per cent for Disney Hotstar. 30 per cent of the respondents prefer watching movies on OTT platforms (Sify Finance, 2019. para 1). As these tailor-made media content responds to the growing consumer demand for more flexibility and lower prices, the youth are preferring to watch content over the internet than on television leading to “*cord-cutting*” (Baccarne, et al., 2013: p. 45) of cable TV (Baccarne, et al., 2013). In the changing age of digital technology and the mushrooming of the various and availability of technology, network services like Hulu and Hotstar has more reliance on expanding their content to their audience via the web (Esler, 2016).

In India, there were nine films which were released in 2020 exclusively on OTT platforms from Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ Hotstar and Zee 5 from March, 2020 to June, 2020. The makers of these films opted for digital release owing to the pandemic COVID-19 (Sharma, 2020). Along with them, there were ten other films which opted for digital release in the OTT platforms, including films from Bollywood stars (Chulet, 2020).

Research by Neilson (2016) has shown that subscriber who have access to SVOD and VODs spend less time in television. The growth of video-on-demand (VOD) is exponential giving the viewer the leash on their viewing choices as they can dictate

their own content, time and have greater control over their choices unlike the traditional television programs and services. The report by CISCO states that in 2023 India has 692 active internet users (Tambe & Jain, 2023).

1.3. Crime Genre in the Web Series

Crime series have evolved as a source of popular culture entertainment. It has been able to develop into a popular genre. Through crime stories; audience derives pleasures from watching stories about murder or other dreadful and shocking acts. This evokes and sets off a powerful emotion among the audience which is fear. Media has always carried stories of crime and punishment which play a central role in the story-telling matrix of most cultures. No matter what the audiences' intentions and motivations are, crime stories and drama series are immensely popular (Turnbull, 2010).

According to the study of Koravi et al. (2019) it was found out that an average, time spent by respondents on watching web series shows on internet shows 3-6 hours daily and the factors attracting them to watch the shows are funny, bad words and dialogues, bad jokes, violence, intimate scenes followed by lavish lifestyles shows in web series. The analysis also showed that 55% of the web series viewers agreed that the web series have established the feeling of diffidence among the viewers. They also analyzed that extreme violence and aggression portrayed in these web series are affecting the youths in their real lives. After watching the web series, 50% of the viewers have admitted to perceive crime to be similar to its portrayal in the web series.

The crime series have the surge in the visibility as superior content in crime shows due to the online platforms like Netflix, HBO and Amazon which have created an

increase in the online distribution of content as the narrative of the crime stories are changing due to the popularity of the online platforms (Russo & Steenberg, 2016).

1.4. Statement of the Problem

The global content approach of the Indian Original web series has widened the appeal of viewers with increase in the number of internet connections and OTT platforms in India. Representations of ethnicity, sexuality and socio-economic background of the people have been traced in television studies. However, the research gap states the stereotyped representation of shaping individual and collective identities of social role players seen from the perspective of heroes, victims, and villains. The ethnicity, sexuality, and socio-economic background of the social roles players in identifying the relationship between crime and identity have also been addressed.

This study has also addressed the creation of us and them as centers and peripheries in the crime genre web series in India. The representations and labelling of social roles have been addressed in these web series through the portrayal of these roles in terms of power, control, discrimination and authority. It has also delved onto the power behind creating these identities and to find a pattern for outlining of social roles.

1.5. Social Significance of the Study

The convergence phenomenon has led to the burgeoning of OTT platforms in India and abroad. As more users are switching over to the online video streaming OTT platforms, the emergence of web series has been widespread across free and paid platforms. These web series often showcased a bold and socially defying theme, which provides social significances. The web series have been delving into contents which otherwise the traditional media may not adopt and adhere to

Crime genre web series has made a significant mark in the OTT platforms. Hence, the transmedia approach of storytelling with platforms and study indulging into crime genre content provides significant relevance to the society. Approaching the study through identity and centers and peripheries, this study finds its relevance through the representation and labelling of social role players within the social structure. The formation of identity and the creation of us and them in the web series, may add value to social significance of the study, which has shaped the individual and collective identities of people belonging to ethnic minority, socio-economic background and sexuality. This study has been approached through the lens of Critical Realism paradigm that sparks the attention through representations of crime and identity of heroes, victims and villains.

1. 6. Aims

The aim of this research is to study the identity of the characterization of affective role players in the Indian crime genre web series across various OTT platforms and also to analyse the stereotyped representation of the ethnic communities in it.

1. 7. Research Questions

- Is there a significant pattern followed in outlining the key roles in the web series?
- Does the web series have any portrayal of ethnic groups through the discriminatory lens?
- Has the identity of any ethnic groups been stereotyped in the web series?

- Is there a relation between crime, identity and portrayal of ethnicity, sexuality and socio- economic class?

1.8. Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analysis of the identity associated with the victims, villains and heroes through the lens of ethnicity, sexuality and socio-economic background.

The other specific objectives are:

- understand how these web series are shaping individual and collective identities.
- examine how these web series are creating centers and peripheries of ethnic group in a social circle.
- ascertain the interrelationship between crime and identity relating to socio-economic, ethnicity and sexuality of the role players.
- determine patterns in representation of social roles in the web series.

1.9.Theoretical Framework

Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) puts across that a theory suggest innumerable relationships between different concepts. Theories can therefore lead to the constructions of the favoured outcomes of the research which the researcher aims at. Through the review of literature, there has been a significant amount of study on Television series like transcultural identity in crime shows Hansen et al. (2018), portrayal of race and crime (Dixon et. al (2003), crime drama and national identity

(Sharp, 2020) but very less has been used in web series using Representation Theory and Labelling Theory.

Hence, this research has undertaken Stuart Hall's Representation Theory and H.S Becker's Labelling Theory because the study focuses on crime and identity on Hindi web series in India. This has added new dimension to an existing phenomenon with a different perspective from the researcher.

a) Representation Theory

Representations have always been a significant part of language and cultural studies. This study will focus on the Representation Theory by Stuart Hall in understanding the language and codes of power, meaning of derived from it and how they operate as a representational system. The word representation can be defined as something which is symbolic, has a stance, is an example of and can be used as an alternative to provide, generate and create various meanings and how one can make sense of the meanings within the language used. The use of qualitative research on social science has been an effective method in understanding and analysing the information conveyed through the language and behaviours. Identity and their representations in media have been a subject which has been studied in the academics for a long period of time. However, as the media converges and transforms, there will always be a new identity discourse which needs to be analyzed and researched. The meaning of representations can change and mean according to the context and thus this will also affect the process and work of representation. Representations give meaning to things through language and therefore the complex processes of representations of our thoughts are determined and meanings are derived out it. Representation focuses on the three approaches of theories are reflective, intentional and constructionist (Hall,

1997a). Due to the evolution of media and its discourse, identity can thus be seen as a production which is developing, incomplete and in progressive which is developed “*within and never outside of representation*” (Hall, 1989: p.68).

Images play a substantial role in the analysis of the language used, visual images along with the text determines the “*preferred meaning*” as Hall (1997b: p.228) describes it in his work, where one words and visuals can generate meanings based on the what is meant the best by the producer of the language. The various connotations attached to the meanings can represent several ideas of representation of ethnic minorities. At times, these minorities are presented with the connotation of contrasting, radical or having dissimilar ideologies because those representations gather immediate attention across borders although they may be presented in a raw and derogatory manner. But sometimes the ethnic minorities are presented both in a positive manner as well as negative manner where they are both denoting (as and when events are produced) and connoting (where meanings or the message as sent) at the same time. Yet, the racial distinction of us and them becomes apparent in the representation of images. Hall’s Representation Theory has been used in this research to showcase the centers and peripheries within the discourse. The theory has been applied while analysing the representations of ethnic minority groups through the lens of religion, gender, caste and socio-economic status.

As Stuart Hall (Hall, 1997, as cited in Morley, 2019) talks about addressing changing relations of representations in a distinct phase and ushering of the new phase, the shift is thought of in terms of change from a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself. As language has its existence much before an individual or group, it helps to position an individual during a discourse. Discourse of identity of the self and the other, of individual and collective, of the subject and

objects are based using the logic of identity (Morley, 2019). The study has focused using Stuart Hall's Representation theory, focusing on the changing relationship patterns of the heroes, victims and villains as their identity shifts owing to socio-economic status giving rise to collective and individual identities.

Race, gender, age, social class, places of origin play an important role in determining the representation of offenders. As much as race, social class is important, a study by Barlow et al. (1995), noted that crime and its offenders mostly belong to lower social class status and find prominence mostly when upper class people are involved in crimes. While addressing crime in news, there has always been an ideological explanation about how people from upper social class specialists lay and create public opinions about crimes. The upper-class people project their image in a manner where they have the onus of protecting and uplifting the morals and values the society and hence in order to bring their ideas within the paradigm of the discourse, they have created principles which fit and describe their narrative. They establish a generalised way of narratives which they represent on behalf of the whole nation through the media (Hall et al., 1978). This study shall look to establish through the theories that crime and socio-economic conditions are inter-related to each other. The discrimination of lower social class people by upper caste has been addressed through the representation theory.

The study associates the representations of identity regarding the creation of centers and peripheries while associating with hostility between two nations India and Pakistan. As put across by Mitra (2013) sharing the same socio, cultural and political history, as the India-Pakistan relationship is volatile, complex where the bruises of the 1947 partition are still unhealed. Since then, the borders have not only existed

physically but there has been an important existence of “*mental borders*” (Tripathi & Raghuvanshi, 2020: p.2).Hence, mental borders give rise to various “*mental processes and patterns*” (Tripathi & Raghuvanshi, 2020: p.5).There have been various representations of hostility between India and Pakistan through textbooks and especially films. Hence, visual representations of these antagonism against each other to the mass audience has led to the construction of ideas as each other’s strengthening the aggression towards each other bringing in anger ending up in elevating the use of one group in contrast to othering of the other group (Tripathi & Raghuvanshi, 2020).

The religion-based divide in India and Pakistan in terms of Hindu and Muslim during partition has made the gap wide as both nations struggle to create centers of power amongst themselves as they create periphery of portraying their dominance over each other. The creation of us and them between the two nations and the othering gets manifested to insecurities in terms of national identity, national security and occupying of territory which gets promoted through the media and spreading information to the public (Chaturvedi, 2002).

This study relates to Althusser (Althusser, 1969, as cited in Hall, 1985) who states that the dominant ideology does not come from a single source. It is an outcome of the collective unconscious minds involved in the production and generations of meanings and its representations and how they construct ideas about machineries in the world. The study shows the representations of the police and the army have been categorized as the “*repressive*” (Hall, 1985: p.99) and churches, media, unions are categorised “*ideological*” (Hall, 1985: p.99) state machineries. The ideologies are represented by media and its discourse. Its frequent occurrence in the social sites embeds these ideologies as materialistic texts. In relation to what Hall argues that any dominant or subordinated ideologies cannot be representative of the multifaceted

discourse in the evolving social structures (Hall, 1985), the study has focused on the representations of dominant and subordinated ideologies in the text. Therefore, the study highlights the dominant social structures which exist as repressive and ideological state machineries determining the power relationships in the society.

The study reflects on the existing freedom in the presence of media biases with state-controlled media existing in the social structure affects the ideological reproduction based on individual's actions and social background. The system of representation occurs in two parts- "*mental representations*" (Hall, 2020: p.75) and conceptual map. The mental representations are those that constitute the interpretations of the world and its meanings around us that help us to differentiate between reality and fiction. The conceptual map interprets the environment and situation in similar manner due to the belongingness of similar culture and its interpretation of the world. The study will thus establish connection between the mental and conceptual with the help of shared language to interpret its meaning through signs and symbols in a systematized and categorised manner interrelationship to each other can be defined as representation (Hall, 2020).

Opposing Foucault's (Foucault, n.d, as cited in Hall 1985), idea of the state that the state was a single entity performing the role in an integrated manner consisting of ruling class, cannot be held true in modern times. The state and its representations have various roles to play which can consist of various class, often represented by political practices and ideologies which brings helps in the construction of social and political practices enabling the spreading and changing practices of power which transcends into the rule and dominance exercised on specific class and groups within the social structure as stated by Hall (1985). Similarly, Hall (2006) also states that the conceptualization of power and politics are not always dominant on the broad ideas

but have their meanings hidden in the representations. It is but given, that power, politics, and culture are intertwined. However, power can be constituted in such a way that its connection to culture is rendered insignificant. Power if defined as a floating signifier leaves it upon the individual to exercise it or not, and not in the cultural milieu. Using the Representation Theory by Stuart Hall, this study helped to outline and analyse the individual and collective identities of various ethnic groups, the stereotyped representations and portrayal of ethnicity, sexuality, and socio-economic class in the study. The focus of the study remains to define the representations and portrayal of centers and peripheries of ethnic group as represented by the Representation Theory.

The digital media has given the voice to the margins of the other communities. Hence, their representations in the media are extremely important to give a different perspective about the others. The assessment of the research objective and questions has therefore been approached with the contents produced within each media that has a specific reason, which becomes extremely important in producing the narratives of the other communities (Fürsich, 2010). The one who constantly keeps people stimulated and agitated over an issue shown by the media has been labelled as terroristhas been painted as the ultimate enemy of the state. Media aggravates these images so that these so-called terrorists are always the other who created turbulence and instability in the states (Said, 1978). Jedlowski and Thomas (2017) articulate that media plays an important role which constructs collective identities. It is deeply integrated with the power and social structures while it represents the othering while formulating these collective identities. The study, thus approaches the representations of terrorists as conferred by Said (1978) and Jedlowski and Thomas (2017) and also see the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the web series with stereotyped lens.

Similarly, it will approach the representations of individual and collective identities that form a pattern as social role players of heroes, victims, and villains in the web series.

b) Labelling Theory

The Labelling Theory has its origin in the 1960s when Emile Durkheim (Durkheim, 1985, as cited in Berk, 2015) introduced the study of deviance on suicide. He established that there is a relationship between the society and the rates of suicide which had the concepts of collective representations and conscience with reference to social structure and functions. Deviance has been referred to crime, delinquency, suicide alcoholism, and other norm-violating behavior. Durkheim has basically studied the functions of society for studying the crime or punishment which determine to help maintain social order in the society fostering cohesion in the society. The early works of Tannenbaum (Tannenbaum,1938 as cited in Berk, 2015), Lemert (Lemert, 1951, as cited in Berk, 2015), Becker (Becker,1963,as cited in Berk, 2015), Goffman (Goffman, 1961,1963,as cited in Berk, 2015), Scheff (Scheff, 1966, as cited in Berk, 2015) has brought about distinction of the Labelling Theory from1938 to 1967 (Berk,2015). The major contributors of Labelling Theory are in the works of Howard S. Becker in 1964, Edwin Lemert in 1951 and Herbert Blumer in 1969. Only after the 1960s it gained prominence where the structural divide was evident in the study of crime (Triplett &Upton, 2015)

This study will focus on Howard.S Becker's Labelling Theory of 1963. The creation of centers and peripheries will be looked upon by using the Labelling Theory in this study. As per the theory, the reaction of the society to crime might serve as a stepping stone in the development of a criminal career of an individual (Becker, 1963).

Therefore, this study will look at crime and its relationship with the social role players of heroes, victims, and villains in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and sexuality. The portrayal of various crimes through labelling of criminals outlines the discriminatory lens upon ethnic minority groups. This study will hence focus on the labelling of ethnic minorities.

Different groups have different judgments about things. The functioning of the society will either hinder or achieve the purpose of the groups. Becker (1963) looks at deviance from the social point of view which may impose the rules to be obeyed and make sure the norms have not been violated. The labelling of criminals will be studied as stated by Becker (1963) that different groups cannot be made and categorized into labelled categories of groups who have committed or violated more crime and less crime because labeling is not watertight. Since the groups fall into homogeneity, it becomes difficult to categorize them as offenders who may have violated certain rules.

The term outsiders refer those people who break the rules according to the normalmembers of the group. But the term outsider itself creates a separate meaning in the sociological context because it can also be that the same person who made the rule can be the one who is deviant to break the same rule. Furthermore, the act of Labeling is carried out by "*moral entrepreneurs*" (Becker, 1963: p.147) where the acts of deviants are not clearly defined. This study has based sexuality, ethnicity, and socio-economic status with labelling of individuals as outsider and insider creating centers and peripheries in the social structure as proposed by Becker (1963).

Basing Hubert M. Ballock's concept (Ballock, 1967, as cited in Bontrager et al., 2005), who established linkage and relationship between crime and minority, ethnic

groups came in the form of power threat in 1967. The increasing crime was often associated with the racial discrimination that often had its roots in the social class. Therefore, they have more chances of being labelled as the other who creates problems within the society (Bontrager et al., 2005). This study has focused on studying the relationship between crime and ethnic minority group as proposed by Bontrager et al. (2005), based on power threat while it comes to demonstrate power and dominance in the society.

The labelling narrative of how one group represents the other tries to create a general approach of labelling of the entire representations of ethnic communities (Gurak, 1996). This study has focused on the narrative of one ethnic group to others as they form opinions in creating centers and peripheries of these ethnic minorities. When an individual is labelled or classified as a deviant, they start facing stereotype and stigma which is often negative and this can increase in the behaviour of deviance and their criminal behaviour becomes more persistently labelled (Bernburg, 2019).

This study has focused on the labeling by others as a criminal offender as an individual or collectively that has activated an aberrant behaviour based on the offenders' prior experiences of deviance before being a criminal. The criminal publicity of labelling in the form of punishment has led to naming and shaming of alleged wrongdoers in the name of justice of shaming sanctions. This public shaming of criminals has been done as an act of punishment for punitive reasons (Hadjimatheou, 2016).

As collective identities are basically created to belong to a group as stated by Ashmore et al. (2004), labelling theory as it offers a clear approach on the role of social labeling in building up crime and deviance between an individual and group in

the formation of collective actions and approach towards creating centers and peripheries in the social structure. The study will thus emphasise on labelling of individual and collective identities that have defied the laws of the society and hence are subjected to punishment.

1.10. Operational Definitions

- **OTT- Over-the Top Television-**Streaming of content in terms of audios, videos and texts over internet accessed through electronic devices like phones, tablets, computers, television etc. (Taylor,2019)
- **Web Series-** Watching television series on computer with the help of internet, now commonly called as web series (Willaims,2012)
- **Crime:** The definition of crime in this study has focused Foucault (1975) any act of violence and crime from one to another is a display of power. It moulds a person's will to accomplish things he would not have done otherwise.
- **Identity:** As per the definition of (Appiah, 2002) identity has been defined as ethnical core, making it the most essential components in human beings. It is important that we identify as men, women, homosexual, gay, straight, or as people belonging from different countries and races.
- **Heroes:** Heroes are strong and well- intentioned and they are people who must set things right and protect others as defined by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018). However, the heroes in this study have been seen through the lens of police,security forces and intelligence agencies in India as heroes who possess the heroic symbols of common men with valour, moral, strength, virility in

order to safeguard the world as defined by Terpstra and Salet (2020), Lalwani and Gayner (2020), Dixit (2019) and Shrivastava (2013).

- **Victims:** The victim is seen as someone who was both responsible for the crisis and salvages the community from the evil. Victims has been defined as people who are weak and is harmed, injured, killed, hurt or suffered because of actions of someone as a victim of crime according to Jasper et al. (2018).
- **Villains:** Villains are malicious, spiteful, dubious, evil, ill- intentioned and often strong enough to create nuisance and harm others (Jasper et al.,2018)
- **Terrorism:** Terrorism has been described as a well-organized and strategic violence against specific part of the society. The acts of terrorism have been widely associated with the conflicts in ideology and political motives by a group or an individual to achieve power. Individuals who are committing acts of terrorism are often motivated and act as state machinery during the time of war or peace as defined by Bassiouni (1981).
- **Corruption:** Corruption can be referred to as an illegitimate exchange of resources involving the abuse of public responsibility for private ends as stated by Jain (2001)
- **Religious Violence:** As Girard (1977) puts across that human desires does not only result in love, but results in fights too. The religion is a ritual, as it is performed as an act of purification to achieve sanctity and destroy the evil bearers. The core ritual practice of religion is a process of scapegoat mechanism which snowballs against one another to create war against groups.

- **Ethnicity:** According to the definition by Berthoud (1998) the ethnic groups are defined with the lineage they share creating commonality amongst the group members. Ethnicity is the boundary that creates the us and them making it prominently distinct with gender and class. Ethnic groups are also the prevailing connections, religion and shared historical contexts related to geographical places between the group members.
- **Socio Economic Status:** As Tajfel (1974) defines, the social economic status determines different kinds of social behavior among individuals. The stratification of these social groups leads the individuals from interpersonal patterns towards intergroup patterns.
- **Sexuality:** This study will use the definition by Macleod and McCabe (2020), that identifies sexuality as a part of influences from religion, class, ethnicity which is affected by the societal relationships including socio-economic, religious, political, psychological and gender identities prevalent in individual and group likewise.
- **Centers and Peripheries:** Centers and peripheries have been defined through the lens of othering of ethnic minority groups and their socio-economic status, sexuality place of origin, and religion. It has also been defined through exercising power and dominance on the weak by the powerful as they discriminate the weak through the creation of us and them (Langholm, 1971, Schneider et al., 2022, Day, 2018).

Chapter - 2

2. Review of Literature

This chapter has used the thematic style of review of literature for a cohesive and consistent review of literature between the literatures. The thematic review has helped to organize the literature and conceptualise the connoted and implied meanings of the texts. This chapter has been divided into various themes which have been used for analytical purpose in the subsequent chapters. The review of literature has been segregated into the globalisation and OTT platforms, web series as the new story tellers, crime and its representations in crime web series and identity of heroes, villains and victims.

2.1. Globalisation and OTT platforms

McLuhan (1964) popularized the term “*global village*” (McLuhan, 1964: p106). He projected on how the broadcasting of information and the telecommunications networks can create the global platform for exchange of information and ideas. He states that the communication of people will start becoming more personal as technologies advances. Even in times before the internet, McLuhan has mentioned that this global village structure will make people experience new values and social structure within the culture of communication. As early as 1983, Pool de Sola (1983) had aptly pointed out that electronic communication was now becoming less restricted, due the various merging or converging of technologies. Technology defined the way mass communication was approached, as the medium which had a fixed transmission of information could now transmit through other different ways of transmissions too. News which was widely under the newspaper now was broadcasted

over television and radio. The telephone lines operated as a transmission of telegraph and facsimile due to the dual nature of the purpose it was able to serve.

Iosifidis and Hamelink (2011) explain that the phenomenon of globalization in the past few decades have allowed the transformations of social life. With integrated communication pattern where the print, digital, broadcasting and telecommunication sectors have merged, the convergence of these technologies have allowed individuals to communicate on a global platform. He mentions about various level of convergence as follows:

a) Technological Convergence:

These technological convergences have helped to transport all types of data benefitting consumers by all-in-one broadcasting of program content on their devices. The digitization made interactive digital broadcasting with high-speed internet connections. The convergence of cable TV to internet, newspaper to online, mails to emails phone to smart phones and radio to webcasting and now online streaming in computers, TV and smart phones have all been a part of the technological advancements in which the humans communicate.

b) Industry Convergence:

As the technology advances, the traditional industries will also be affected by the Information and technology convergence. Therefore, these industries undergo structural changes which will help them to either retain or build up their positions in the market. The various joint ventures of corporate and media giants have provided a market dominated by just few multinational corporations. Becoming the major

players, the cut throat competition to both create and publish their own content leads to cultural imperialism.

c) Market Convergence:

As the mergers and acquisitions continue between firms and companies, the flexibility of the digital platforms enables better production, distribution and consumption of the content. The development of the internet brings in a lot of advancement for all platforms.

d) Publisher- user convergence:

The blurring boundaries between media producers and consumers have activated a new form of content creation due to the potential and rise of the internet. People can create, participate, publish, and distribute their own content form anywhere and it is viewed by anyone at any time. The terms “*prosumer (producer + consumer)*” (Iosifidis & Hamelink, 2011: p.187) and “*prosumption (production + consumption)*” (Iosifidis & Hamelink, 2011: p.187) are used to describe new forms of business approach (Iosifidis & Hamelink, 2011)

Television has been undergoing technological changes ever since its introduction. Television has always been seen as a medium of “*sharedness*” (Katz, 2009: p.7) and that of nation building and togetherness through the broadcasting of multiple channels over a network with variety of choices. No other medium has been able to replace the fireplace and bringing together a family in one room like the television (Katz, 2009).

Although the cable and Direct to Home (DTH) have their increasing number of subscribers, the services offered by them provides to the same market and

geographical locations delivering the content via the same medium, the television set. The globalization of television industries via the usage of web creating content has global appeal. The mergers and acquisitions of various and prominent networks and companies such as Disney, Sony, ViaCom 18, and Time Warner etc have become a part of the global television system who dictates the media content all over the world (Burroughs & Rugg, 2014). As Arsenault and Castells (2008) have explained the term global media is typically used to describe the multi-media corporations with the greatest revenue and the largest diversified holdings in multiple regions and countries around the world. Some media businesses maintain a stronger international presence than others. However global media organizations are not truly global, as local media organizations are not truly local. What is global is the networked organization of media companies.

Jenkins (2006), talks about the “*convergence culture*” Jenkins (2006: p.2) as the technological phenomenon rather than cultural or social, where traditional media and new media come together in disseminating information to its consumers. The consumers in the technological convergence have the tendency to shift unpredictably from one media to other enabling them to get information from everywhere and anywhere they find it convenient from. The corporate media house focus on popular and ordinary medium making it simpler to circulate and distribute. Hence, convergence culture is a representation of the cultural shift seen in the light of the convergence of technologies.

Television being a conservative medium with regards to content, the medium is recycling and introducing new and innovative story telling methods through introduction of television series in the network. Television series has the nature of

continuity which does not have an episodic closure at the end making it a lengthy and winding process which has a multiple concurring development of plots simultaneously. However, this technique established the television series to garner faithful and loyal viewers for a long period with cliffhangers (Allrath & Gymnich 2005). The beginning of the 1990s saw the digitization which led to the transformation in the distribution, media policies, technologies and economics of television. The unrestricted sharing of information between various systems and other technologies helped television led it to the convergence phenomenon which ushered in a major change in the media environment (Mikos 2016).

The entertainment industry has a far-reaching integration between the traditional broadcast content and broadcast delivery platforms. This has further enhanced the global reach, generation of more user-based content as the online market has created new opportunities for new players. The introduction of Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu etc have become the new aggregators which now allows broadcasters and TV producers to go directly to their consumers bypassing the traditional network gatekeeper and access providers (Marshall & Venturini, 2012).

With the evolution and the proliferation of the video streaming services, the logic behind the distribution of television service is changing. As users are more attracted towards the streaming services, they are becoming more accustomed to a unique and distinct way of watching TV is characterized by an interactive selection of algorithmically curated catalogues of content presented to them (Lobato 2017). Web series are changing the concept of how audience watch the content as they now can

which is no longer determined by constraints of time and place of the television programs (Taylor 2015).

In India, an average daily television viewing time per person is six hours in India in 2022 (Basuroy, 2019b). Today, Indian television industry has more than 900 channels across various regions and genres. The expansion of television has extended to online streaming too as a greater number of households are now connected to the internet. Out of the total revenue, 40 per cent is attributable to advertising and 60 per cent to distribution and subscription services (Basuroy, 2023c). The online digital market in India is valued to be over 500 billion in 2022, where an average Indian spends approximately six hours online daily (Basuroy, 2023d).

India is among the largest terrestrial networks in the world where the choice of channels and content hugely varies from National to regional. Both the urban and the rural India have viewers who surge a considerable amount of time on television. Facilitating the availability of television programs over the convergence and the global distribution of integrated network convergence between media and telecommunications has made the customers customize their television viewing over mobile platforms (Waterman, et al., 2012).

The traditional network services have adopted OTT platforms easier and inexpensive measures to broadcast the content. The democratization in the content creation leading to the freedom of creating curated contents for its audience has been the niche function of OTT platforms in India. The contents in the Indian OTT platforms are often produced in the global standards to cater to wider global audience in local or regional languages, mostly through subscription-based platforms or advertisement powered online streaming platforms. The politics of economy has helped emerge

Indian OTT platforms like Zee and ALT Balaji to expand their revenues teaming up with major industries like Reliance and Eros International Media to produce and distribute original contents in the global diaspora (Kamei, 2019).

The proliferation of OTT platforms in India has been due to the rise of mobile internet by Reliance Jio, own by Ambani as it led to affordable internet subscription plans. At similar times, the launch of 3G and 4G mobile network subscriptions with handheld devices like mobile phones added more to its explosions. The network broadcasters too upload their channel's videos on YouTube. YouTube was dominantly playing non-coherent, random and haphazard content in their streaming platforms which were challenged by systematic, all-in-one package subscription-based OTT services. The global OTT platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix, Disney+Hotstar soon made their presence in the Indian OTT market catering both to regional, national and international audience through their original curated contents (Menon, 2022).

2.2. Web Series as the New Story Tellers

The transformation from the traditional television viewing of televising programs, series and shows to watching the content via web led to web television. Web television was watching television series on the computer. However, now as the videos stream online, this came to be popularly known as web TV series or commonly called as web series (Willaims, 2012).

The rapidly changing structure in the industries and audience's preferred choice to watch new and captivating stories in the streaming platforms has no doubt been a noticeable one. The difference in pattern of their screening is that television drama series follow the episode wisenarratives traditionally called as the drama series which

usually airs the episodes of the series on a weekly basis. What makes the web series more popular are the new narratives of storytelling which is devoid of government regulations, which means there are no censorship, self-regulation- viewer's discretion and advertiser's demand which somehow controls the content the audience watches (Hilmes, et al., 2014).

Jenkins (2006), popularised the term transmedia story telling. Transmedia storytelling is told among multiple media platforms, which flow across multiple media platforms. Every platform has a unique way of telling stories as the stories can be begin in films, with increased scope in television, novels, comics and develop into games. The OTT platforms are serving as the platform for the new comers and the Indian entertainment industry are booming with these web series. The web series are currently serving as breaking grounds for the newcomers and established actors with challenging roles. This was similar to what television serials did previously. Least explored genres on television soap operas like gang wars, crime, romantic comedies, thriller, horror, adult show gave new platforms for creating new production concept for more accepting Indian audience (Roy, 2019).

With the evolution and the proliferation of the video streaming services, the logic behind the distribution of television service is changing. As users are more attracted towards the streaming services, they are becoming more accustomed to a unique and distinct way of watching TV was characterized by an interactive selection of algorithmically curated catalogues of content presented to them (Lobato, 2017).

Web series are changing the concept of how audience watch the content as they now can giving them enough dictatorship over the access, timings, place and choice of contents and no longer be captured with the traditional viewing traditions of

compulsorily watching the television screen for a stipulated period of time determined by the television ranging from thirty to sixty minutes or whatever is convenient for the traditional broadcast companies (Taylor, 2015).

In India, the changing loyalty of audiences from television series to web series is due to the accessibility and convenience of the content available online across all technological devices owing to internet accessibility. The preference to watch web series is related to superior content factors than television series. The unpredicted commercial advertisements in the television series are also factors, where the audiences prefer subscription-based platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix and Disney + Hotstar (Gupta, 2021).

The attraction of Indian audiences to web series has been due to the original contents available through the OTT platforms. But, the industry of OTT platform in India stream contents where there is too much violence, crime and nudity in explicit manner (Kumari, 2020). The web series contents in India are often produced by adding local Indian narratives in the discourse. These series often fulfill the audience's satisfaction as they have a pliable story telling structure that adds up to the inquisitiveness of solving a complex story in one episode, leading the audiences to watch another resulting in binge watching. As the web series are not advertisement based, hence the contents are free of advertisement biasness which may give a different shape to the originality of the content. The freedom of speech and expression has attributed to creating bold contents treading the path of socio-cultural and ethnicities as the OTT platforms are free of censor board (Chattopadhyay, 2020).

2.3. Crime and its Representation in Crime Series

Although there are various definitions of crime, this study will focus on the definition of crime by Foucault (1975) who has discussed about power as a powerful relationship among people which shapes the action of another person. Any act of violence and crime from one to another is a display of power. It shapes an individual's will into doing things he may not have done otherwise. Foucault describes, police officers exercise severe penalties as reformists. Cruel penalties are imposed by the law, not because it is required but because it will serve as an example that the penalty's representation should be larger than the crime's interest. When the stability of the power of the state becomes unstable, through dominance, the state tries to re-establish the power. As all human relationships have the greed for power, this ideology spreads throughout the society. The extreme display of force and physical violence instigate the strategy of fear and horror and make people aware of the presence of the ultimate sovereign. The ruthlessness, physical violence and public execution are only the reactivation of power of those who dared to oppose.

Durkheim & Halls (1984: p.31) views the property of crime and its essence has to be looked inside the "*intrinsic properties*" (Durkheim & Halls, 1984: p. 32) of the acts that has been restricted by law. Therefore, according to Durkheim, an act is illegal when it violates the collective consciousness's powerful, well-defined states. He has argued that every society comprises of certain norms which if deviated can result in punishment. Every society are structured and shaped through collective consciousness of the people in the society. These laws differ from one society to another thus resulting in different criminal laws and give different meaning to laws resulting in various conceptions about laws.

Sparks (1992) has critically analyzed that audience of the crime fiction in television series decodes the meanings of these crimes which influences their culture and perception about their fearfulness and sense of risk. He states that the crime series are thrilling. As television viewing is mostly in the privacy of our homes, the televised violence provides the distinctions between the private, political, and social order means that people fear in crime and violence. Sparks mentions that the consistent and incessant images of crime and policing develop a theme of how the real display of crime in public and private viewing of crime on television affects the culture which is associated with fear, concern and pursuit for safety develops among the viewers. The televised crime affects the viewers in differentiating between the television violence and social reality and reduces the public fear of crime as programs always end with a positive resolution towards the end. On the other hand, as argued by Eschholzet al. (2003) the television representations of crime increase the fear of crime because the response of the viewers is most likely to shape their social, cultural, and personal viewing experiences.

The social responses towards crime and the principles focus on the societal perspective about the structure of crimes and criminal justice. The academic of criminology no longer defines the criminology discourse in the society. This has been redefined with the various popular culture and various public policies which no longer refers to the academic understanding of the same. The popular culture of crime as a genre has been related to visuals, its symbols and connotations transmitted through mass media. Therefore, crime today needs to be understood in terms of how these popular cultures arbitrate the images and mass produce hence leading to cultural studies and cultural representations. The studies on criminology therefore, now talks about only one cultural product produced through the single industry, mainly the mass

media, which perpetuates the negative influence on its audiences irrespective of the medium (Garland, 2012).

Rafter and Brown (2011) put across their views that the various categories of popular crime discourses covered by film, television, internet, newspapers, and books cover more varieties of crime than the academic studies. The criminal discourses on these popular mediums deals largely with the ideological messages that are embedded in their messages and metaphors. This representation has direct impact and greater social significance than the academic discourses because it serves large audience on a mass scale.

In real life, the audiences do not come across as many crimes and violence, therefore, their primary exposure to violence basically comes via the media rather than their own experiences (Dominick, 1978). Mass media can be very influencing in educating the audiences about crime, criminal justice, or the legal system because they reach a wider audience at a time. However, mass media may only give them a glorified, entertainment packed representation of crime and not essentially educate the audience with true and accurate measures of how criminology works. It only induces the anxiety and unease by consistently producing distorted facts and knowledge which is far away from the reality (Lam, 2013).

Heath and Petraitis (1987) in their study have found out that there has been no direct relationship between the exposure of crime series and fear of crime, but there is a relationship between the exposures of crime series and the perception of crime. The over representation of the violent crime in the media, however influenced the audiences' fear of crime in the city and neighbourhood. The result also indicated that the fear of crime among women was higher than it was for men and the viewers who

exposed themselves to the crime series were often fearful of the urban settings than those who were not exposed to the crime series. Crime often happens when a criminal has long tried to subdue the emotional urge to commit an offence, but often emerges as more stronger form of protest when triggered through consistent societal pressures along with existing situations which is embedded in the psychological consciousness adding fuel to the fire in committing a crime (Clarke, 1983).

As crime has been depicted with a sense of deviance, often media provides and represents crime in the form of entertainment where the actors are performing and delivers a sense of terror, anxiety causes alarm but at the same time, it also provides and fulfils certain gratification in the audience as they use it in the form of diversion and relaxation. Crime dealing with poor people and their resistance to rise to the above has always found fascination amongst the audience (Mayr & Machin, 2012) .

When it comes to the reflection of terrorism in crime drama series, it has always been portrayed in terms of political violence, racial profiling, and motives within these crime series. These crime series develop a narrative where the terrorist acts are often suspected and pose a threat to national security packed with exciting and thrilling action-packed entertainment content. The crime dramas have picked up a distinctive narrative which deals with the caucus of political violence and the resolution of problem (Tasker, 2012). The definitions of terrorism have widely been defined as acts of war or violence of human actions often used in a disparaging and wilful approach, however, this study has taken terrorism through the lens of a nation as an act which suffices the nation's national, political, or ideological agendas as proposed by the state (Meisels, 2009).

The Indian web series have taken intricate topics of corruptions which talks about the corrupt system and pushes the audience to come out of the comfort zone (India Today, 2019). These Indian web series are delving deep into storytelling narrative where “*greed, corruption, politics and money*” (Express Web Desk, 2017: para 1) play in important role in telling the story about power play (Express Web Desk, 2017).

India, with its sheer diversity of religious faiths, provides a powerful expression of the overlapping of the religion with secularism. Thus, this overlapping of religion and secularism in the television dramas get enacted and performed in terms of stories, plots, characters, and the characters’ life worlds (Asthana, 2008). The representations of religion in media in the creation of us and them in the formation of identity add more biases for violence and conflict. This has been the case of Kashmir after 1990 insurgency, where “*Al Qaeda*” (Garner, 2013: p.42) a militant terrorist organization has been creating political and religious tension and conflicts through “*Mujahideen*” (Garner, 2013: p.422) in the name of Jihad. This also resulted in joining and support of other Muslim dominated countries like Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia, often uninvited, to safeguard the Muslim religious ideologies as establish it as single sovereign Muslim dominated states. The Mujahideen’s activities were backed by Pakistan especially in areas of “*Pakistan controlled Kashmir*” (Garner, 2013: p.426) determining the growth of organization like “*Harkat-ul- Mujahideen*” (Garner, 2013: p.426), “*Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)*” (Garner, 2013: p.426) and “*Jaish-e Mohammad*” (Garner, 2013: p.426). “*Jamaat*” (Khan ,2022b: p.442), the religious rebel group in Pakistan who saw practising of Islam as the core practice which will be included in the political ideologies for the formation of Muslim community (Khan ,2022b). The Islamist revolutionary organizations have often been found to use the

online platforms for making their statements and their news through videos streamed online which became more dominant after US and Afghanistan ties after 2001. The news of Islamic terrorists is covered through TV news channels like Al-Jazeera. Pakistan army's involvement in the political affairs has led to infringement of democracy while they arose with complete control over the economic front. For many decades, Pakistan, however has created a narrative for itself through media engagements and global media reporting regarding the state of affairs of Pakistan and its relationship with its army and Islamic terrorist organizations like "ISI" (Kuszevska,2022: p.92), "Taliban"(Kuszevska,2022: p.93) and "Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)"(Kuszevska,2022: p.95) and Pakistan army focused on Indian army for creating instability and ineffectiveness by force and violence. The partnership between ISI and Pakistan army propagates as the self-assigned protector of the country, promote propaganda against India, posing threat and manipulation and indicting the Kashmiri Muslims against for their rights in Indian administered "Jammu and Kashmir (JaJK)" (Kuszevska,2022: p. 85). After liberalisation of the media from the times of Pervez Musharraf, the military power in Pakistan grew strong that over the years, there was no political party which could exercise their power and rights freely and had to rest most of their power on Pakistani Military. By running a mainstream state-owned media was used by army to establish "state within a state" (Kuszevska,2022: p. 85) as they ridiculed the politicians of their country for corruption and inability to run the country (Kuszevska,2022). The religious conflicts in India, have been fuelled by political agendas of creating power centers. 90s saw the religious violence over demolition of mosque belonging to sixteenth century Babri Masjid, created by Barbur, the Mughal emperor by "Hindu fundamentalists" (Rudolph & Rudolph,1993: p.24) allegedly backed by Bhartiya Janata Dal Party

(BJP). The demolition was backed by the claim through well drafted reports and texts in media, school textbooks and advertisements. The claims of Hindus over accusing Mughals building temples over Lord Ram's sacred birth place in Ayodhya were fanned through increasing media exposure and political agendas. Ramayana, the television soap opera in Doordarshan in 1987, made a huge impact defining the religious discourse in the minds of the Indian audience which was soon followed by Mahabharata and Chanakya. Mass killing of 2500 people due to religious riots gave birth to hostility and hatred towards each other amongst Hindus and Muslim in India since then. The othering of Muslims began through poems, blaming them for killing cows and chopping off sacred pipal trees (Rudolph & Rudolph,1993).

The contest for occupational rights of Jammu and Kashmir has led to wars, continuous conflicts in the borders and increased terrorist activities in both India and Pakistan as vengeance and solutions to the problems. Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has often been blamed by Indian officials of bomb blasts and terror attacks. "*Lashkar-e-Taiba*" (Baezner, 2018: p.6) which is a Pakistani militant group been accused to have various terrorist attacks orchestrated in India through cyber terrorism. At the same time, India too has retaliated against the attacks on Pakistan through counter attacks and exposing the agents of crime from Pakistan (Baezner, 2018). As far as Kashmir is concerned, national identities are constructed while exposing people from other nationals who have malicious intentions to harm Kashmir are seen as criminals and to safeguard Kashmir from other territories are seen as an act of nationalism and patriotism (Szivak, 2021). Therefore, the national identity of Indians is associated as anti-national sentiments against Pakistan as a development towards Indian Nationalism. Therefore, any positive sentiment and positive action towards Pakistan will be claimed as being anti-national as Pakistan is treated as the

other nation who have been in act of war against India causing intentional harm and destruction to India and Pakistan holds similar opinions about India (Ansari & Riaz, 2020).

The negative labelling of Muslims as threat, criminals, possessing radical thoughts and behaviours, fear of Islam, association with terrorism has given rise to the concept of other that is existent in the communities which has warranted unnecessary attention and attraction of negative representations of Muslims as intimidations of the society (Welten & Abbas, 2021). Recruitment of terrorist although is largely dependent on the poor socio-economic factor, but some are also dependant on wealthy people who owing to the nation's political situation becomes a part of the terrorist activities. Terrorist movements are often funded by rich and powerful belonging to well-off socio-economic status where the minds of these powerful and rich people have been based of "*Islamic fundamentalism*" (Ehrlich & Liu, 2002: p.184) who believe to bring back their hegemony on economic social power and dominance in the world. At the same time, America has been trying to establish hegemony over the Middle East countries with oil extraction and thus having dominance in the world through it. Hence, the prejudiced notions about America in the eyes of Middle East and Muslim countries about the fight for power display came attack on America like 9/11 on 11th September in 2001 fuelled and masterminded by Osama Bin Laden who was a well-educated terrorist coming from affluent background (Ehrlich & Liu, 2002).

The Indian Muslims in Kashmir who are referred to as "*Mujahirs*" (Robinson, 2013: p.183) are seen as refugees in Kashmir, where they considered safeguarding Muslims and their rights and Islamic religion as their collective duty. This led to the establishment of Jihad in Kashmir as Kashmiri Jihadis, who saw fulfilling the duties

of “*Jihad*” (Robinson, 2013: p.187) as religious obligation. Jihad has been seen as a journey of formation from individual to collective identity of all the individuals who participated in the idealism of Jihad in Kashmir for attaining freedom of the Kashmiris. The “*Jihadis*” (Robinson, 2013: p.179) who died during the process were considered as martyrs. However, some concluded that they been subjugated to being victims through domination as a result of armed conflict against India which began in Kashmir. The suppression of Border Security Force (BSF) and Rashtriya Rifles (RR) to participate in helping them were either assaulted or arrested under doubt for supporting the armed conflict. This added to the anger and rage towards the Indian Army, where the Kashmiri Jihadists were now fighting to defend and guard their family members in the hands of victimization of Indian Army (Robinson, 2013). The population of Muslims have often seen to change the statistics of the demography in India and on a global level, where their increase in population had has been seen as the other. In the Indian context this has led to conversion of Hindu women to Islam by marrying them, to increase on the population of Muslim. It has also been observed that the increase in their population has often been related to growth and intensification of Jihad activities (Frydenlund & Leidig, 2022).

The violent radicalism of thought present amongst the terrorists are an outcome of radicalisation of Islam or “*Islamization*” (Nilsson, 2022: p.93) by those who have adopted Jihad and Jihadist ideas which largely comprises their religious identities. The conflicts in individuals regarding identity crisis has been fulfilled by the action taken by an individual to develop collective identity is to gain empathy, for a utopian idea of global dominance and presence of Muslim nations. The rationale behind adopting Jihadist idea is safeguarding the country from anti-Muslim forces which is inducted as a duty amongst the members of Jihad. However, if there is cognitive

dissonance in their existing belief, they either adopt the new beliefs or change their actions (Nilsson, 2022). The leaders of “*Al-Qaeda*” (Kurzman, 2018: p.54) leaders have often claimed that the recruitment of the terrorists whom they call volunteers are for being martyrs as they fight against the infidels working against the beliefs and fundamentalism of Jihad (Kurzman, 2018).

The debate on the killing of terrorists as a justifiable act has been based on both legal and moral grounds. While, the discussion on legal grounds have for this study has been side-lined, as it takes an approach on the moral grounds. The killing of terrorist as a part of counter-terrorism have often been under debate with Israel in 2006, followed by United States of America being one of the first nations to announce the use of target killing for anyone who can be an alleged threat. Therefore, on moral grounds the killing of terrorists has been justified on the grounds on imminent threat (Goppel, 2013).

As much as the Hindu mythology has been given importance, the Indian media is gradually drawing its narrative discourse towards “*Islamophobia*” (Siyech & Narain, 2018: p.182) as they normalise violence against Muslims leading religious violence in connection killing of Hindu’s sacred animal cow. Immanuel Kant (Kant, n.d, as cited in Siyech & Naitain, 2018) has rightfully justified violence as duty if done so for the purpose of safeguarding sacred beings and thoughts. The violence against the Muslims have been justified under the context of Jihadi fundamentalism, this is stigmatized and stereotyped for Muslim community in India as shown in the study by Siyech & Narain (2018). India’s vegetarians although in minority has an upper hand in leading the discourse about food where they discuss about meat as anything which does not contain vegetables, using the term “*non-vegetarian*” (Sathyamala, 2019:

p.879) caste system. With the political dominance of the “*BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party)*” (Sathyamala, 2019: p.879) has imposed on the production and consumption of cow, bulls and bullocks, as the upper caste Hindus known as Brahmins have reservations regarding Hindu’s sacred animal cow. Although the sanctity of meat-eating reservations was prevalent among the upper caste Hindus, the beef consumption was represented among the Dalits and lower caste Hindus, known as untouchables, were encouraged. This established the collective upper caste identities of vegetarian Hindus with moral superiority thus establishing hegemonic dominance on Hinduism (Sathyamala, 2019). Similarly, in Islam, Prophet Mohammed is seen as a symbol of triumph over atrocities and evil. Hence, the sacred sword of Prophet Mohammed named as “*Zulfiqar-e-Ali*” (Rizwan et al., 2013: p.131) has a symbolic significance of victory over evil (Rizwan et al., 2013).

Bernburg et al (2006) puts forward that the official labelling of the deviant group leads to have a major impact in the later course of life of these criminals. There are more chances of youngsters and teenagers falling under delinquency when their parents belong to lower socio-economic status, where there is lack of education and poor income. These youngsters often fail in future, as the parents do not have enough provisions to help them achieve in life (Cohen, 1955).

The society has the tendency to label the criminals as the outcasts who have no major contributions towards the society. Hence these people are pushed further back into the periphery which adds to the criminal activities and get drowned within them (Reed & Boppre, 2021). Social class determines how the gap between the hierarchies of the people who are classified in the society according to their socio economic conditions,

political affiliation , profession and educationally favoured are categorized on the basis of highest pyramid in the social class system (Vandrick, 2014).

Violence has deep rooted connection with force. Force can be seen as a catalytic agent for violence. The possibility of violence occurring can be traced to the freedom. It also has been related to aggressive frustration which can be seen amongst the offenders which has the connection with the societal class structures and their unfulfilled and unsatisfied desires which then reflects in the form of protests and violence (Schinkel, 2004).

It is inevitable to have a discourse in caste and caste-based crime in India as it is inseparable from the other facets of discourse in the formation of social structure. Caste in Indian context does not only depict social categorization but also economic status, political gains and societal status within the system (Bansal,2022).Castes in India have always been treated with the traits the community possesses and the violence related to it. Any crime or violence in India has therefore been associated to the lower caste groups for criminal activities and have been labelled as criminals for performing those activities. The identification of these caste-based criminals has always been subjective as there was no concrete evidence of the crime but rather the criminals were identified on the basis of suspicion for belonging to lower castes. The upper castes have been less effected when it comes to criminal activities (Kumar,2004). However, in India, caste has been politicized in the manner which has been associated with development, vote banks, reservations, and economic growth. The rise of lower caste activities especially the Dalits, from the 90s did bring in some turning events in the country, but the truth remains that the lower caste people are yet to turn the tables around for bringing around equality in terms of major development,

forming the government and economic stability. The lower castes are still suffering from the social stigma of the upper caste through untouchability and discrimination when the true reigns of diverse benefits are reserved by upper caste people (Mosse, 2018). The hegemony of upper caste communities in their ability to save themselves from the crimes than the lower caste communities is very evident in the Indian media context. The creation of others followed by discrimination and separation to lower caste employees by upper caste has found to be very distinct in work places. The othering of Dalits in the Indian media has made them gullible victims as the dominant narrative of the upper caste Hindus dominate the media content and side-lining the lower caste narratives (Kureel,2021). The discriminatory othering of employees by passing derogatory remarks, passing an attacking comment are based on the religious background of the employees. Employees belonging to Muslims communities have been more susceptible of the discrimination in the work place(Schneider et al., 2022).

The radicalised format of presentation of the crime and its related information represented by the media often gains a lot of attention than something which is rather simple and has good messages to related to. Crime to be specific has been represented in a manner which creates sensationalism resulting in grabbing the eyeballs in a literal manner where the power and ideology are the major players which validate the prevailing patterns in the society (Paul, 2003).

2.4. Identity of Heroes, Victims and Villains

Soanes & Hawker (2012) describes that identity is the fact of being who or what a person or a thing is. It is the characteristic that determines who or what a person or thing is and distinguishes them from others. As Jenkins (2008), defines, the principle idea of identity encompasses of anything that is existing on the earth which has

human connections to it. The overall concept of identity spreads from everything that generates meanings and can be applied for comparisons between what is similar or what is different.

Although various disciplines have been expanding the literature on the meanings, definitions, ethnicity, nationalism, linguistic, religion, gender, class and other identities, yet the social sciences are yet to bring about a common definition in the logical thoroughness for the common usage of the words (Abdelal, et al., 2006). Identity as such relating to ethnicity is only one of the vast components that constitute our identity which invariably varies according to different groups, individuals and contexts (Gandy, 2001).

Fearon (1999) aptly mentions that in political theory, the term identity has varied opinions of which consists of “*gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and culture*” (Fearon 1999: p.1). The idea and concept of identity remains intriguing as there has been varied dictionary meaning which defines the concept of identity. The social construction of the identity remains multifaceted, where the term has been developed into social and personal context. The category belonging to social identity determines the identity shared on social level which defines the norms of the societal relations and functions which deems to be suitable and accepted by the society. On the other hand, personal identity delves more on intimate level of the extension of one’s own personality and characteristics which they are closely associated with. When the social identity keeps changing between the behaviours of the society, personal identity finds hard to change with their notable traits which determines an individual’s self-worth and esteem.

This study will therefore focus on what Appiah (2002), has stated, that identities are ethnically central which makes them the most important elements in our lives. It is important for us to identify ourselves as men, women, and gay, straight or as a person belonging to different countries and race. As an individual, we need to live up to moral and ethical values and these obligations will also determine the value of life we live. Human beings are by the nature of the constitution of individual identities which later forms the social identities. These nature extents to the construction of self- social identities hence, leading to the construction of collective identities.

The social psychology of collective identity offers understandings of individual's group identification and thus finds inspirations to involve collective actions (Hunt & Benford, 2004). As we deal with identities, it becomes imperative to mention here the ethnic groups consisting of minorities. The existing definitions of ethnic group varies where (Alesina et al., 1999) have mentioned that language and religion are important when it comes to ethnic identification and preferences of the groups. Discussed by Fearon (2003), the ethnic group may consist of members of group who are connected through heritage and share common culture, practice similar religious beliefs, customs and traditions along with common linguistic features. They do not associate themselves with caste as they remain associated as a separate idea. The idea of collective identity constructs individual identity through the process of "*self-categorisation*"(Ashmore et al., 2004: p.84).Collective identification is first and foremost a declaration about categorization membership. Collective identity is "*a place in the social world.*"(Ashmore et al., 2004: p.340). A collective identity is one that is shared with a group of persons that share (or are thought to share) some characteristics (Ashmore et al., 2004). The members of the group first identify themselves as the members of group thus self-categorising themselves as a part of the

group which is already preconditioned. In order to self-belong to the group, one must feel a strong bond and foundation on the grounds to belong to the particular category of the group (Ashmore et al., 2004). As per the research by Bradford et al. (2014), social identities are often shaped with the previous encounters and experiences with the police and being labelled. The judged attitude of the police to offenders produces a label which further determines how the offender should be treated resulting in the subjectification of identities in the social structure.

Villains, victims, and heroes form an essential triad as apart of the myth, crime and fiction. Heroes are portrayed as strong and with good moral characters. Villains are also strong but they are malicious. The term victim comes from the Latin word “*victima*” (Van Dijk, 2020: p.74) which means a sacrificed animal. Victims are those who have been hurt by crime as defined by Van Dijk (2020). This study has taken the definition by Jasper et al. (2018) where victims are morally weak; therefore, they need to be shown sympathy and need to be offered protection by the heroes Villains can develop into heroes as they possess similar traits of hero being strong and invincible, possessing God-like characteristics but only lasting for a short period of a time. The changing of identities can occur in circumstantial variances due to change in the adaptation of institutionalised ideology (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018).

Heroes are strong and brave with good intentions and morals. They are the saviour of the world who possesses extraordinary skills, strength and virility beyond the possession of a normal human being. The positive qualities of the heroes have been differing as per the change in roles, from being virtuous, defending the weak, possessing orthodox views to existing rules and customs, self-sacrificing, kind and benevolent or simply being obliging. Heroes are helpful even without being

powerful, but possessing power helps them to succeed. Heroes are representative of the system of justice, hence in crime series, heroes will always have the responsibility of finding the resolution irrespective of the social structure, circumstances and power associations which are the crux of the crime and delinquency (Kort-Butler, 2012). The heroic activities of heroes in order to safeguard the honour and tradition of the nation have often been associated with patriotism as it becomes a part of their national identity (Guo, 1998).

In the context of crime, heroes consist of police as heroes as stated by Terpstra and Salet (2020) where they are known for their remarkable heroic deeds. India and its context to heroes and martyrs have their strong association with security forces as stated by Lalwani and Gayner (2020). The social construct of the police heroes has that been of someone who has all the heroic symbols of valour, moral, strength, virility in order to safeguard the world (Terpstra & Salet, 2020). The Indian Armed Forces are the Republic of India's military forces. The Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force are its three professional uniformed forces. The Indian Coast Guard also assists the Indian Armed Forces as stated by Dixit (2019). The mention of heroes in the Indian context remains incomplete, if Indian Intelligence Agencies are not mentioned. Some of the major agencies are of R&AW) Research and Analysis Wing, IB (Intelligence Bureau), MI (Military Intelligence, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation and NTRO (National Technical Research Organization) as stated by Shrivastava (2013).

Thus, this study has taken the definition of heroes as common men belonging to police, security forces and intelligence in India who has extraordinary feat to suffer, take risks, commit to take action and take considerate decision for those in need or

defend the principles of moral, social and political ideologies as stated by Terpstra and Salet (2020), Lalwani and Gayner (2020), Dixit (2019) and Shrivastava (2013).

In Indian films, often while combatting corruption and crime, the heroes have been seen to become a part of the crime world, referred to as underworld or netherland or as '*paatal loka*' (Ghosh, 2013:p.26) in Hindu mythology, which the heroes defeat and emerges victorious in the end (Ghosh,2013).The references of "*Hiranyakashyap*" (Bansal, 2022: p.43) who was the evil father to "*Prahalad*" (Bansal, 2022: p.43), a youth hero, who holds the epitome of devotion and loyalty to Lord Vishnu has often been seen in the context of win of the good over evil (Bansal,2022).

The Indian soap operas have often been seen to reinforce Hinduism as an important religion which ultimately gives rise to the sense of heroic nationalism. This is because, lord "*Ram*" (Mankekar, 2002: p. 135) from "*Ramayan*" (Mankekar, 2002: p. 135). has been seen and believed to the epitome of heroism and has been seen as the main destroyer of evil signifying the win of good over evil as he kills "*Ravan*" (Mankekar, 2002: p. 135) for abducting "*Sita*" (Mankekar, 2002: p. 135) his wife. Therefore, in India, religious identity too holds an important part of the identity formation. The representational strategies adopted by popular mythological Hindi soap opera like "*Ramayan*" (Mankekar, 2002: p.35) and "*Mahabharat*" (Mankekar, 2002: p.139). had a very clear depiction of who held the centers of power, at the same time had strong representations of genders, leading to the social constructions of they have wronged our people and thus, they have to be punished (Mankekar, 2002). Characters like "*Bhim*" (Hooper, 2018: p.80), "*Duryodhana*" (Hooper, 2018: p.81), "*Karna*" (Hooper, 2018: p.81), "*Krishna*" (Hooper, 2018: p.78) from "*Mahabharata*" (Hooper, 2018: p.78), have significant impact, references and

presence in Indian media. In the similar context, Ashwatthama is Drona Acharya's son who is deeply loved by him. He is represented as a symbol of possessing power to destroy as he is deceived by Lord Krishna through "*Yudhisthir*" (Hooper, 2018: p.80). His fake death creates a sense of loss in Drona Acharya. "*Ashwathama*" (Hooper, 2018: p.87), learning about this deceit, vows to finish the "*Pandava*" (Hooper, 2018: p.78) clan to take his revenge (Hooper, 2018). At similar times, as far as representation of female heroes are concerned, the Indian main stream media projects females as an extension of patriarchal consisting of violent, strong, and well-built physique who are capable to beat up the villains. They are represented as females possessing male like strength, and hence finding acceptance in the men's world to portray themselves as strong counterparts. But when the female is accompanying the hero or the villain, they are often represented with feminine traits, vulnerable and flimsily who needs to be protected as they are more susceptible to become victims of crime such as rape, sexual harassment, and physical abuse (Datta, 2000).

There has been an equal need of the heroes and the villains in the society. The importance of heroes comes forth with the fact that there is an evil which needs to be defeated for the hero to prove his heroic deeds of playing the role of a saviour. The criminal hero is usually an outcome victory built of the anger and discontent of overly suppressive authorities who have been suppressing in the society which people will resonate as their hero (James & Lane, 2020).

The celebration and acceptance of criminal heroes can be seen through the cultural perspective. As oppression occurs through various systems of the society mainly socio-economic and political oppression, a criminal who emerges victorious by breaking the law, order and system and stands up for one's community has much been

appreciated in the media culture. However, the celebrated criminals like Robin Hood who takes from rich and gives to poor thus bridging the economic gap between have often been seen as celebrities which achieves a psychological victory and a crime conducted by a criminal is interpreted as a victory of good over evil (Penfold-Mounce, 2009).

The victims criticize the failure of the system to protect them and demand justice as the law discourages the victims, blames and humiliates them and fails to deliver justice. Victims are the effects of causal processes. They play a very symbolic role in the society because it allows a society to identify evil and in justice. Societies interpret events through religious terms, rationalism and science, victims answer the questions embedded in all the layers of the society (Best, 1997). Lower class people have often become victims of racial and class discrimination, as they remain helpless in the social structure. It has often been argued that victims have been an outcome of society's discrimination towards the less fortunate in the society. The victims often seem to draw their attention towards the institution to be acknowledged of their victimisation, but when that fails, the victims seek alternative method to make sure that their demands and needs are fulfilled (Best, 1997). The victims of lower caste and lower social hierarchy especially in India have often evoked a strong sense of sympathy among the viewers. The underlying discrimination and classification of castes which is also based on social hierarchy has often been defined the identities of the victims. The labelling of the victims have been based on the fact of their belonging to social hierarchies (Deshpande & Spears, 2016).

The voice of the victim gets suppressed in the criminal justice system. The legal system has never seen the justice delivered under normal moral values and grounds,

but rather based on the perception of agony, sorrow and angst based on circumstances. The vengeance by the victims which has led them to turn into criminals has a very strong basis of argument during capital punishment. The circumstantial motivations leading to revenge and crime has somehow legitimized in understanding the criminal law and justice and their involvement in contemporary society (Sarat, 1997). The depiction of women as victims in crime shows often have their closely related person as an abuser (Garrett, 2023). The representation of gendered victim in Netflix web series Delhi Crime have disregarded the representation of woman as rape victim and gender-based violence. Instead, it has looked at the victim from the patriarchal point of view, where the victims have been categorised as common problem in the society (Ranjan et al., 2022).

Villains are extremely powerful elements who are capable of inhuman activities. They not only appear strong but also possess strong powers and equal amount of strength and intelligence as the hero. The only characters missing are virility and morals. They are hardly self-sacrificing and full of greed, wiliness, sly and cunning (Cohen, 2011).

This study has taken the definition of villains as defined by Bergstand and Jasper (2018) that villains are malicious, spiteful, dubious, evil, ill-intentioned and often strong enough to create nuisance and harm others. Villain exhibits slyness, viciousness, ambiguity, dominant, brutality and malice in their roles. Villains evoke a wide number of emotions where hatred and fear are amongst the most powerful emotions they evoke amongst the audiences. Villains usually reinforce the undesirable and adverse feelings towards the out-groups.

Villains can be categorised in two broad categories as – enemy or traitors. Villains keep an extreme power to exercise on innocent civilians as they become victims of the

evil agents in the form of terror and attacks. Their will to destroy usually creates the center stage of the main plot of any crime-based television program. Enemies of the state who are seen as villains are passed derogatory remarks through speech and text (Blain, 2022). It has been found out in the study by Deadman and MacDonald (2004) that the interchangeable role of victims to villains and villains to victims is often embedded in the system of taking vengeance done to them as members where taking revenge seems a valid answer in reclaiming their position and finding solutions to their problems.

The studies have often reflected that the portrayal of victims and villains can help to distort the image of the victims and villains. Wrongful portrayal and incorrect information passed on by the media helps to construct an image about the offenders and victims may create or reinforce myths about victimization. The study of crime series has also found that the race and class ascertain the media houses to cast whether the coverage will be victim-blaming or offender-blaming events. The victims who are coloured and represented as the lower class in the society are more likely to be presented as contributor to the offenses in comparison to the white counterpart who as victims are often looked upon with more sympathy and greater condemnation of the villains. (Britto et al., 2007).

Indian television soap operas have relied heavily on Indian mythology as they portray tradition and culture in the programs. The constant reference to characters of religious scriptures like the Ramayan and Mahabharat is an important interlinked subtext of narratives in the Indian soap operas (Jaggi, 2011). The reference of Hindu Gods and scriptures has often led to the formation and functions of trinity comprising of Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma is responsible for good cultural environment,

Vishnu with changing and adapting to the environment and Shiva for regeneration and revival of organizational structure (Low & Muniapan, 2011).

According to the definition by Barth (1969), ethnicity has been defined in the forms of social categorization. By focusing on what is socially effective, ethnic groups are viewed as a type of social structure when they classify a person in terms of one's most fundamental, most generic identity, which is presumptively determined by one's origin and background. The members of the group belong to a common place of origin and have shared their history together. With the multidimensional definitions of ethnic group, for this study, the definition of ethnic group have been taken from (Berthoud, 1998) where the identities of ethnic groups are defined with the lineage they share creating commonality amongst the group members. The line that separates them from us and them makes them prominently distinguishable in terms of gender and class. Another major factor relating to ethnic groups are the prevailing connections, religion and shared historical contexts related to geographical places between the group members. As (Jaggi, 2011) contests that Indian television soap operas have tried to incorporate stories and plots from places like Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab and Maharashtra to encompass under a single umbrella as the core of India, especially while representing the rural context. The clothing, accent, dialects, geographical locations are adopted as a part of the main Hindi language in the soap operas which has various denotations and connotations across various geographical locations in India in order to bridge the gap amongst various existing cultures in India. The sense of belonging to group in a society comes naturally, especially if it is concerning the caste (Patnaik, 2017). The caste-based identities in India have been on a rise, as they continuously face discrimination based on ethnicity and religious minorities. Asserting to the statement by Kothari (2014), caste can be seen as a motive to go

against the oppressive system and source of collective identity when acted upon the struggle to rise up against the caste hierarchal system in India. Tracing the history of criminals in Indian media, the North India, in particular, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have had major stereotyped representations as a place where criminals originate from. The majority of lower caste tribes residing in the area have been represented and portrayed as brute, with hierarchal caste of criminals, habituated as robbers who have acquired the skills of crime in the form of inheritance and hereditarily imbedded in them (Kharsyntiew, 2017).

Althusser (1979) points out about two theses of ideologies. One, where ideology has a material existence, second is through Marx's (Marx, n.d., as cited in Althusser, 1979) concept where ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Althusser poses the concept of "*interpellation*" (Althusser, 1979: p.95) wherein you and I have two aspects, one is recognition and the other is misrecognition. Via interpellation, an ideology defines and constitutes an individual as a subject, where a person responds through his illusory senses of independence through the ideological and political view of self-consciousness. Althusser poses a grim view of the society which has been positioned and summoned through ideological discourses hence impacting our independence and subjectivity which has already been determined through these ideologies. The representation of these ideologies in the society obliges us to view the state apparatus and the equation of power which has been installed in the dominant position in the formations of society.

When an individual is defending himself and his identity, it is representative of the entire community or group that he belongs. Hence, when an individual is safeguarding

his identity, he is in other way is protecting his community too. As criminal victims before the law, they seem like they are a representative of the entire community (McMahon, 2008). The discourse on changing identity of a victim to becoming an offender or villain has often been that of saving one's own face as the villain who was once a victim to correct the damage which has been done to one's own identity (Gonzales et al., 1992). The purview of the world is dependent on the perception of the people living within a certain area of residence. Identity and representations are based on the contexts of perception which one develops of the world they reside in, capturing the essence of the environment that they have been brought up in. In addition to that factors like ethnicity, age, gender and address also plays its equal role in building up collective identities of representations (Howarth, 2007).

The construction of language in the digital age has led to the formation of new concepts and types of identities which are being added to the dictionary. The multimodality nature of the language which can be seen and contextualised according to the modality of production techniques have now led to various representations drawn in terms of language construction of identity. Hence, the interchangeability of identity in terms of patterns and cultural context has become very fluid (Rogers, 2014). Identity construction through language has been rightly put across by Norton (2013) where relationship between identity and language determines the way people perceive each other in terms of social status in the society. Language provides of sense of belonging as well as the relationship with numerous powers in mediating the right to entitle their ground and allowing them to exercise the right to express when the time is conducive for expression.

According to (Langholm, 1971) the postulation and belief of center and periphery are primarily divided into four concepts by “*Lane, Milbrath, Galtung and Rokkan*”(Langholm, 1971: p.273).In Lane’s(Lane, 1961, as cited in Langholm,1971) concept, the centrality of location as centers representing the societal dominance making it accessible to reach the members of the organisation creates the distinction. In Milbrath’s(Milbrath, 1965, as cited in Langholm,1971) concept, explores the social point of view, where a person’s position the society where an individual who shares a good social position are placed at the center, those in lower positions are places as periphery. The Galtung’s (Galtung,1967, as cited in Langholm,1971) concept however focuses on people who are at the center making decisions who become the point of focus in the society and anyone who are not at that position becomes the periphery. The last concept of Rokkan’s (Rokkan, 1962, as cited in Langholm,1971) focuses on territorialpoint of view which focuses on nations and the association and the rapport the nations share with each other.

Schneider et al. (2022) puts forward that the relationship of center and periphery is advantageous for both the center ethnic groups and peripheral minority ethnic groups. The center groups gain strength by exercising their control either through religion or materialism and the same time, the peripheral groups are dependent on the center for economic growth. Nonetheless, the ethnic minority are deprived of their self-esteem and pride, the feeling of sense of belonging to their ethnic group and the freedom they might have experienced if not dependent on the center.

The interrelationship between center and periphery exists only when the center and the periphery are separated and located at different topographical locations when there are differences in ethnicity. The differentiation of ethnic minority groups has always

been seen as weak, discriminated and dominated by ethnic groups who are in majority. An important factor of dominance on ethnic minorities are that they are connected with socio-economic conditions where the minority ethnic groups are dependent on the dominant group (Wright, 1991).

The strategies of representation of ethnic minority in a country creates the centers and peripheries which has been largely placed on the concept of othering of another community which is deemed to be inferior by a country which feels are superior, for example, the western countries perceiving the migrants as the otherwith a distinct representation of usand them(Markina, 2015). The explicit usage of the terms like we, they, I, you, have largely been representative of the creation of centers and peripheries in the discourse. It also portrays display of power, dominance over one another and disparity shown in the societal relations that are existing in the society (Maalej,2012).

The political discourse on the two nation, India and Pakistan on issues related to Kashmir has been an important part of this discourse creating a rift between religious beliefs of Hindus and Muslims which has been created by media. At the similar time, the rise of the lower caste in terms of revolution and making their voices heard have been prominent in the nation through news in both print and broadcast. The narratives in the media have stated inferiors were needed by superiors in order to make a difference at the powers in the center (Kohli, 1996). The process of creating others as outgroups within the ingroup as an exercise of dominance of power is a practice that has been of concern in work places. The shift in the process of othering in terms of inclusivity and exclusivity by dominant groups are both dependant on the social roles the outgroup plays in terms of their how identities are constructed, as they may both be included and excluded in the organizational activities depending on the roles

performed by the subordinates according to the situations. The identities of the other exist through the perception and of those in the powerful position in the society to create the distinction (Canales,2000).

Language used as texts can define, undermine, or value the perception of the minorities which further affects the identity of the one using the language. Language also develops the sense of belonging to one's communities across borders and helps in the creation of developing cultural collective identity (Evans,2016). As put forward by Laskar and Amir (2022),on representations of ethnic minorities are portrayed through the "*religious superiority*" (Laskar & Amir, 2022: p.2), "*ethnic in-groups*"(Laskar & Amir, 2022: p.2) and "*out-groups*" (Laskar & Amir, 2022: p.2) are concepts which are propagated by Hindi language cartoons in television. The excessive exposure of these representations in the form of mainstreaming help to shape the beliefs, audience's perception of reality and ultimately gives rise to lopsided, manipulated and stereotyped views of the world. Religious groups belonging to Muslims have often been represented as the other and have been depicted as not belonging to Indian territories but hailing from other countries.

Prominent in the studies of identities is the common idea of "*we-ness*" (Valocchi, 2001: p.446) with a set of beliefs, interests, background and understanding of the individuals. This helps to take a collective action which has been dominated by various socio-political perspectives (Valocchi, 2001). The term we are an outcome of the individual identity which tries to find a representative in the group or in a particular social category. Collective identities, does not need connection and interaction on an individual basis amongst the group members. They are just based on a common cause and ties which share common goals therefore resulting in collective

identities (Brewer & Gardner ,1996). The interrelatedness with names of the individual and group names has a significant way of understanding the us and them concept creating a distinction which can be inclusive or exclusive of the ideology the people in the group they represent. Physical traits lead to stereotypical and discriminated perceptions towards individuals or groups. Hence, people are differentiated according to the physical features (Edwards, 2009).

The influence of mass media is huge when it comes to the producing, reproducing and shaping ethnic and racial stereotypes, often in negative manners. The representations of ethnic groups and their depictions in media have often been marginalized, stereotyped, labelled and disproportionately represented. When the ethnic communities are represented, media matters as partly because they are the important sifters of information through which different groups learn about each other. In this process, media might not present the dominant ideas and influence the groups about ethnicity and race but they do give an idea regarding the constructions of those identities. According to the amount of time people expose themselves to the media, the shaping of racial or ethnic identity can be either formed or distorted (Ross, 2019). Discussing about ethnic identity, it is based on language, places of origin, religion, and territorial occupation (Tambiah,1989). In India, the mainstream media has been believed to have represented Muslims as major perpetrators of crime and has been a part of propaganda and pushed the narrative of Islamophobic concept. Muslim community has been criticised as a community who harness violence and are continuously working towards spreading hatred and creating negativity in the country. The mainstream media has often seen as using stimulating and metaphoric language to represent the Muslim community as offenders (Khan,2022a).

There are many linkages between crime and socio-economic status. One where the individual seeks linkage between the social structure and individual state diverging from accepted terms. The other factor involves where crime is related to socio-economic deprivation thereby developing different associations. Another important linkage is people's early learning experiences where an individual adapts to his early learning environment. When the social attachments to a social environment break down, an individual may seek a deviant behaviour. (Fergusson, et al., 2004). Individuals who have not achieved in terms of their societal front, often show irritation and annoyance. Low self-esteem, rejection can also be the delinquent factors for an individual to commit crime (Boduszek & Hyland, 2011). There exists a favouritism pattern amongst the group of people belonging to the same group, which kindles competition amongst the group members. This encourages the members belonging to low self-esteem group to help preserve, retain, and boost their self-esteem within the circle resulting in improved prospects for the low self-esteemed people in the societal struggle (Lemyre & Smith, 1985).

As Foucault (1990) mentions, sex and sexuality before the 17th century was negated and any aim to have a discourse was outside the power of an individual and was considered a taboo in the society. Foucault greatly criticizes the western society which suppressed the sexuality of individuals. The reason being, during that period there was a high rise in capitalistic economy and the rise of the bourgeois class. However, he argues that during this particular period, the sexuality was looked through the lens of the science of sex and was looked more in terms of disease and perversion which through examinations and medicine was believed to have been cured. He argues that sexuality was a unlikely element only for basic body needs and desires and sex performed as a means to showcase power.

Representation of gay, lesbians, ending the stereotypes about female characters in the web series has ushered in a new form of narratives about sexuality in the Indian context. These shows have showcased how the females can be the reign takers amidst the violence and emotional voids they go through irrespective their social economic challenges (Moneycontrol News, 2019). The web series having a separate narrative pattern have become a platform to represent the “*marginalized groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex communities*” who are barely represented in the mainstream media (Monaghan, 2017: p.3). The crime shows have dealt with gay and lesbian issues as an insignificant part of the plot, usually represented sympathetically, serving as stigmatized and tabooed love interest. They represented often represented as victims of violence, social stigma and unrequited love interests (Monaghan, 2020). The representations of gay and lesbians in the web series are often prejudiced by race and gender. The stereotyped representations of this community are still bounded by their narratives of sexuality of displaying gender presentation where “*masculine women*” (Day, 2018: p.1) find more visibility in the media. This community has always been represented as the “*other*” (Day, 2018: p.14) in opposition to the socially accepted groups (Day, 2018).

Sexuality as an identity, has been a social stigma in the sociological perspectives. The acceptance of social stigma within the boundaries that define these stigmas give voice and meaning to sexuality. In broader sense, sexuality is an important and legitimate part of the social structure. (Plummer, 1975).

This study will undertake the definition of sexuality proposed by Macleod and McCabe (2020) as inseparable from the influences of religion, class, ethnicity, and other identities. Although an important part of people’s lives, it can be motivating and

supporting relationships, practices, behaviour, roles. It has influence on the social, economic, religious, political and psychological and gender identities of an individual or a group.

The influence of mass media is humongous when it comes to people's learning about sexual behaviour. The more they expose themselves, the more they develop a belief and pattern about their sexual behaviours. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities do not find much prominence in the mainstream media hence, the sexuality about these communities is rarely discussed. Therefore, media forms their basic source of information regarding sex and sexuality where they try to educate themselves with the dramatic portrayal of sexual scenes depicted in these media (Brown, 2010). While researchers believe that in academic disciplines, the academic studies have kept out the study of sexuality and if often narrow down to a fragmented discipline of study. The importance of studying sexuality however, has meaningful components for the formation of individual and collective identities (Meyer, 2013).

Kakkar (1990) addresses the hegemonic regressive relation of a man and woman from the mythical approach as to how the relationship between a man and a woman is defined through folk tales and mythological characters and the conflict between genders (Kakkar, 1990). This Indian approach towards sexuality, delves deep into fantasy, conflicts, fears, misrepresentations, presentations of sexuality. The perspective on Indian folk tales has been analysed and understood through the motifs embedded in the cultural understanding of sex and sexuality which develops and forms the imagery of sexuality in Indian mentality. India's gender relations are patriarchal in nature and women are seen as an epitome of idealness, whereas the men are entitled to the pleasures in life.

As the media distribution and content creation of patterns are changing, so are the definitions of sexuality in new media. The new web series are exploring fresh and different approach towards Indian sexuality. The flipping gender roles and various gender shades have been the prime focus of these web series. Instead of creating a concept of lust, these web series are focusing on serious issues which otherwise are not discussed in the mainstream media (Shekhar, 2019).

Representation of gay, lesbians, ending the stereotypes about female characters in the web series has ushered in a new form of narratives about sexuality in the Indian context. These shows have showcased how the females can be the reign takers amidst the violence and emotional voids they go through irrespective their social economic challenges (Moneycontrol News, 2019). In a country where have only recently decriminalized gay sex, the increasing portrayal of sexual minorities on web series are slowly changing the radical viewpoint about sexuality. This ushers in the new paradigm shift about these issues which remains largely a taboo in the orthodox Indian scenario (The Economic Times, 2019).

The stereotype portrayals of any ethnic community in the media result in seeing one ethnic community as more harmful and detrimental than the other community. The negative stereotyping of any community may be beleaguered in the formation of identity of the offenders (Franklin & Henry, 2020). The stereotyping of ethnic minorities can take place under three elements. First, is "*categorisation*" (Trebbe, et al., 2017: p.2) which strategically recognizes and categorises any single or group either socially or ethnically into categories. Second is "*value -neutral generalisation*" (Trebbe et al., 2017: p.2) refers to preconception about various functions and workings of individual members which gets transferred to the whole groups that are

ethnically connected with each other. Third is “*negative generalisation*” (Trebbe et al., 2017: p.2) of individuals and ethnic groups who are characterised through negative qualities, roles and behaviours (Trebbe, et al., 2017).

The programs require a genre and perhaps the stereotype is the result of the genre which are dominated through the expectations and perception of the creators. Every genre has some stereotypical profiling which are prominent in some or clichéd in other which stands out evidently in the program genre. The portrayal of ethnic groups in crime genre will represent powerful attachment to ethnic subculture than mainstream culture. The division in the ethnicity and their portrayal are distinct in these crime genres series (Holte, 1984).

In the context of the popular culture, identity has been ever evolving as the popular culture industry has remodelled and reused it for individuals in everyday life. Sociology holds the central concept of identity, but now identity has been unrelated to the social definition of identity as it has been overlapping now under various discourses. Identity now has a separate context to the situation where the people, especially younger generation shift constantly with pop culture, the presentation style and accessing the success of the content through its consumption (Altheide, 2000).

The Critical Discourse Analysis used in the discourse of crime and its representations in the media are reflective of their perceptions and actions that are presented on the media. In relation to the negative and positive representations of ethnic group and minorities in media, the Critical Discourse Analysis deals with the creation of us and them through the power discourse in the media (Potts & Kjaer, 2016). Critical Discourse Analysis has mostly been used to investigate the language and its generations of meanings (Fairclough, 1993). It has also been used to look preferably

to critically look on the language in the discourse which looks at the concepts of power, history, and ideology (Wodak, 2011).

At the same time Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis emphasis that texts in communication do not only comprise of written and oral but are comprising of language, images or sounds as they are achieved through signified sources, selections and varieties (Han, 2015). In the broader semiotic principles that in the communication process connect not just language and picture, but all the numerous modes in multimodal communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

In this study, Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis have thus been seen as the methodological aspect from Teau A. van Dijk's (1984, 1993) and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001, 2006, 2021) approach. This approach deals with social inequality, the power and dominance existing in the society and need for social cognition for the formation of individual and collective identity (Van Dijk, 1994). Critical Discourse Analysis, have drawn relationships between crime, ethnicity, socio-economic status and sexuality through texts and contexts in the discourse (Van Dijk, 1997). The creation of centers and peripheries through the process of othering has been portrayed through texts which produced discriminatory talks (Van Dijk, 1997) along with the metaphors and metonyms present in the language within the discourse.

The Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis has recognized the latent signs and symbols and then decoded signs and visuals in the visuals which were underlying within the data (Machin, 2016). This analytical approach has familiarised the semiotic choices, hence establishing the power relationship of the social role players. The technical articulation has helped to establish the centers and peripheries in between

the social role players as they represented their ethnic group through socio-economic status, sexuality, places of origin and religious backgrounds (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

Crime and identity with its representations in media have often been looked through the analytical approach of Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis studies as they have been presented across various platforms such as television (Machin & Mayr, 2013), radio news bulletin (Haig, 2012), news headlines (Duanprakhon, 2012), internet news portals (Peng, 2021), and many more. However, Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis has found very few analytical approaches in crime genre web series on the OTT platforms. This research has used Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis as the analytical framework in the study. The web series in India have mostly been looked through the study of users viewing preferences across OTT platforms (Lad et al, 2019), theoretical framework like Uses and Gratification theory (Chattopadhyay, 2020), consumers shift from television to OTT platforms using statistical analysis using mean and t-test (Tiwari, 2019, Kumari, 2021, Gupta, 2021) and descriptive study (Srivastava, 2020). Therefore, by using Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis in this study used to understand the critical aspects of crime, identity and its representations in the Hindi crime genre web series in India. It has thrown light in the context of power, dominance, formations of social structure and changes in the power dynamics within the society through the lens representations and labelling of ethnic group from the point of view of socio-economic conditions, ethnicity and sexuality.

Studies show that previous representations of crime in relation to television and its content as an acceptable medium of entertainment (Turnbull,2010), which led to labelling of criminals through social status, gender, places of origin and race (Barlow et al., 1995). However, as crime finds its representations in the identities of ethnic minorities as put forward by Hall (1997), in some aspects, these representations of crime and identity have not fulfilled the representations in the Indian context of media representations. These representations and labelling of criminals have been partly reinforced though the society's perception towards crime and its criminals belonging to certain ethnic background. Moreover, many of the representations of crime in the Indian web series has dealt with discrimination, stereotyping and social stigma of ethnic minorities leading to caste and religious based crimes which has not been fulfilled by previous studies. Therefore, this study has taken the critical paradigm approach to study crime and identity to find connections and patterns of stereotyping and discrimination in relation to the heroes, victims, and villains as social role players. Also looking from the point of view of socio-economic status, ethnicity and sexuality, this study has gained insight on the existing presupposed stereotype and discrimination in the representations and labelling of ethnic group in the Hindi crime genre web series in Indian context.

Chapter - 3

3. Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design, sampling process, and data analysis. The qualitative research approach offers an envisioned context and gives the researcher the chance to explore and delve into fundamental underlying presumptions, beliefs, and values (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). The study has used purposive sampling. It has further discussed the methods of data analysis in the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. van Dijk (1984, 1994) and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021) to analyse the text and visual data.

3.1. Research Design

Critical realist researchers like Miles & Huberman (1994) puts forward that qualitative analysis has been able to simplify the approach to follow the set of procedures without the complex use of technical terms and jargons related to traditional approaches data analysis procedures. This research has adopted the inductive design in the qualitative research. The inductive approach design has been used to primarily allow the research findings to arise from existing recurrent, dominant, and noteworthy themes on the data. The analysis of the data has been based on frequently obscured and reframed themes found in the data.

In the broader spectrum, the inductive approaches comprise mainly of four types (Herrity, 2023). They are:

- a) General inductive approach: This considers evidence from previous similar instance. The general inductive approach is a practical and efficient method of analysing where the data size is huge and helps to reach a conclusion (Thomas, 2006).
- b) Statistical induction approach: Statistical data are used to reach conclusions. Referred to as statistical generalisation, this form of inductive reasoning gives contexts and assumptions while generating fresh facts adding more value to the existing theory or may change the theory (Herrity, 2023).
- c) Causal induction approach: Establishing a logical connection between a cause and a likely result is result is required for this style of reasoning. Causal inductive reasoning involves strong relationship between the initial situation and the concluding inference. This is approach also requires observable evidence for the inferences gathered (Hayes & Thompson, 2007).
- d) Induction through confirmation approach: By accepting specified assumptions, you can reach a conclusion through induction through confirmation. Confirmation aims at achieving results to an extent where an inductive inference is justified (Sprenger, 2016).

This study has undertaken the general inductive approach as the basic goal of the inductive technique is to allow research findings to arise from the frequent, dominant, or noteworthy themes inherent in raw data. The purpose of using general inductive approach in this research are to reduce large amounts of diverse raw text data into a concise, summarised manner; to establish explicit ties between the research objectives and the summary conclusions produced from the raw data, and to ensure that these links are both transparent and capable of proving to others where the conclusions are justified considering the study's objectives.

The data has been collected through secondary data collection method for text and visuals. Secondary data for qualitative research mostly are obtained through documents, archives, government official records and electronic data from internet (Hox & Boeije, 2005). The documents for data collection as suggested by Polkinghorne (2005) consists of written, oral, visual (such as photographs), video tapes, transcripts, or cultural artifacts in qualitative research as put forward by Therefore, the documents used in this study are in the form of videos, pictures, and transcripts. The secondary data for this study has been collected through the online subscription-based OTT platforms from 2018-2020.

The data have been analysed by identifying topics and themes to be discovered in the raw data from the transcripts through multiple readings by adopting the data analysis method as suggested by Thomas (2006) and Saldaña (2016). After the interpretations of the raw data, categories from relevant themes were created which were identified from raw data to create a model or framework to cover significant themes built during the coding of transcripts to answer the research questions and objectives of the study. The conclusions are drawn from the product of numerous interpretations after coding the raw data by sorting of less relevant data to important ones.

3.2. Sampling

This research has undertaken non probability sampling technique as non-probability sampling technique makes use of a convenient set of units from the population as suggested by Ayhan (2011). Lavrakas (2008) states that the samples are carefully chosen to focus on the objectives and to include only those that are relevant to the study. Thus, sampling of the web series and the episodes has been done through purposive sampling to fulfil the requirement of the research questions and objectives.

This sampling technique has also been used after discovering particular and specific characteristics that were present in the data that added significance to the study. They have been selected purposively according to the crime as the main theme in the web series which consist of: *terrorism, corruption, religious crime, and caste-based crime* from the year 2018- 2020. The Hindi web series was selected because of the familiarity of the language which is relevant to fulfil the objectives and research questions of the study.

Samples being the subset of population, 21 Hindi crime genre web series on Over-the Top (OTT) platforms available in India which were streaming original content was identified from the period of July 2018 to July 2020 for this study. The following types of crimes have been purposively selected in the crime genre web series:

- Terrorism
- Corruption
- Religious violence
- Caste based crime

The following role players have been segregated to meet the research purpose and therefore fulfill selection criteria of the research.

- Victims
- Villains
- Heroes

The sample of the population are four web series from three subscription-based OTT platform providing Indian original content in the platform from 2018 – 2020. Only Sacred Games consisted of both season 1 and season 2 as of 2019 (Mubarak, 2019). The sequel web series for Paatal Lok, Special Ops and The Family Man were not

available and released in the selected time period. Only Season one of the selected samples have been taken for the study. This has been done in order to make a manageable sample size to study it in detail and add more value to the analysis of the data collected. Below are the samples of the population.

Table 1

Samples of the study

SL. No	OTT Platform	Name of the Web Series	Season	Episodes per season	Year of Release
1.	Amazon Prime	Paatal Lok	1	09 episodes	2020
2.	Disney+ Hotstar	Special Ops	1	08 episodes	2020
3.	Amazon Prime	The Family Man	1	10 episodes	2019
4.	Netflix	Sacred Games	1	08 episodes	2018

This research has undertaken the crime genre web series on the premium subscription-based OTT platforms creating and streaming Indian original contents like Amazon Prime Video, Disney+Hotstar and Netflix which have been chosen based on Hindi crime genre web series in India from 2018-2020. The samples for data analysis were chosen based on initial viewing of crime genre web series in India on subscription-based OTT platforms preferred by consumers. The reason for selecting the time frame is because the OTT platforms and web series proliferated in the Indian platform due to the accessibility of internet as stated by Basuroy, (2023a), since the first web series streamed in India in 2014 (Lakhani, 2015). The crime genre web series in India have

garnered attention and praises for their new approach in storytelling with enthralling and riveting concept in Indian OTT platforms (Gupta, 2020, Malik, 2020).

The secondary data has been collected through texts, transcripts, videos and pictures. Each selected episode of the web series consisted of an average of 42 minutes per episode excluding the credits.

Below outlines the summary about the selected web series:

Paatal Lok is a Hindi crime genre web series which was released in 2020 in Amazon Prime Video. Directed by Avinash Arun and Prosit Roy and produced by Anushka Sharma and Karnesh Sharma under Clean Slate Filmz, the plot of Paatal lok deals with an underprivileged and underachiever police officer who is assigned a high-profile criminal case. In his quest for truth and justice he gets drawn into the dark world during his investigation. The web series deals with the realms of social class divide existing within the Indian social structure. The web series has metaphoric references to the world which has been divided into Paatal Lok as the netherland and Heaven and Earth (Sharma et al., 2020).

Special Ops was released on 2020 via Disney + Hotstar. This series is directed by Neeraj Pandey and Shivam Nair under the banner of Friday Storytellers. The web series follows Himmat Singh who operates as the member of Research and Analysis Wing (RA&W). His chase on terrorist attack in the Parliament in India, leads him to one person who is behind a series of attacks with his team of five agents (Pandey & Nair, 2020).

The Family Man is a web series launched in Amazon Prime Video on 2019 and has been directed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna D.K. It has been produced under D2R

Films production. The story is led by protagonist Srikant Tiwari working as a member of Threat Analysis and Surveillance Cell (TASC). To support him are his team JK Talpade. The story has been based on newspaper news article. Srikant Tiwari leads a normal married life with two children. However, his marital relationships are affected after he chases to stop the terrorist attack in India (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019).

Sacred Games is a crime genre web series that was released on 2019 in Netflix. The series has been directed and created by Vikramaditya Motwane and Anurag Kashyap under Phantom Films. This web series is based on the novel by Vikram Chandra having the same title. Sacred Games is the first Indian Original web series for Netflix India. Season one of the web series features Sartaj Singh as an underachieved and disturbed Mumbai police officer who receives a phone call from gangster named Ganesh Gaitonde telling him to save the city in 25 days. The series then follows the events that transpire and unearth the conspiracy behind the planned terror attacks (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018).

The selected web series have also won awards and nominations in the following categories (India Today Web Desk, 2019, IMDb, 2020, Filmfare, 2021).

Table 2

Awards, nominations, and IMDb ratings of sample web series

SL. No.	Name of the Web Series	IMDb Ratings	Awards Won and Nominations
1.	Paatal Lok	7.8	Best Series, Best Director (Series), Best Actor (Series) Male in Drama category and Best Original Story, Best Screenplay (Series),
2.	Special Ops	8.6	Best Actor in Supporting role (Drama Series), Best Editing (Series), Best Original Soundtrack (Series)
3.	The Family Man	8.8	Best Series (Critics), Best Director (Critics), Best Actor in Drama Series (Critics), Best Actress in Drama Series (Critics), Best Dialogue
4.	Sacred Games	8.6	Best Background Music. Nominated for International Emmys 2019.

Note. From Filmfare (<https://www.filmfare.com/features/winners-of-the-flyx-filmfare-ott-awards-46147.html>); *India Today Web Desk* (Emmy Awards), 2019IMDb (Ratings), 2020, IMDb (<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls026690132/>) ; *Filmfare* (Awards and nominations), 2021, *India Today* (<https://www.indiatoday.in/television/web-series/story/sacred-games-the-netflix-india-original-nominated-for-international-emmys-1601132-2019-09-20>)

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis has been done using the analytical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis using the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis towards discriminatory ethnic communities and societal power relations by the framework developed by Teun A. van Dijk's (1984, 1994) Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis has been done by using the analytical framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021) for both texts and visuals simultaneously. The analysis of the data has been done using the qualitative coding framework by using inductive coding techniques by Thomas (2006) and Saldaña (2016).

This research has undertaken the Critical Discourse Analysis as the methodology. It focuses on key the concepts which helped to strengthen the information gathering techniques. This methodology has undertaken because Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on examining the societal power relations which are established and highlighted through the language. Critical Discourse Analysis analyses the relationship between discourse and multifaceted social construction of the community we live in as stated by Fairclough (2013). The distribution of power from the more powerful to the lesser one only becomes the transmitter of the ideology of the strong to the weak. Therefore, the representations with words and visual are equally important as words and images are used across different media platforms (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003). Critical Discourse Analysis helps to study the identity via the perspectives of the social role, power and helps to understand its meanings in the society (Clegg, 1989).

Critical Discourse Analysis necessitates the understanding the access of communication process into public discourse and by looking through the dominance

in the society in the form of economic, political, and cultural factors into consideration. Social power as such is subjected and controlled by groups who are in power control of one over the other by restraining and manipulating the prevailing freedom of ideologies, attitudes, and beliefs as put forward by Van Dijk (2008).

The visual is one of the primary resources for making meanings materially visible. Meanings are realized differently in each mode due to their unique affordances. Halliday's (Halliday, 1985, as cited in Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021) assumption signified that "*semiotic resources*" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021: p. 15) are what they are due to the functions they perform in a certain social group (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021). The Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis lays down the differences between language and visual communication through highlighting the connections, the broader semiotic principles that connect not just language and image, but all the various modes in multimodal communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

In this study, Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis has been used to formulate the concept of labeling of an ethnic group as criminals also looking at the socio-economic status, places of origin and religion. When an individual is labeled, they are often denied the identity of the group they belong and are compelled to follow the discourse of the group to form an opinion. Therefore, this study has studied labelling of criminals based on the homogeneity and similarity of the group they belong to. Thus, labels only come into existence to create an image of homogeneity and similarity but they also create the concept of otherness and outsider thus creating centers and peripheries (Appleby, 2010). The individual and collective identity comprising of both individual and collective level has been addressed through

the sense of belonging and collective actions used to understand the relationship between the discourse and the social relationships which constitute framework of the society.

This study has also focused on the dominance and power addressed in text, languages, and discourse, along with dominance coming from various organizations which practice the dominance of power through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, resulting in exploitation of the positions, thus bringing in the social in unfairness and depriving equality in the society through various representations. The analysis framework has analysed the texts and visuals of not only the power vested in those in power but from the individual perspectives of those in power too and their influences on each other too. It has also analysed the relationship between the dominant and submissive, but also the subtle emergence of counter-power within them. In the times of globalization, the representations of power are never neutral and devoid of perceptions, therefore, various representations of ethnic minorities have been studied through the lens of stereotyped representations of crime, socio-economic status, sexuality and religion.

The study has used the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021) through the monomodality in the form of written texts along with the '*multimodality*' Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006: p. 41) of visuals in the form of music, frames, sound effects etc. has helped to develop a universal framework in the analysis of semiotic modes. As the technology advances, the different representation of texts and language also produces multiple meanings. Therefore, multimodal analysis has helped to discover various meanings and expression of each single signs produced at different level and modes that has been developed into codes,

categories and later themes to be analysed. Multimodality helped to understand the usages of these modes in the various visual signs as discussed in Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021). Critical Discourse Analysis approaches texts and visuals by making of meanings through multimodal communication. It is not only the language but also the visuals which helped in the generation of meanings through various visual techniques as stated by Machin (2013).

Van Dijk (1994), claims that the Critical Discourse Analysis deals with the power and domination which exists within the society. The power structure in a society is a complex issue; however, not only understanding the nature of power, but its functioning is also equally important. The content and contexts of the texts in relation to power supremacy and discrimination in the data have been analyzed using the following principles of Van Dijk (1984, 1994).

- a) **Power and dominance:** Out of many ways to exercise power and remain in dominance and control the most powerful exercise is through controlling the context of the discourse (Van Dijk, 1994). Identifying the discourse of those who are socially powerful and the abuse of the power generating individual powers which are usually neglected helped in understanding the creation a production of joint power. The analysis also has been done on the context that the social power is determined by the social roles of each society. The determination of social power of one over the other is directly affected by actions of the dominance and role of each other in the society. However as far as cognitive control is exercised in terms ideological and cognitive beliefs, then the mental control comes into action which results in the change of actions. Power dynamics shared between various stakeholders in the society

are purely dependant on each other's gain. Hence, as they strive to create a power balance, they will exercise their scope of power on an individual or group to maintain their control over it. Therefore, the conflict arises as they share the dynamism of power and control and dissimilar resistance from dominant group in the form of counterpower emerges which brings about the change (Van Dijk, 1995).

b) **Discourse and access:** Access of the discourse to the privileged has been a major component in analyzing the power dominance because dominance results in having access to the power. Having more power also indicates having more influence. The analysis has included that the influential groups have tendency to build a stronger narrative in terms of how the discourse and access will take its course. People in power have more access to information than the ones who are more powerful. The more the access of power is centric amongst the powerful, the more resistance it will invite. This thus creates the centers of power controlled by the dominant group. Hence as the media texts are created, multiplied and disseminated, the narratives of centers of power are also becomes a manipulative force between them as suggested by Van Dijk (1989, 2008).

c) **Social Cognition:** Social cognition is another important factor that helped to analyse the domain of social construct relating to power, the users, abusers and for the abused. Hence, the whole idea of dominance is extremely contextual depending on how one constructs their social being. The analysis has been done on the basis that power has the ability to create social hierarchies and reprimand the actions within the hierarchy. The powers exercised within groups have been recognized as elements of functionality in of the groups

bringing the desired outcome and results by influencing the members in the hierarchy as stated by Guinote (2014). The analysis in the text has also shown that lesser powerful social category of people tends to associate themselves with those in power to achieve their goals and increase their stance in the social hierarchy. There has been a sense of belonging towards the in members of the group after associating themselves with powerful people in the social structure who have been seen as an outsider as they find themselves less deprived of the social control as stated by Fiske & Dépret (1996).

d) **Text and context:** The text, its context and their relative meanings have been derived out of social context and domains. Therefore, complex intricacies of the discriminatory texts are rooted in the talks have been analyzed to see the cognitive understanding of meanings of the text which develops a discriminatory attitude regarding the ethnic communities. As per Van Dijk (1997) the texts used in the media and the talk in videos often have contextual references to the social structure. Several texts related to contexts adding to the development of contextual interpretation of the social roles each group play in the society thereby challenging or confirming the socio- political structures. The construction of the language has been used and had applied in creating social hierarchy. The context of text has been used in various forms like space, time, practice change and frame as suggested by Leitch & Palmer (2010).

e) **Strategy to produce discriminatory talks:** Various strategies to create the community of us and them in the talks has shaped a strategic center and periphery of the ethnic communities within and outside of the communities. The strategies have been used to achieve the target and to protect or triumph in

their motives in the process of making ethnic minority groups as others. Language can create, shape, and add perception as the preconceived notion about a terrorist and a freedom fighter can carry different meanings based on those perceptions as per Van Dijk (1997). Since Critical Discourse Analysis looks into all aspects of the texts, the discourse comprising of dominance by the powerful leads to resistance by the oppressed as put forward by Van Dijk (1995). The discourse in the study has been seen through discursive strategies in positioning of strategies both in the form of politicization and legitimization. Certain actions have been justified in the study through regularizing their behaviours and activities whereas the discrimination strategy has been adopted to dominate the periphery groups in the study. The straight or unintended texts that has been produced are suggestive to be discriminatory in nature as put forward by Carvalho (2008)

- f) **Social strategies and functions of prejudiced talk:** Personal experiences play an important part in bringing out a narrative about a particular community. Hence, any description of the personal event and description may eventually add to the narrative connotation of the entire community. The personal expressions are an important part of the interchangeable attitudes from a positive to negative views about a community. The sense of belonging to a group plays an important part in the study of identity formation about an individual and their persuasion to belong to a group. The role of mass media may be defining the narrative of a community by forming opinions and continuous repetitions. The resolution of the conflicts often lies in the acts of discrimination towards the other group and bringing negative light to them. The discriminatory remarks have been observed upon so that it finds

amusement among the social structure. The cognitive reasoning often tends to paint a picture about a community. Hence these remarks involving certain norms, values, and beliefs to create a periphery community was coded and analyzed.

The images, texts, sounds, light, and language are subjected to various interpretations and the images do not have fixed meanings. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis multimodal analytic framework breaks down the texts and images into more comprehensible and interpretable objects for studying, understanding, interpreting and analyzing the texts as per the framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006). The data analysis has been done using the following multimodal analysis framework for the visuals and texts of the samples.

1) Language: The text has the power to derive meaning out of the context that has been spoken upon and also construct identity. Meanings can be derived through the uses of language, sound, music, images, gestures etc. The choice of language can be socially and ideologically significant. The language has the way of representing certain groups by making them as one of them or making them an outsider. The choice of usage of words and language through referral strategy helps in creating certain perception and image of the people being referred to in the verbal language as stated by Machin & Mayr (2012). The modality of the language has been looked through epistemic, denotic and dynamic references of the language used as it also refers to the tone of the voice used by the speaker. The difference in tone determines the power relations of the speakers. The authoritative tone determines the power and position of the person using it, however a reverence tone may determine the

person's tone as respect, awe or admiration as put forward by Huckin (1997). The interpretation of visual text has intertextuality resulting in the formation of identity, gender, ethnicity etc connecting and evaluating them with emotions and other discursive elements as stated by Sulkunen & Törrönen (2009). The use of modality in the language developed the understanding and discovery of the identity and power of the person using the language.

The language has been looked upon as to how different terms are described in the verbal and images have represented the ethnicity of a group and have been analyzed through:

- a. **Vocabulary through the choice of words and connotation:** The use of vocabulary explains the difference in the class. The usage of the language helped to decode the suppression of the voices through the lexical meaning of the language used while representing ethnic groups. As Fairclough (1993) has put across that language is developed along with social practices, the vocabulary of the language is thus interdependent on the text and its meanings. The usage of grammar in the vocabulary in the form of verbs, adverbs, adjectives has been an important aspect in the presentations of texts and its meanings as suggested by Carvalho (2008).

Looking into the choices of words and connotation has helped to find out the underlying meanings of text and discourse. The choice of words can mean different connotation, hence adding interpreted meanings to the text. By looking at the connotation of the words, meanings have been derived, which have denoted power relations. The connotations had very distinctive derivations of labelling of different ethnic groups which were made through the

usage of certain distinct words, descriptions, metaphors and phrases. The modality of the discourse was set through various tones carried through verbal languages to define certain level of creating centers and peripheries of the groups and establish authority over it as stated by Huckin (1997). Connotations provide a vital understanding of the language and its meanings which represents ideas and its association of the meanings beyond the exact basic sense of what the words means has been put forward by Rao (2017).

- b) **Quoting Verbs:** Quoting verbs in the speech reveals the representation of the words spoken that shape the perception of the events. Interpreting the verbs gave better understanding of the attitude of the speakers used to influence the various events and people. As a part of the analysis on the verbal language, various types of verbs were identified which depicted different perceptions and representations of the events have been perceived. Quoting verbs has also helped to define the various types of roles suggesting it to be authoritative or submissive, depending on the events. The positive or negative tone of the language and the attitude of the speaker in the verbal language has also been identified through quoting verbs. This has further led to the creation of various representations attributed towards influencing the language of dominance and threat as put forward by Han (2015).
- c) **Rhetoric and Metaphors:** The rhetoric and metaphors used in the language were interpreted to that of the reality of the language represented in the text and establishing how one perceives the world and acts in it, thus constructing the social structure. The rhetoric and metaphoric context in the speech has evolved from derogative remarks about race and racism to now being recognized as a context which develops social structures. Metaphors and

rhetoric have thus been seen as meanings in the units of analysis in the spoken words which had connections to deeper meanings in the text further developing into creation of individual or collective identities. Under the pretext of usage of metaphors, the speakers have taken the liberty to express deeper issues and perspectives which lie latent in the text as stated by Musolff (2012).

- d) **Hyperbole and Metonymy:** The exaggeration in the text was interpreted using the hyperbole and metonymy in a language. The latent meaning in the text was evaluated to obscure the main reason behind a sound of an individual, groups or organizations which became important to classify the social structures and the inequality it represented. The hyperbole and metonym have not only been limited to texts but also has played a critical part of analysis in the visual images as well as the symbolization of visual image has led to the creation of stereotyped images of ethnic minorities. The representations of various social roles like heroes, victims and villains have been done with the usage of metonyms and hyperboles in the visual images in different units of analysis. The concepts of crime, power status and dominance have been distinctively developed with the usage of continuous metonyms and hyperboles (Catalano & Waugh, 2013).

Metonymy can be conceptual which can be representative of the entire social structure. It can even be representative of a single or entire category they are representative of. Metonymy can also be a cognitive process which serves as reference point to mentally access a concept (Radden & Kövecses, 1999).

2) Images and Visuals

Images are considered as an important text. Images and visuals are also considered as documents for symbolic representation of the visual language. Images and visuals have been analyzed through:

a) **Decoding signs in images and various denotations:** The images in the video facilitated to decode the inter relationships of the signs and symbols latent in the images with respect to their representations to the context in determining the power structures in the video. Denotation of the images helped in denoting different meanings in terms of people, places, things, and events. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis helped to unearth the dominant ideologies which remain latent in the visuals and images in the unit of analysis. The exercise of power can be seen of as denotative in nature and connects the message and meanings of the how the social structure is perceived during the visual discourse. The image may not always denote correct meanings but by decoding the signs in the visuals, the social representation of power and how it shaped the social practices has been coded (Machin, 2016).

b) **Semiotic Choices and decoding power:** The semiotic choices signified identities of different sexuality and ethnicity. The various semiotic choices have helped to understand the different ideologies embedded that were represented in the texts. The interpretation of visual text decoded the power through various semiotic codes embedded in the images leading to the understanding of perception and functioning of how it shapes views the world. Various attributes like clothes, mannerisms, places of origin, characteristics, settings of various locations, have been found in the study for which the semiotic choices have

been decoded. The visuals have basically been used to communicate the meaning more effectively. Visuals have been used to set boundaries in creating social circles which serve the purpose of creation of individual or social identities amongst ethnic groups as suggested by Machin & Mayr (2012). The visuals have established multiple hegemonic relationships among the role players in the analysis which add to the wide discourse of shaping ideologies and social structures as put forward by Machin (2016).

c) **Technical Articulation in the Visuals:** A detailed representation of the background, the depth in the shots of the visuals, the lighting and shadows, sharp details of tone, colour, hue and saturation in visuals has accessed to analyse visuals and its different representations in exploring the identities, values, circumstances and sequences that is reflecting in it. Production has played a major role in the analysis of the visual images along with sound, background, colours which has been followed distinctively amongst various ethnic groups building perceptions. Hence, deriving different meanings with regards to socio economic status, stereotypes, religions, caste, background setting and ethnicity has helped to develop codes and further into themes. The nonverbal communication in terms of colour, tone, hue, sounds, music, silence, and lights have played a significant role in analysing the role of centers of power and periphery and derive meanings from the visual texts as put forward by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001). The internal validity referring to the extent which the findings of the study are true and factual and relates to how well a study is conducted (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Therefore, this research has looked at achieving the validity and reliability through appropriate methodology,

systematic and appropriate data collection, consulting the expert or peer review (Brink, 1993, Holly et al., 2011).

3.4. Coding the data:

Codes are words or a phrase which summarise and encapsulates the concepts of within the text or visual data. It helps to establish an important link between the data collected and the meanings generated out of the coding framework of Thomas (2006) and Saldaña (2016).

The data collected was categorized and put into a common matrix. This categorized matrix was further divided and segregated into various other similar items which was used finalized for the coding and then analyzed. As suggested by Patton (2014), only those data which were suitable for purpose of the research was utilized for the research, as qualitative research generates huge amount of data. Therefore, reducing the data from less important to important ones and categorizing them into significant patterns and framework resulted in generating a meaningful analysis.

The raw data was read in detail to derive concepts and themes in this study as suggested by Thomas (2006) and Saldaña (2016). The data was examined line by line by assigning codes to paragraphs or segments of texts as concepts emerged that were relevant to the objectives of the study. Due to the recurring process of coding the data, the existing data was looked switching back and forth between data analysis and literature to make sense of emerging concepts.

Coding of the data was done using qualitative data analysis software. Initially transcripts were made of Paatal Lok, Special Ops, The Family Man and Sacred Games. The transcripts were made with literal understanding of the Hindi audio to English written transcripts following the timestamps of each event as and when it occurred in the videos. English was used as the language to transcribe the videos.

Further, to conceptualize and manoeuvre the methodology process through the coded transcripts, codes were developed through line-by-line coding which was later developed in themes that helped in achieving the research purpose. The codes were then used to capture the most empirically supported and conceptually intriguing themes that suited the research objectives and questions. The codes generated and categorised along with the subcodes by the researcher are as follows:

Table 3

Individual Identities

Codes	Subcodes
Association of ethnicity with individual identities	Considering victorious, lack of sense of achievement, class differentiation, sexuality as an identity.
Place of origin	Mumbai, Karnataka, Kerela, Chennai, Northeast, Delhi, Pakistan.
Religion	Christian, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu

Table 4*Collective identities*

Codes	Subcodes
Association of ethnicity with individual identities	Sense of belonging to a group, belief, social inequality, common destiny, importance to religion.
Places of ethnic origin	Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerela, Delhi, Muslim Dominated Nation, Pakistan.

Table 5*Interrelationship between crime and identity as per socio- economic status ethnicity and sexuality*

Codes	Subcodes
Interrelationship between crime and identity as per socio-economic status	Discrimination on the basis of class, upper class crimes are hidden from lower rank police officers, criminals from low social class, importance of crime according to who is leading the case, crime done by lower class finds prominence if upper class is involved.
Interrelationship between crime and identity as per ethnicity	Muslims as potential threats towards crime, regional reference, Hatred towards Specific Community (Hindu, Muslim, India.), Crime zones (Africa, Europe, Dubai, Syria, Karnataka, Kerela, Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh, Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, UAE)
Interrelationship between crime and identity as per Sexuality:	
Sexuality of heroes	Female and Male
Sexuality of victims	Female and lgbtq
Sexuality of villains	Male, female

Table 6*Stereotyping and discrimination*

Codes	Subcodes
Stereotyping	Labelling as criminals, women as sex objects, Muslims as main suspects of crime, flirtatious male colleague with female colleague, North Indians as brute.

Table 7*Crimes as seen through religious violence, caste-based crime, terrorism, and corruption*

Codes	Subcodes
Religious violence	Creating disharmony, violence on Muslims, violence on Hindus.
Caste	Crime committed by lower caste, rise of lower caste, discrimination by upper caste. Prominent upper-class Hindus.
Terrorism	Associated with Hindus, associated with Muslims.
Types of terrorist attacks	Nuclear attacks, bombs, gun violence
Factors leading to terrorism	Radical motivation, fanaticism, loyalty, religion.
Corruption	Bribing, Misuse of funds, political corruption. Embezzlement, illegitimate private gains.

Table 8*Characteristics of Heroes*

Codes	Subcodes
Characteristics of Heroes	Life struggles of a common man, low self-esteem, low tolerance level, protective, under achiever, under paid, persistent, equipped with tactics to combat crime, integrity and ethics, skilled and focused, benevolent character, patriotism.
Associative Organizations in India	RAW, TASC, CBI, Force One, NSG, ATS, IB, BSF, Indian Army, Mumbai Police, Delhi Police.
Associative Organizations in United States	FBI, CIA and US Seal.
Place of Origin	Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai, Delhi
Religion	Sikh, Muslim, Hindu

Table 9*Characteristics of villains*

Codes	Subcodes
Characteristics of Villains	Common face, Megalomaniac, Assertive, Provoking, Positive gestures, educated, tech savvy, ruining evidences, ruthless, distinct marks, hiding real identity.
Associative Organizations	ISI, Jaish, Al-Qaeda, Others (Hizbuddin, GIA, Lashkar-e-Taiba)
Religion	Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh
Sexuality	Male, female.

Table 10*Characteristics of Victims*

Codes	Subcodes
Characteristics of Victims	LGBTQ Victims, female victims, unheard grievances, collateral victims, victims made by police, innocent victims killed or made hostages in terrorist attacks, victims from circumstances.

Table 11*Interchange of social roles*

Codes	Subcodes
Interchange from Victims to Villains	Personal vendetta, monetary benefit, killing, to evade punishment.
Interchange from Villains to victims	Finding solution, justifying actions, circumstances.
Interchange from heroes to victims	Change in perspectives, negotiations on positions.
Interchange from Heroes to villains	Getting the job done, need of the hour.
Interchange from victims to heroes	Situational advantage.

Table 12

Creating centers and peripheries of ethnic group in a social circle.

Codes	Subcodes
Centers	Pulling within, making an outsider, social hierarchy, gaining trust, soft on female, latent subconscious hatred leading to creation of centers of power.
Periphery	Ideological disagreement, outside of social circle, within social circle, descriptive derogatory verbs for villains, prejudiced against gay, lesbians and transgender, preconceived superior notions

The total codes generated by coding transcripts and memos in the transcripts in the sample size were 2939. The codes have been strategically arranged according to the objectives of the research which been toned and converted into themes for finding the results and discussions. The current codes have fulfilled all the aspects of the research questions and objectives. The coding of complete transcripts has developed concrete the themes that are evident in the research questions and objectives.

The detailed analysis of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 has been done according to the codes derived from visuals and transcripts of web series. In this chapter, the researcher has analysed the text according to Critical Discourse Analysis and applying the context and modality of language and visuals in shaping identity through the usage of vocabulary through choice of words and connotations, quoting verbs, use of rhetoric and metaphors, hyperbole, and metonymy.

The vocabulary through the choice of words and their connotations have been analysed through local connotation of meanings which has positive self-representation and negative self-representation of ideological discourse. The other factors that have been considered are tone of the voice which focuses on stress and intonation (Van Dijk,2001).

In analysing the texts, quoting verbs have been taken into consideration which comprises of Meta propositional verbs which are assertive, directive and expressive in nature in revealing identities in the text. In addition, transcript verbs which add to the discourse and discourse signalling verbs which progresses the discourse further have been taken into consideration (Machin & Mayr, 2012, Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Rhetoric and metaphors in the texts has helped in understanding the meanings and its relationship with the context as metaphors signify the power relationship among the participants also referring to those references and circumstances which may or may not be applicable (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

The exaggeration (hyperbole) used in the discourse has been used to reveal the identity within the discourse (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

The various metonymy used in the discourse has been analysed to understand the similarity between the usage of language which has been used in the substitution to denote and derive the meanings intended (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

As per the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, the visuals in the web series have been analyzed through representative of various latent meanings in both the text as well as the visuals. The visuals have been analysed through decoding signs in images and various denotations, semiotic choices and technical articulation in the visuals

using narrative, conceptual and compositional structures, dealing with the production of the visual in terms of tones used in the visuals.

Decoding signs in images and various denotations and analysis have been conducted through conceptual structures consisting of classificational and symbolic process (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Semiotic choices and decoding power have been looked upon in this entire chapter through the gaze. Gaze has been taken through subjective and objective point of view which gives meanings and perception as shown by the image that has been produced. The semiotic deals with the interactive metafunction dealing with image act consisting of demand and offer gaze serves the intended purpose of what the images mean within the framework of social structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The demand gaze has been taken through subjective point of view and the offer gaze has been taken from the objective perspective which informs the viewers and gives information about the image (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021).

Technical Articulation in the Visuals has been seen through compositional metafunction. Saliency and framing have been taken to analyse the visuals (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021).

Chapter - 4

4: Individual and Collective Identities

This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the four-web series Paatal Lok, The Family Man, Special Ops and Sacred Games (Season 1). The text analysis has been done after extensive study of review of literature on Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 1994, 1995, 2008). The visual analysis has been done through Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). Citing Van Dijk (1994), the societal power and domination related to ethnic communities, discourse and its access to power, social cognition, texts and contexts, strategies to produce discriminatory talks, and social strategies and functions of prejudiced talks are the core principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which has been used to analyse the data to ascertain the relationships between the role players in terms of heroes, villains and victims in the web series.

4.1. Identity in Paatal Lok.

In this chapter the various identities of heroes, victims and villains have been ascertained through the usage of language as texts and visuals which have represented socio-economic class, ethnicity and sexuality of the role players. This also consists of the analysis that determines various patterns in representations of social roles in the sample Paatal Lok.

Althusser (1979) points out illusionary sense of real conditions. Hathi Ram Chaudhary has been seen as the hero who works as police is an under achiever, has been a victim of professional discrimination and hierarchy, suffers from low self-esteem and struggles through personal and professional life. However, as the hero, as

stated by Jasper et al. (2018) with his persistence and tenacity to pursue the truth, overcomes his shortcomings and emerges as an underdog hero.

Imran Ansari is another character who emerges strongly as a hero, but has been subjected to professional and personal discrimination and stereotype owing to his belonging to ethnic Muslim group as his background. As stated by Khan (2022a) mainstream Indian media has stereotyped Muslims as criminals, Imran Ansari on the other hand is persistent in punishing the criminal for their crimes has been a dominant factor as it ascertains his fight against stereotyping and proving his patriotism in a country which sees Muslims as people with latent threat to the nation and common people.

Confirming to Becker (1963), Vishal Tyagi, labelled as Hatoda Tyagi, is the villain who has been a victim as an outcome from unheard grievances and at the same time framed by corrupt police officers for their personal gain. Villains as stated by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018) mostly come from lower socio-economic background. Therefore, Hatoda Tyagi's role begins with the representation of villain coming from low socio-economic background, but interchanges to a victim who has been a victim of circumstances as gets sacrificed amongst the power and dominance of the powerful people in the society as a collateral damage within the powerful people as proposed by Van Dijk (1995).

The lower caste people face oppression as stated by Deshpande & Spears (2016). Tope Singh, a member of the lower caste facing discrimination and oppression amongst the hands of upper caste people takes drastic actions which leads him to adopt deviance as he seeks freedom from the oppression. The powerful people have more access in the society (Van Dijk, 1995). Tope Singh's alliance with leaders of his

caste, give him the confidence to commit the crime, however fails to achieve his goal against the people from the dominant upper caste as they have more access over the power, they have already been exercising within the community. Hence, Tope Singh too becomes a victim of circumstances later in the discourse as he turns into one from villain.

As stated by Van Dijk (1995), the upper-class people work as moral entrepreneurs for safeguarding the morals and standards in the society. Sanjeev Mehra's character as a prominent journalist defines how the powerful people belonging to upper social economic status established their role as moral entrepreneurs for the society to establish a structure to function, however, uses the circumstances to their advantages which makes them villainous in nature.

Penfold-Mounce (2009) states that a criminal will often find collectivism while safeguarding other people. Donullia Gujjar, as Masterji, the notorious criminal has been represented with a sense of belonging as the group members associated themselves with him. He represents hope that determines an individual to adopt collective identity and join his group as they believe in the leader of the group. He is seen as a ray of hope to find justice within the judicial failure to deliver justice to the victims.

Van Dijk (1995), states that discriminatory talks can strategically move centers of power. DCP Bhagat holds the highest rank amongst the police officers with upper socio-economic background within the discourse with more access to information and power. Owing to corruption and his greed to reach greater heights in his career, he fails to defend the law and order as he joins hands in the conspiracy for committing crime and creating victims out of police atrocities. He discriminates, conspires and

frames Hathi Ram Chaudhary to make him take the fall of the failed mission to bring the criminal towards justice.

Van Dijk (1995) states the access and power lies in the hands of the powerful. Inspector Dahiya, a police officer who is a pawn in the hands of DCP Bhagat both get ambitious for power and dominance ends up in corruption and hence leading to guard and uphold the law and order.

As stated by Van Dijk (1995), the discriminatory talks and strategies can lead to social dominance. SHO Virk, a rival colleague of Hathi Ram Chaudhary, discriminates him for being incompetent and not letting him compete in the professional hierarchy. He under estimates his colleague who has been an underdog and does not let him prosper under him.

Hall (1997a) states that language and texts can create social hierarchies. Rachana Dwivedi although bureaucrat in Central Bureau of Investigation holds a stereotyped preconceived notions towards Muslim community as she sees them as a threat to the nation, holding negative beliefs about Muslim community. She uses the state machineries and manipulates information about the criminals in order to win the favour of political party and hence climb up in social hierarchy.

Kharshiing (2020) establishes that North East India have always had marginalised representations in the main stream Indian media. Mary Lyngdoh, a transgender woman, becomes a victim because of her ethnicity as she belongs to North East India. She is represented and looked down upon with a stereotyped image of a North Eastern origin who is seen to be frivolous character involved in prostitution and crime.

As stated by Patnaik (2017), victims are also circumstantial and are created as an outcome of their activities. Rajbir Gujjar, characterised as a sports teacher and a police officer, becomes a victim in the discourse as he harbours the infamous criminal Hatoda Tyagi under Donullia Gujjar. He becomes the victim of circumstances, where he tries to save the life of his student Vishal Tyagi or Hatoda Tyagi

Becker (1963), states that criminals build their career by how the society views and labels them. Kabir M, belonging to Muslim community with an alleged Pakistani passport has been seen as an outsider capable of committing heinous crime with the stereotyped notion that Muslims are a danger to the Indian state. Due to this discrimination, he falls prey to the networked and organized crime spun by police and politicians

4.1.1. Language and Identity in Paatal Lok

The formation of identity through language has played an important part in the changing power centers which has been achieved through the elements of meanings like usage of particular words, descriptions and visuals which has been derived from the multimodality of the languages as stated by Norton (2013) used in the web series Paatal Lok. Understanding identity discourse among minority communities requires, often has led to the creating otherness within the discourse of national ethnic community. The language has been segregated and analysed through linguistic determination, ideology and power, representational strategies, individualisation and collectivisation and referral strategies as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) and Van Dijk (1994). The interpretation of the texts in Critical Discourse Analysis has been understood through the language embedded in the texts and the visuals have

been analysed using the framework of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001, 2006, 2021) Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis.

4.1.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations:

The choice of words in the texts can derive meanings out of the texts. The connotations of the texts can draw power relations existing within the texts. The modality of the discourse sets the tone of representations through usage of words and descriptions as stated by Huckin (1997). The social cognition helps to interpret, learn, think, and argue about the discourse of communication. Knowledge helps to develop and influence the interpretation of the world as texts are an outcome of our action, resulting out of knowledge (Van Dijk, 1994).

4.1.1a.i. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *big case, who does not know you sir, this is the Delhi Police*

The choice of words can derive social relationships developed out of social practices (Fairclough, 1993). The choice of words like *big case, know you*, connotes Hathi Ram Chaudhary's lower social class as he strives to move forward in the structure as stated by Lemyre and Smith (1985). This study also links the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) where the existence and being draws attention to reality. Being in awe of another person connotes preferred meanings as proposed by Hall (1997b) which can derive meaning that the other person holds a high regard in the society and has been represented as a symbol of success.

Delhi Police connotes the new found confidence which an underdog police officer has gained power in the form of confidence from lowly police to a capable one who has become a seeker for truth and hold true to his working ethics. As McMahon (2008) states an individual safeguards his identity irrespective of the group he belongs to. Hathi Ram Chaudhary has risen above his individual identity as low rank, incapable police officer to collective represents the police force who has worked diligently to stop the crime and get to the bottom of the problem in finding the actual culprit.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *was not his fault, horoscope is blessed*

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) holds the view that an individual directly produces meanings of the texts. Therefore, this study reveals that words like *blessed horoscope* can be interpreted with the connotation that Hatoda Tyagi has been shown to possess all the powers and qualities of a hero, hence, for a limited period, he has been transformed from villain to hero confirming to what Bergstrand and Jasper (2018) states that the villains are extremely powerful and invincible. The construction of individual identity is established here for Hatoda Tyagi as the perpetrator crime and therefore changing his identity from villain to the victim. Words have been used to create target, defend and achieve dominance and power as proposed by Van Dijk (1997). *It was not his fault* used as a denotic modality of the language as stated by Van Dijk (1994) has connoted as a positive connotation, where the oppressed by the powerful led Hatoda Tyagi to adopt his identity as a criminal and hence justifying his crimes.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *King of Dalits' heart, Muslim butcher, a Kana (Dalit) Commando*

As proposed by Edwards (2009), interrelatedness between individuals and groups can create us and them. Hence, the reference to *King of Dalits*, represents the collective identity of the group which is represented in the form of their chosen leader and naming him as the one who rules the *Dalits*, *Muslim butcher*, *Kana Commando* are positive connotations signifying people coming from inclusive in the group comprising of various caste, class and religious backgrounds which co relates with Appiah's (2002) concept of identity that it comprises of being ethnically central. This arises the sense of belonging to a group with common ties allowing the group member to exercise the power and express it during a favourable situation, establishing the concept of Hunt and Benford's (2004) of collective identity among its members as they get together for a common purpose.

4.1.1a. ii. Negative Connotations:

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Heavens*, *Earth*, *Paatal Lok*, *bite at the precious souls of the earth people*, *poor cop*, *lowly farmer*

Following the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), the social structure in the society exists due to what human's exercise in the society. Therefore, this study links with language which gauges the social structures based on human activities. Words like *Heavens* here has been seen as negative connotation as stated by Van Dijk (2001) which signifies an upper social class system structure which is out of bounds for people belonging to the lower-class people. *Earth* here connotes the middle-class system, which just exist as a part of the social class system. Bernburg (2019) states that when labelling and classifying of criminals often gives rise to negative behavior. Here, *Paatal Lok* connotes the lower-class system who are neither welcomed nor are people happy with their existence as they are the labelled as

offenders of crime. Agreeing to Hall (2006), the study has seen representations of the class structure as evident in the study through metaphoric usage of the words which are tangled with the connotative meanings.

Foucault (1975) has discussed about the power shaping the course of relationship among people thereby shaping the course of actions, *Bite at the precious souls of the earth people-* in a similar way, the discourse connotes that the importance of the lower-class social structure comes into existence only when they get in the way of the middle- or upper-class people. Supporting Becker's (1963) Labelling Theory, the upper classes creates distinctions and is more prominently dominating in the society. It takes the upper-class scandalous crimes to give recognition importance and pave way for the involvement of the lower-class police heroes with individual identity where their presence has been acknowledged and agreeing to Hunt and Benford (2004) that they get the sense of belonging in the group.

The epistemic modality of the usage of language *poor cop* as stated by Van Dijk (1997) has used language as a discourse has been seen as the construction of identity relating to power and dominance existing within the society as stated by Van Dijk (1994). Hathi Ram Chaudhary has very low self-esteem about himself, hence, as he narrates the functioning of the society and the discrimination of professional hierarchy that comes with his profession therefore during the discourse of identity Hathi Ram Chaudhary supporting what Hall (1997a) states where language represents and constructs the meaning of power and ideology embedded in the existing structures.

Belonging to the lower social class, the offender's family refers themselves as *lowly farmer* have already given up on the fact that they are no longer associated with the offender. Belonging to lower social class, they have accepted the fact of being an

offender and have given up on the freedom of the criminal and their fight for justice. The representation of lower social class in the discourse agrees with Hall (2006) as the representations of power always have a hidden meaning which can be related to wider concept. The labeling of the offenders has often been associated to the collective identity of social class that they belong too as proposed to the concept by Bontrager et al. (2005).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *strip, Nepali wh***, operation done after the job*

Mary Lyngdoh, a transgender was asked to *strip* naked called *Nepali wh**** on being arrested as a suspect in a crime along with other offenders. Represented as a character from North East India, the Indian main stream media has often portrayed which agrees to what has been stated by Kahrsiing (2020) where North Eastern characters as people from the fringes who are yet to belong to the national in-group of mainstream Indian ethnicity. Supporting Howarth's (2007) notion, the minority community is viewed from the perspective of the people from where they live and reside in the discourse. Gender, age and address being additional factor of representation of these communities in developing collective identity.

Supporting Monagan (2017), notion of transgenders as sidelined communities, the study finds that transgenders have always been marginalized in the mainstream media, however, now they are finding new narratives of representation in web series. The identities of marginalized sections have been presented as representational strategy as projected by Machin and Mayr (2012). The usage of words like *operation done after the job* has representational strategy of social actors within the texts which describes the voice of the suppressed as the marginalized identity tries to find their representation to fit into the norms of social structure through socially acceptable

behaviour and act. Here too, the transgenders have been seen as an outsider who are trying to fit into the society, yet tries to struggle for the due respect and rights in the society. The derogatory remarks passed on to them through and seeing them through discriminatory lens has been very distinguishing in the study.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *wanted gangster in Chitrakoot, UP, never been arrested, kidnapping, ransom, extortion... and forty-five murders, dreaded, ruthless killer, in forty-five gruesome murders, Bundelkhand*

Agreeing to the Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), the society exists because of human activities. Therefore, usage of words like *wanted gangster, dreaded, ruthless, gruesome* paints the character Vishal Tyagi, known as Hatoda Tyagi with a negative connotation and seen symbol of crime and represents fear, terror and ruthlessness as projected by Hall (1997a). The language here represents the representational strategy used for the characters here describes the voice of the offender who will not hesitate to commit crime and takes pride in the symbolic significance he represents within his community. As conferred by Bernburg (2019) social labelling through the usage of denotic modality of language as stated by Van Dijk (1994) on the deviant has been done with preconceived notions about a community leading to stigmatization and stereotyping of those community and place of origin which will aggravate the future course of crime hence developing a strong sense of belonging further developing it in the formation of collective identity.

Places of origin *Chitrakoot, UP, several states, Bundelkhand* have had an important representation of collective identity associated with crime in this study. Agreeing to Patnaik (2017), crime has and its representations with places in North India especially Uttar Pradesh has been seen with negative connotation where the origin of the

criminals has been labelled as criminals as they belong to the particular place. Hotoda Tyagi belongs to low status group, the caste has played an important role in the representation of villains in the web series. In India, caste, gender and class have played an important representation to crimes. Agreeing to Joshi (2001), the study also shows that lower caste people have been seen through stereotyped lens of discrimination where they have portrayed as habitual offenders where crimes have been embedded upon them through hierarchy hence constituting their identity as criminals

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *change their community's image, Muslim working on the case, Muslim criminal, LGBT Character, Tariq, Kabir M, Jihadi Literature, Kabir does not know Urdu*

The study agrees to Guinote (2014) which says that power has the ability to create social hierarchies and thus reprimand and recognize the actions within the hierarchy. As Appleby (2010) states, the extent on which the labeling of a group or an individual is done depends on the social class they belong to. The representation of ethnic Muslim minorities as put forward by Althusser (1979) represents the concept of interpellation in the form of recognition and misrecognition as words like *change their communities' image* where Imran Ansari belonging to Muslim community have been connoted using negatively connotative words *Muslim working on the case* has been used to show the stereotyped notions of the people about Muslim man who did not do his job properly as he is a Muslim who are not diligent towards their duties. Words like *Jihadi, Muslim*, as presented according to Khan (2022a), confirms in this study that the Indian media sees Muslim community as major offenders and therefore label them for all the harmful intentions the community might carry against the

country. The representational strategy used through the epistemic modality of language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) in the above text, has a clear distinction of us and them, as the character belonging to ethnic Muslim minority community, with distinct usage of words like *Muslim*, *Muslim criminal*, *Tariq*, *Kabir M*, *Jihad*. A Muslim police officer must prove his worth of being competent and patriotic as his community has been labelled as perpetrators of crime. Confirming Bernburg (2019) the study has revealed the labelling of an individual of community as an offender often resulting in stereotyping and stigmatization of the entire community. The identity of the suspected villain, Kabir M has been used as a context to referral strategy of the language as suggested by Van Dijk (1998) distinguishing and referring to people from religious Muslim community consisting of ethnic minority to represent them as preparators of crime due to their religious affiliations whereas he has been labelled as criminal is obvious with words like *Kabir does not know Urdu* only because he belongs to the Muslim community are evident in the study.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *intend to murder*, *assassination attempt*, *never been arrested*, *police on Bajpayee's payroll*, *men who tried to finish*, *he is a monster*, *murder champion*

The negative connotative words as stated by Van Dijk (2001) like *murder*, *never arrested*, *monster*, *murder champion* have been used to describe the villain Hatoda Tyagi. By painting the picture of ruthlessness, extreme in human capacity to commit crime against common man and his extra strength of achieving difficult feat as stated by Bergstand and Jasper (2018) has played a substantial role in creating the representation role of the through preferred meanings as stated by Hall (1997b) where the criminal has been seen through the perceptive lens.

Words like *assassination attempt, Bajpayee's payroll, men who tried to finish* reveals the social strategy to represent a community with prejudiced talk through using epistemic modality language of personal experience ultimately adds to the connotative narrative of the particular community agreeing to Van Dijk (1995) about the prejudiced talks creating social dominance. The usage of language like *men who tried to finish* here refers to Sanjeev Mehra's individual identity and his pursuance to belong to the group can be seen interdependent on the positive or negative connotative attitude of the narration that he makes which refers to the importance he holds in the society as he creates an image of person who holds extreme importance in the society.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *If a man likes dogs, he is a good man, if dogs like a man, he is a good man*

The references of *dog, good man* refers to the loyalty dog refers to. The importance of *dog* as a text has come with conceptual reference as stated by Hall (1997a) to create an access mentally to conceptualize a meaning of *dog* as a concept to signify a target manto create a positive connotation to the language.

4.1.1b. Quoting verbs

Cockroach murdered, bug's bike, flea

The descriptive verbs used in the form of *cockroach, bug's, flea*, for lower class people are representative of the class structure existing within the system. Supporting the statement of Vandrick (2014), the inequality is socio-economic class, the study has found out that the lower-class system are looked down upon and hence susceptible for committing crimes. Confirming that an individual's identity is shaped

by collective identity as projected by Evans (2016) the study too has found that the collective identity is established through the usage of descriptive language determines the perception of the community being referred to as it shapes their identity. Talks here have produced a stronger narrative with the usage of discriminatory language as proposed by Van Dijk (1995), the study here too has talks used to describe the flow of discourse and determine the power of the upper-class people who thinks lowly of the lower-class people.

This whole world.... At the very bottom is... the Paatal Lok, the one that belongs to the insects the creepy crawlies

The study supports Bontrager et al. (2005), where the labelling of criminal is determinant of the world one lives in. The presence of distinct labelling of class discrimination as presented by Hathi Ram Chaudhary determines the linguistic determination of the world he perceives to believe in and has lived so far. The epistemic modality of language used determines that Hathi Ram Chaudhary does not have the sense of belonging to community in the social circle that he belongs to as stated by Van Dijk (1997). It has been depicted very evidently in the study that as Hathi Ram Chaudhary, the police officer, narrates the social class system which is existent in the situation; it builds the collective identity of people coming from various social classes. The segregation of the world through language has been according to the social class has been determined by how the language has differentiated and determines the class system within the social structure of the society.

The policeman only gets the number of the scandal's investigation and nothing else.

Fifteen years in this netherworld, no word ever gets out

Using Van Dijk's (2008) epistemic modality of the language in the study, the language determines Hathi Ram Chaudhary's struggles to find recognition in his own group as the access of power with the more influential group retain the information from the less powerful ones. Confirming to Althusser (1979), this study too reveals that his individual identity depending on his ideological views have been blurred where his development has been hindered as he lacks the sense of belonging to group. Hall's (1985) representation of lower-class police officer in the discourse determines the usage of epistemic modality of language that used in the construction of identity has played an important role in the form of power play of dominance on lower class structure.

But every once in a while, the crawlies from Netherworld (Paatal Lok) crawl out into the open and bite at the precious souls of the earth people and when that happens, there is a scandal.

The study depicts a direct relation of the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) about the production of knowledge and the meanings it derives out of it. Descriptive words like *crawlies*, *scandal* have been representative of the social structures which Hathi Ram uses as his knowledge and interprets meanings of the words. Foucault (1975) has discussed about the power shaping the course of relationship among people thereby shaping the course of actions. In a similar way supporting Van Dijk's (1997) concept of upper-class hegemony, the study finds that it takes the upper-class scandalous crimes to give recognition, importance and pave way for the involvement of the lower-class police heroes where their presence has been acknowledged and they get the sense of belonging in the group, which can be

reflected through epistemic modality of the usage of language. Using Hall's (1985) representation, the study has focused on how people from low social class are seen here as the catalyst for bigger crimes, where often the representation of those who are in minority have been through sensationalised through extreme behaviour and because of that they too have been noticed.

*Stop, m****, out of the car, now, strip off your clothes, search him thoroughly, stand up, take it off, the ba****d will not even say his name*

The usage of descriptive words in the study in the form of order - *stop, out of car, strip off, stand up, take it off, will not even say his name m****er, ba****d* as has been in accordance Becker (1963) referring to labelling of criminals according to the judgements of dominant group over another. The denotic language used to describe the villains here has been a clear approach of social labelling who are classified as deviants and looked from the lens of stereotyping and discrimination along with the social stigma as stated by Bernburg (2019). As projected by Guinote (2014), the discourse in the study too has created a social hierarchy as powers are exercised on the villains to bring about the desired outcome of actions, to make the perpetrators of crime accept their crime. Van Dijk (1997) affirms the hierarchy in social roles; hence the study also shows that the police affirm their social roles to be higher than the criminals who are under their custody. The concept of collective as proposed by Hunt and Benford (2004) has shown in the study that the collective identity has thus been established as the police are working towards achieving the same goals via the same action.

Tope Singh, leader of the pack

Words like *leader*, *pack* describes and establishes the individual and collective identity of the characters within the discourse. Agreeing to Fairclough (2013), the study here reveals that critical discourse focuses on the usage of language which helps in establishing the link between the discourse and the multi-layered creation of meanings derived from the language and its discourse. As suggested by Appleby (2010), labeling of criminals on the individual or collective level creates the centers of power in the social level. This study too reveals that to construct the meaning of being the gang leader of the notorious criminals, Tope Singh has already been labelled as a criminal, who, through the construction of meaning, as assumed by the state machineries has the potential to create damage within the system.

*He belongs to a lower caste but he slashed the upper caste boys. carved them open with his knife. up and down, left and right. he did not see anything. m****

This study links the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) that the social structure of the society exists because humans and its activity is exercised. There has been a distinct depiction of the class and caste differentiation through the usage of prominent and strong denotic modality of language as proposed by Van Dijk (1994) like *lower caste*, *slashed upper class*, *carved open* relating to committing crime by people who belong to lower social class and lower caste system, hence indicating the us and them notion of power. The upper class and caste community view them as disreputable who are on the verge of tarnishing the image of the upper-class people. The lower caste and class people have been seen as people who do not have the access and rights exercise their control, rise from their class, and take similar stand as upper caste and class people. Supporting Kumar's (2004) account, caste being a social hierarchy and social structure, the study too reveals that caste and class in the Indian

context are seen as a basic formation of societal structure as the upper caste and class label the lower class and caste people as criminals and perpetrators of crime hence constructing their collective identity as criminals.

*Shot-put player like him, have made it to the national team. Take me in your army,
Master ji*

Contesting to Fearon (1999), the individual identity is to maintain and see self-esteem and self-image leading to collective identity. This study too, uses the dynamic modality of the language to remark about Hatoda Tyagi as a sportsman who could have made it to the national team where his individual identity keeps evolving has his self-worth and esteem keeps altering due to the behaviour of the society. To bring about a change in the social structure, Hatoda Tyagi, asks to be taken into the group of rebels who are more powerful than him which confirms Penfold-Mounce's (2009) concept to change the social structure and thus establish collective identity. Agreeing to self-categorising himself in the group as Ashmore et al. (2004) puts across, Hatoda Tyagi too self categorises himself to belong to the group as one of them. Social cognition here has played an important part as the construction of social being by an individual agreeing to Guinote (2014), gives rise to conflicts as counter power emerges to bring about the change as stated by Van Dijk (1995). In this discourse, the representation of a villain to the victim of circumstances through wrongful portrayal and construction the image of the villain is seen and therefore distorting of the image of the villain who has been the victim of offender-blaming phenomenon as supported by Britto et al. (2007).

4.1.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

For analysing the rhetoric and metaphors within discourse, various texts have been segregated that has been used for understanding the reference to the context as it reveals identities in the discourse as suggested by Van Dijk (1984, 1994) , Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021) and Machin and Mayr (2012).

Paatal Lok

Paatal Lok with rhetoric metaphor has used as Indian mythological reference to underworld which is full of darkness, evil, fear and with no hope of improvement similar to the study by Ghosh (2013). *Paatal Lok* has been a representation of the social class structure, which has been continuously used in the text as a part of the discourse to bring about class differentiation similar to the study by Vandrick (2014).

Revenge is not a crime; it is a karmic duty

This study agrees to Sarat (1997) where the individual identity of any criminal has relationship to their relationship with circumstances of pain, grief, angst which has happened in their past. Their identity, very subtly, has been subjected to their past experiences which lead to motivating them into committing crime often to take vengeance. This study links Bhaskar's (1975) Critical Realism paradigm of existence and reality to Hatoda Tyagi's *revenge* as a *crime* which has been metaphorically referred to *karmic duty* has been seen in the form of justice delivered to the injustice faced by him and his family due to socio economic status by the society. His preference to take the matters into his own has been a determination that he has lost faith in the system therefore has taken refuge delivering justice himself. Becker (1963) has mentioned that the functioning of the society essentially is responsible for

the hampering or accomplishing the purpose of groups. Therefore, labelling of the criminals becomes evident as they collectively resort to deviance breaking the social norms. The representation of criminals through the language can be interpreted in the manner of understanding the behaviour of criminal as stated by Hall's (1997) Representation Theory.

Donullia Gujjar, dacoit for some, saint for others, there is hardly a Gujjar family in Chitrakoot that does not owe Donullia or Gwala a debt

As we look at the cultural stance of the media as expressed by Penfold-Mounce (2009), the role of a criminal standing up for one's community in between societal domination and subjugation has often seen as a hero by the oppressed community. Supporting the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) of directly producing the knowledge and the meanings generated out of it, Donullia Gujjar in this study has been referred to as Robin Hood's character as stated by Penfold-Mounce (2009), has been highly acceptable by the audience as he emerges a hero out of the economically deprived community and committing crime in the wealthier community to fulfil the gap between the two hence symbolically representing the community they belong to as they break the barriers. The metaphoric representation of *Donullia Gujjar* as *saint, dacoit* represents his stance as a hero amongst his community. The study agrees to statement by Hall (1997a) which expresses that representations are often fluid and can bring about a change in the existence of an individual or a group creating an individual or collective identity which helps to position an individual or group in the discourse. Here too, Donullia Gujjar has been seen as someone who has been metaphorically related to Robin Hood as he provides and safeguards the interest of his communities in the rhetoric. Metaphors like *every family, in debt* creates the demand

and supply bridge that the villagers are forever indebted to Donullia and Gwala Gujjar therefore, creating a collective identity of people whom he represents thus earning loyalty for him. He has been celebrated as a hero by his community and those against him as a notorious gangster who has allowed flourishing crime under the pretext of justice.

Master ji, wherever I look, I see you, hail Lord Shiva, hail Lord Shiva, Gwala like Bharat, keeps his brother Ram Chandra's slippers on his hands and delivers justice

Approaching the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) *Masterji* here is referred to Donullia Gujjar who represents connection between reality and existing social structure. He is symbolic as the leader of the gang, where the other members of the community look up to. In this study, the rhetoric metaphor *Masterji* is representing the community of individuals who have collaborated for the collective common action to take place they believe in similar ideologies represented by Hall (1997a). The language here is part of the discourse of multifaceted social construction of the community consisting of the society that are existing within the part of the discourse as stated by Fairclough (2013).

Depicting the human knowledge of reality as seen through Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975), *I see you, Lord Shiva* has metaphorically represented the omnipresence of Donullia Gujjar like the Hindu God Shiva who has its presence everywhere. This represents the exercising of power through power and cognitive beliefs in the form of mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995).

Gwala like Bharat, Ram Chandra's slippers, delivers justice

The rhetoric metaphors related to lord *Ram* as hero for justice and loyalty like *Bharat*, a character from Ramayan, who is the step brother to lord Ram and takes care of the kingdom as stated by Mankekar (2002) during his absences has been represented by Gwala Gujjar, brother of Donullia Gujjar, who loyally takes care of his kingdom in his absence. Here too, Gwala Gujjar tries to retain his power via exercising the mental control as proposed Van Dijk (1995) when an individual wants to exercise control over his group.

Just look at his hands, hard as rock, he is a monster Hiranya Kashyap, Tyagi turned out to be the Bhim from Mahabharat. When you will die, it will neither be day, nor night... neither at the hands of a friend, nor a foe... and neither by an accident, nor by a conspiracy

Hatoda Tyagi, in rhetoric metaphor, has been represented as *Bhim* from Hindu mythology as stated by Ghosh (2013) as he represents the strength possessed by him in an extraordinary way which made him capable to taking revenge. In this discourse, a villain's role has been characterised and seen in a positive manner who are representative of the justice system they belong to similar to the study by Kort-Butler (2012).

Hatoda Tyagi at the same time has been compared to Indian mythological character *Hiranya Kashyap* and a *monster* as *Hiranya Kashyap* is the evil character in the Indian mythology, villainised for his demeaning morals and activities against his own kin as stated by Bansal (2022). *Hiranya Kashyap and monster* are both terms which metaphorically represent the villain creating a powerful negative emotion as stated by Bergstand and Jasper (2018).

Hatoda Tyagi has been referred to as *hard as rock* which metaphorically represents that he can achieve unfathomable feats if given the opportunity, as he does not have the heart of the human to show compassion and sympathy while committing crime like the study by Blain (2022). The constructionist approach of representation by Hall (1997a) has been used for representing the individual identity as an individual is looking for aspirations to find sense of belonging to the group thus developing collective identity has been found in the study which agrees to the statement projected by Hunt and Benford (2004).

The epistemic modality of the language used here for Hatoda Tyagi's death determines the way how the death of Hatoda Tyagi will be determined to establish the power. Morley 's (2019) concept about individual identity in the discourse to form a powerful collective identity has been discussed in the discourse as identity of the individual here has been represented that the power of destruction as it brings about new change.

Dog is Lord Dharma, dog like Lord Dharma, doorway to Heaven, your dog did not reach you to Heaven, but it saved you from reaching there

The mythological metaphoric references to the Hindu characters as stated by Mankekar (2002) creates the importance of religious identity as it establishes the direct connection of good over evil where the importance of one's duties are related to highest form of attainment of heaven. The choices that one makes in the process have been representative of the groups which he self-categorises to have the sense of belonging as stated by Ashmore et al. (2004). The epistemic modality of language used here has issued deeper meaning of dog that has a metaphoric significance of loyalty which is directly related to the karmic work done attaining the highest form of

achievement in the form of opening of the *doorway to heaven*. *Reaching heaven* again has been used as a metaphor related to death, which the dog prevented Sanjeev Mehra from reaching.

4.1.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

Hyperbole and metonymy have been used in the text to represent power, class and dominance in the following texts that are descriptive in nature to portray various social roles and their position in the society as stated by Van Dijk (2006).

We used to be heroes

The context of the hyperbole *heroes* here talks about glorious past as now the prominent journalist has been under the radar of judgement and criticism for his work. The dynamic modality of the usage here in the discourse which talks about the turn of events for a hero journalist to now the victim critiquing about the disappointment and failure of the system that has led to the downfall of the hero as stated by Best (1997). The hyperbole signifies the representational system the world functions on Hall (1997a). This text has also revealed the social structure where the context of heroes can be interpreted as a failed personality who has failed to deliver justice within the system as stated by Van Dijk (1997).

His most special and reliable weapon is Hatoda, not a human's horoscope, no one will be able to kill him

The denotic modality of the language like *no one will be able to kill him, not a human's horoscope; special and reliable weapons* have been used as a hyperbole where Hatoda Tyagi has been seen as a criminal hero who has emerged to possess

supernatural human powers as stated by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018) with regards to villains. At the same time the study uses the hyperboles as stated by Van Dijk (1997) that have exaggerated his power and position as the one who is highest in the social structure who is invincible Hatoda Tyagi has seen as a part of the collective identity who has self-categorised himself to belong to the group which he strongly feels a part of.

I am just suspended from duty, I am not dead

The hyperbole text used as *suspension, dead* refers to that suspension of Hathi Ram Chaudhary has made him loose the confidence with his failure and no achievements agreeing to professional discrimination as laid down by Terpstra and Salet (2020). His individual identity as a police officer to self-categorise himself as a hero to deliver justice and his inability to rise to and belong to the group delivering justice has been unaccomplished as stated by Hunt and Benford (2004). The discourse here has created a power center as stated by Van Dijk (1989) where the more powerful one has decided to bring down the less powerful like Hathi Ram Chaudhary from exercising his rights and duties.

Killing of a prominent journalist Ma'am, the voice of media is being silenced; freedom of speech is in danger... so on and so forth, news like this creates political unrest, and elections are round the corner, and the blame would have directly gone to the ruling party, given your past connection with them

Paul (2003) puts forth that the presentation of crime which has a radical disturbing perspective through have always garnered more attention than the ones where these elements are missing, hence determining the political power and ideology prevailing

in the society and similar results have been observed in the study. Usage of hyperboles like *killing of prominent journalist, freedom of speech in danger political unrest* determines the linguistic perception, Rachana Diwedi (from Central Bureau of Investigation), has tried to radicalize the presentation of facts on the assassination of Sanjeev Mehra, the famous journalist who has been mentioned here as a center of attention inviting major crime by the criminals who had allegedly been arrested for trying to assassinate a prominent journalist. Berk (2015) mentions earlier studies by Durkheim on labelling of criminal states that crime and punishment has are interrelated to maintain the social order in the society and thus maintain the necessary equilibrium. Here, as mentioned, the political loss for one and gain for the other has been very evident in the language used as it determines the perception of the world that they have determined displaying a pattern for ideology and power.

The dangers lie in the air we breathe, in the words we speak, even in the words we do not utter for fear of getting killed

The epistemic modality of hyperbole used for *dangers, lie in the air we breathe, words, killed* represent the overdramatization of words used by Sanjeev Mehra as he relates language to label the criminals associated with crime as he creates a discourse as a moral entrepreneur labelling a group of people as criminals as suggested by Becker (1963). The crime here has not been evidently defined but creates an act of deviance through the usage of texts using stereotyping and social stigma confirming Bernburg (2019) about social stigma and discrimination.

At the same time, Donullia is at 1008 places, he is the man with a thousand faces

Like the omnipresence presence God as stated by Jaggi (2011) Donullia Gujjar has been used to describe with dynamic modality of language used with words like *1008 places 1000 faces* refers to the ability of Donullia Gujjar being at various presence of the same time, which is an indication of how a leader looks after his subjects as stated by Penfold-Mounce (2009) suggests creating of collective identity through sense of belonging. As Van Dijk (1995) states the mental control of controlling by not physically being present to exercise power and dominance, Donullia Gujjar too exercises the same as being at different places at the same time; Donullia Gujjar has exercised mental control to be with his people.

First, they tried to silence me, but could not, then they tried to finish me, but again, they could not, but today, the action was swift, justice was instant, terrorist, Vishal Tyagi, Hatoda Tyagi, tried to flee the Patiala House Court, thwarted by alert police officials, Tyagi had no other option but to shoot himself dead

Here, Sanjeev Mehra characterizes as the victim. Through the use of hyperbole as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) of building, an labelling of the terrorist and villains has been established, thereby creating the notion of deserved punishment for the crimes that they have committed as stated by (Becker (1963) has bee reflected with words like *the action was swift, justice was instant, terrorist, Vishal Tyagi, Hatoda Tyagi, tried to flee the Patiala House Court, thwarted by alert police officials, Tyagi had no other option but to shoot himself dead*. The study has thus analyzed that the interchanging roles of victims to villains is often a characteristic to take vengeance upon the other member who has intended harm to him. By taking revenge, the solution to problem is hence achieved which is similar to the study by Deadman and MacDonald (2004). Usage of words like *first, they tried to silence me, but could not,*

then they tried to finish me, but again, they could not, Sanjeev Mehra is seen to be protecting his individual identity as stated by McMahon (2008) which has determined through the usage of dynamic modality of language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) refers to the value of the life he has led according to his values and moral ethics thus determining his social identity as stated by Appiah (2002).

Smashed open the skulls of three people with a hammer like he squashed a water

Eschholz et al. (2003) states that the fear created by one crime can serve as the fear to establish control and dominance. Agreeing to this, the epistemic usage of words like *smashed, skulls, hammer, water-melon* refers to the context of the intensity of crime for creating fear. Here, *He*, refers to Hatoda Tyagi who has been the perpetrator of crime and constant labeling has made him consistent and obstinate perpetrator who holds the capability of performing heinous crime. Hall's (1997a) constructionist approach is to create an individual's identity as Hatoda Tyagi establishes the power threat within the community which he has oppressed owing to social class discrimination similar to the study by Bontrager et al (2005).

In revenge for a big job, he did a full job on his uncle's sons to avenge his sister

The denotic modality of language in used in terms of big job, full job refers to crime committed on women in the form of *big job as rape and full Job as murder*. The text here has applied Van Dijk's (1997) concept of power centers, where to satisfy the goal which the communities achieve in their motive to create power centers.

For I am not one voice, but a billion voices

The contextual metonymy reference of dominance can be seen through the usage of words like *one voice, representing billion voices* as stated by Guinote (2014). The importance of Sanjeev Mehra as an individual identity trying to belong to a group holds extreme significance of him holding a noteworthy position in the society which agrees to the concept of Hall et al (1978) regarding power and dominance created by upper class, where Sanjeev Mehra has been creating a discourse to suit his narrative of the crime that has been occurred as he thinks he bears the onus of upholding the moral and ethical values of the society.

This system, Chaudhary... looks completely like rotten garbage from the outside. But once you get in and understand... you realize it is well-oiled machinery

The dynamic modality of metonymy language like *system, garbage, it*, referring to system and *well-oiled machinery* has been a reference to the representation of the functionality of the existing system as stated by Hall (1997a). The text here has been found to be challenging as well as confirming the socio-political structures which is existing within the system, as DCP Bhagat talks about the system as *this system, Chaudhary... looks completely like rotten garbage from the outside* and its practices which both works for and against, unless you know how to manipulate the system according to work towards your advantage while agreeing to Van Dijk (1995) as he talks about changes in the social change system.

4.1.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Paatal Lok

The visuals have been decoded through using signs in images and various denotations, semiotic choices and technical articulation used in the visuals (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006).

4.1.2. a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

Decoding of signs in images with various denotations has been seen through conceptual structures through classificational and symbolic process in the images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

The conceptual structure has been representative of the social class structure. The conceptual structures have been decoded through the classificational and symbolic process. In classificational process messages depicted within the images always have the presence of a superior to inferior depictions whether they be in the form of concealed and hidden manner or obvious and evident manner (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

4.1.2.a.i. Classificational Process:

Figure 1

Tope Singh as a lower caste mocked and taunted by upper caste villagers



Figure 2

Tope Singh ridiculed by upper caste villagers



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY>

5)

In Figures 1 and 2, Tope Singh belonging to lower caste is looked down upon by people from upper caste in his village. Here, the lower caste people have been shown in a frame which has a clear depiction of an inferior and superior class as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) as Tope Singh struggles to find his collective identity within his own place agreeing to Ashmore et al. (2004) where an individual struggles to belong to a group. Agreeing to Guinote (2014), the social dominance in the form of abuse thereby constructs the social meaning which has led Tope Singh to take further course of action as he takes actions against his abusers .

Figure 3

Man worshipping the slippers of the community leader Donullia Gujjar



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

)

Figure 3 portrays the slippers of Donullia Gujjar whereas the other actor is seen to be worshipping the slippers that lie in front of him. The slippers are symbolic of the power representing the presence of Donullia Gujjar as he exercised mental control over his community as stated by Van Dijk (1995) to continue to control his people.

4.1.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process:

The symbolic process signifies the symbolic representation of the images portrayed and represented within the discourse. These images play an important role in carrying out the symbol of identity as they possess the meanings contained within the images to besymbolic representations of identity as they carry the symbol within its meanings (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

Figure 4

Cockroach under the foot, representing a metaphorical significance of trampling the weak



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY>

5)

In Figure 4, the symbolic representation of a cockroach being crushed under the shoes is representative of the social power and hierarchies which represents that the less powerful are crumpled by the ones in power as stated by Guinote (2014). The discourse here is representative of the intentional representation Hall (1997a) of the people belonging to lower caste as they are treated with discrimination and stigma.

Figure 5

Horrifyingly squashing the skull, portraying extreme hatred and vengeance



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 5 has shown the symbolic significance as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) of committing crime evoking sense of fear as Hatoda Tyagi takes revenge upon people who have wronged him while smashing skull with the intention to kill. This sense of achievement has led him to create his individual identity as a person through the process of self-categorisation as he identifies and thus labels himself as a criminal who must take revenge against the people who have shown atrocities upon him since he as he represents lower social income group and has more chances of delinquency hence creating collective identity.

Figure 6

Hammer symbolizing the transition of Vishal Tyagi to Hatoda Tyagi as a criminal



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

In Figure 6, the symbol of hammer represents Vishal Tyagi who has been nicknamed as Hatoda Tyagi as he commits crime using his hammer and has managed to evoke a sense of fear among the people thus exercising mental control as proposed by Van Dijk (1995). The hammer is significant of the murder weapon he uses to commit crime. The ideology of crime and fear has been symbolic of the discourse which can be created only with its related symbols that are implanted and layered in the message which it wants to portray.

Figure 7

Dog licking ice-cream, signifying the social status of the characters in the web series



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOH8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

In figure 7, the dog is a symbol as stated by Machin (2016) of loyalty and change of fate due to loyalty. Hatoda Tyagi being faithful as the dog to his master Donullia Gujjar, Hathi Ram Chaudhary who was tossed around like a stray dog for his incompetence and the symbolic dog which saved Sanjeev Mehra from being killed.

4.1.2.b. Semiotic Choices

The visuals are suggestive of the meanings that they carry. Hence the changes in the semiotic outlook of the visuals represent how closely the visuals are representative of truth and reality through image act (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021). The image act deals with two categories, demand gaze and offer gaze (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021). The gaze between the characters can metaphorically signify the representation of identities whether they constitute a part of the group or are belonging on the individual level. The act of gazes in the visuals between the characters and their significance can initiate an imagination amongst the audience

which has can be representative of the relationship that the character shares between each other (Arnheim, 1969).

4.1.2. b.i. Gaze: Demand

The image choices can be suggestive of different relationships between the participants which can be a demand gaze which is projected through facial expressions, gestures demand a relation to be established with the viewer which has been taken into consideration in analysing the visuals creating individual and collective identities (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

Figure 8

Police constable slapping a transgender while slurring racial comments of herethnic background



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

In Figure 8, the police constable is seen gazing with demand as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) at the other participant with demand full disgust for committing a crime. The visual has a clear depiction with facial expression and gestures that

police often see criminals through stigmatized lens as they subdue the victim's voice on the pretext of delivering justice whereas the criminals have been made from circumstances as stated by Sarat (1997). Here, the visual analysis reveals that due to the defined and fixed notion of social labelling towards transgenders as criminals, it has led to stigmatisation of communities as they are stereotyped to be criminals hence defining them into a collective identity of criminals based on their gender.

Figure 9

Upper caste Jat community, symbolically holds, a Manjaar, lower caste man's head on his hand to showcase power and dominance



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 9 establishes the demand gaze as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) through the community of Jat belonging to upper caste comes as a group to punish the Manjaar, belonging to lower caste. Jat in their ideological perspective believes that Manjaars have committed crime which they find that it is their moral responsibility to punish them. Agreeing to the representation stated by Hall et al. (1978) they believe punishing Manjaars are a part of cleaning the society and establishing the norms as

the lower caste people are represented as people who are notorious people The crime committed by lower caste people have become important as upper caste have been involved as stated by Barlow et al. (1995). The visual of the Jat leader holding the chopped off head of the Manjaar leader is representative of the collective identity of an ethnic group who shares common belief and ideologies representing collective actions taken in order to achieve the goal and display superiority agreeing to the concept of superiority as stated by Fearon (2003).

Figure 10

Power display by Sanjeev Mehra on Hathi Ram Chaudhary executing his authority



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 10 shows demand gaze and gestures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) that Sanjeev Mehra shows hostility towards Hathi Ram Chaudhary as he is annoyed and gestures Hathi Ram to leave the room. However, Hathi Ram Chaudhary's gesture and facial expression portrays that he is in total control of the situation. Sara Matthew too gazes Sanjeev Mehra with a look of contempt as she does not approve of Sanjeev's views. Here, the visual has led to the discourse of the formation of new collective

group in the form of Hathi Ram Chaudhary and Sara Matthews as they seek the truth supporting the concept of Ashmore et al. (2004) in the formation of collective identity. The new power threat is established as Hathi Ram Chaudhary takes full control of the situation and ushers in new beginning in the form of uncovering truth, finding confidence and bringing in change. Sanjeev Mehra used his social background to control the narrative of the context of the discourse as stated by (Van Dijk, 1994) to showcase his power and position in the society.

4.1.2.b. ii. Gaze: Offer

The offer gaze on the other hand offers information to the viewers which is subjective in nature hence giving out information about the gaze and the message it tries to portray as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021).

Figure 11

The gaze offers a revenge by Hatoda Tyagi after he commits his first murder



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al., 2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

In Figure 11, the offer gaze (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) showcases the gaze as Hatoda Tyagi directly looks at the subject of victim who has been killed in the process of establishing and labelling himself as a delinquent through past experiences and behaviour. Agreeing to Bernburg (2019) where an individual takes the path of deviance due to his painful past experiences. This also depicts the avenge he takes on the abuse, discrimination, and ill- treatment he and his family got in the place he resided.

Figure 12

Represents the accolades of Hatoda Tyagi, as it stands rusted on the walls of his house



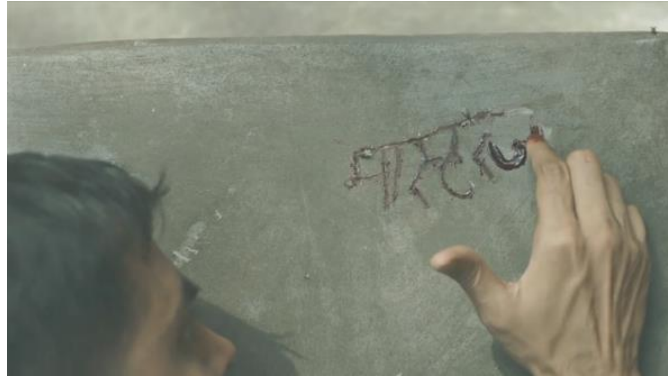
Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 12 offers the subjective information as seen by Hathi Ram Chaudhary, on the photo frame about Hatoda Tyagi who was once an acclaimed sportsman Vishal Tyagi now turned into a most wanted criminal as Hatoda Tyagi owing to applying power to specific class of people who can be dominated within the social structure agreeing to Hall's (1985) concept of social structure. The individual identity of Hatoda Tyagi has been compromised as now he becomes a criminal.

Figure 13

Depicts the folly of Hatoda Tyagi as a blind follower of Donullia Gujjar



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 13 represents the awe and admiration as individual, here, Hatoda Tyagi, has for his master Donullia Gujjar. He has been highly influenced by Donullia Gujjar as he has given up his individual identity to be part of the group led by Donullia Gujjar as suggested by Brewer and Gardner (1996). In this image, it is evident that Donullia Gujjar tries to establish his mental control over his followers as stated by Van Dijk (1995) where the powerful exercises control in minds even while being physically absent.

4.1.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

The technical articulation in the visuals have been analysed through compositional metafunction which consisted of salience and framing in the visuals image (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021, Mayr & Machin, 2012).

4.1.2. c.i. Saliency

Some elements in the visuals are emphasized in a manner where its importance is much more than other elements in the picture. The saliency helps to establish the meanings from these elements and interpret the importance of it (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001, 2006, 2021).

Figure 14

Hatoda Tyagi proves his identity



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 14 portrays the hands of Hatoda Tyagi which has missing thumb in one hand has been given major prominence. This visual agrees to the representation of identity of criminals to establish crime by Barlow et al. (1995), where it represents Hatoda Tyagi's identity as he opens his hand with a missing thumb earning him the title of Hatoda Tyagi from Vishal Tyagi who is now a notorious criminal and is sought after in his region as now he has been arrested for the assassination attempt of the famous journalist. Relating to Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) that states that

identity of an individual is not independent of its activities in, therefore, Vishal Tyagi losing his thumb led him to being Hatoda Tyagi the notorious criminal.

Figure 15

Hatoda Tyagi gazes with contempt after murdering



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

In Figure 15, the orifice of the skull which has been smashed open bleeding with blood has been given prominence as Hatoda Tyagi gazes. The colour of the blood, along with the details of the head smashed ,Hatoda Tyagi at the background in the visuals are representative the circumstances and consequences of the discourse to be followed adding a significant dimension which now shifts the power centers to Hatoda Tyagi agreeing to the power shift has been revealed in the study as stated by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001).

Figure 16

Focuses on CBI Building, making them the center of power



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 16 shows the prominence given to the logo of CBI represents and establishes that the agents of law and order are of highest regards as they fight their fight against crime. The image has been representative of what Hall (1995) states that police and army work as repressive social agents in order to suppress the crime.

4.1.2.c. ii. Framing

Framing adds to the representation of the characters and various elements that encompass in the frame. They help to define and segregate the important elements to non-important elements as meanings are generated out of the visual (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006,2021). The distance and angle used to frame the shots are representative of the relationship the characters share with each other. It is also a depiction of the changing relationship between the characters and also their relationship with the viewers (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021).

Figure 17

Portrays chasing of suspected criminals



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

In Figure 17, extreme long shot is used to portray the chase between the police and the criminals. The distance establishes the close proximity of the police in catching the criminals thus portraying the dominance over the situation.

Figure 18

Scornful look at the suspected criminals by police



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Supporting the Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), society is interdependent of human activities. In Figure 18, vertical angle is used to depict the superior position of police and lower angle used to depict the criminals determines the upper hand in power held by police over the criminals as they stand on their knees on the ground agreeing to the dominance and power as stated by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001).The gaze in the visual as seen through Hathi Ram Chaudhary's eyes demands answers from the criminals, whereas the criminals gaze upon a subject which is out of frame, contemplating their state of mind as they are held captive by police. Agreeing to Valocchi (2001), the study reveals establishing collective identity of criminals labelled as criminals for committing similar action.

Figure 19

Dirty water represents unclear future for Hathi Ram Chaudhary



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Referring to logic, meanings are generated out of the texts, as per Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979). In Figure 19, the dirt on the river metaphorically represents the muddled and unclear professional status of Hathi Ram Chaudhary. The objective view of Hathi Ram Chaudhary sitting on the river side drinking and the importance of garbage on river represents his he failure to accomplish the mission. Althusser (1979) states that an individual needs to establish collective identity through the sense of belonging to a group. This study however has established his individual identity has failed to be recognised into his group. The grey coloured tone used to frame the shot is symbolic (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) of his current situation where the future looks bleak and uncertain.

Figure 20

Metaphoric significance of the villain and hero as they both try to shift the power dynamics



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 20, supports the creation of meanings through logic in the texts, as proposed by Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979). The distance between Hatoda Tyagi

and Hathi Ram Chaudhary represents that are at an arm's length which has a metaphoric significance that can be interpreted where the change in the power and position can occur any moment. Either Hathi Ram can save Hatoda Tyagi or Hatoda Tyagi will kill himself before where long shot to portray the relationship between characters as represented of sharing equal power dynamics within the given circumstances hence changing the narrative of the access of power within the discourse which has been stated by Van Dijk (1989, 2008). The text Central Bureau of investigation in the visual also represents the failed system to safeguard the interest of the victim, where Hatoda Tyagi, kills himself in the presence of the system.

4.2. Identity in Special Ops

The characters in the sample of Special Ops have been defined and characterised as follows:

Ikhlaq Khan or Hafiz Ali, the villain, has been represented as a mysterious individual who possesses extra ordinary power and skills capable of mass destruction. As described by Ehrlich and Liu (2002), Ikhlaq Khan has been represented as an epitome of terror and threat who is proficient enough in technical skills, master of disguise, capable of manipulation and extreme terrorist activities as his brutality and viciousness knows no boundaries causing harm to the India and its territories as he is not motivated by money. He belongs to upper social class with good educational background. Supporting the belief to create a hegemonic world as proposed by McMahan (2008), his immense and extreme hatred towards India confirming reality and perception defined by the Critical Realism Paradigm proposed by Bhaskar (1975) his notion is to consider India as an enemy which must be disrupted and destroyed in order to gain power and dominance is his goal. The narrative in the discourse is

controlled by Ikhtlaq Khan as he tries to dominate the world of terror through his language

Himmat Singh, has been characterised as the member of Research and Analysis wing (R&AW) who heads a team of secret agent in various parts of the world in order to gather information around terrorists and their activities. Being a hero, as described by Terpstra and Salet (2020), he is well accomplished in his field, but his image has been tarnished for the past nineteen years as he fails to capture a notorious terrorist Ikhtlaq Khan by his team who believes as per the notion of Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) between the perception and reality that they are main perpetrators of Indian Parliament terrorist attack in 2001. Therefore, his tenacious chase deploying his agents around the world to catch him becomes his aim as he chases this unfinished mission of exposing the true face behind the terrorist attack as Ikhtlaq Khan, as perceived by the world is only a figment of Himmat Singh's imagination as he creates a character and struggles to prove his worth within the organization through the understanding of power and structure proposed by Van Dijk (1995). Himmat Singh adds to the discourse of dominance and power as he seeks to establish a norm within the system.

Description of a hero as proposed by Terpstra & Salet (2020), Farooq Ali alias Amjad Sharif alias Rashid Malik, has been represented as a hero who, although belonging to Muslim community, is patriotic, brave, well versed with combat tactics and master of disguise. He chases the dream of Himmat Singh in catching Ikhtlaq Khan which becomes his mission as he jeopardises his life for his country while on the mission. He has also been characterised as a hero as described by Guo (1998) who

does not hesitate to become ruthless while on his duty and uses state machineries to his advantage to accomplish the mission.

Abbas Sheikh, has been seen in the character of a Muslim police officer who is careless towards his duties and is an alcoholic. However, he does not confuse his duty and habits when in demand of his services he is diligent, persistent, and capable police officer on duty who has the vigour and skill to complete the task as he keeps the ability to distinguish his priorities. He has also been seen to be used as a pawn owing to his habits to his senior officers and politicians, but has the integrity to uphold the law and order adhering to the description of a hero by Guo (1998).

Female police hero as described by Datta (2000), Juhi Kashyap, a female spy agent, who is well versed in technological and combat skills has been represented as character who is patriotic and keeps the ability to fight against the terrorists.

Similar descriptions of female police hero as Datta (2000), Ruhani Khan, another female spy agent, who is represented as a common girl living a common married life but possessing extraordinary combat skills to fight terrorists and possessing good organization skills.

The description of hero as proposed by Guo (1998), Balakrishna or Bala, has been portrayed as a martyr, working as a spy, who sacrifices his life in the hands of the ruthless killer Ikhlaq Khan on a mission to expose him thereby representing patriotism

Avinash, a male spy agent, has been represented with a person who is earnest as a colleague and a reliable agent when it comes to completing tasks and missions as per the description of Terpstra and Salet (2020). He upholds the integrity of camaraderie

and team work during adversity and portrays patriotism as described a hero by Guo (1998).

Surya Kumar, a member of Intelligence bureau, is represented as a character who provides a turning point in capturing Ikhlāq Khan as he does away with protocols, shares information with Himmat Singh and finally plays an instrumental role in capturing Ikhlāq Khan.

Illiyaas Hassan, a taxi driver, has been characterised as key role player in adding to the discourse as he possesses a key element in unearthing information about Ikhlāq Khan by Farooq Ali and becomes a victim fitting the description of victim by Jasper et al. (2018).

Ismail Hassan, has been characterised as villain who belong to upper socio-economic Muslim community who works for Ikhlāq Khan. A credible worker under Ikhlāq Khan, he however, becomes the turning point of downfall for Ikhlāq Khan as he becomes a pawn under the R&AW agents and ends up being the collateral victim in the process as defined by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018).

The victimization of female as proposed by Datta (2000), where Sonia, represents a classic victim for being a female, as she gets used as a pawn in by Farooq Ali and becomes the sacrificial lamb in order to catch Ikhlāq Khan.

Wasim Karachi Wala is represented as a villain who too belonging to upper socio-economic background harbours extreme hatred towards Indian and possesses interests to cause harm to India as stated by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018).

Naresh Chadda, a senior officer to Himmat Singh, exercises his power over his subordinate as stated by Van Dijk (1995), for enquiry commission has been seen with a preconceived notion of discrimination and prejudice against Himmat Singh. He is determined to prove Himmat Singh wrong regarding Ikhlaq Khan and tries to jeopardise Himmat Singh's mission in capturing him

D.K Banerjee, also a senior officer and member of enquiry commission holds similar opinion as Naresh Chadda and tries to demoralise Himmat Singh for his operation as the power exercised stated through the power discourse as proposed by Van Dijk (1995).

As stated by Datta (2020), Sadia Qureshi is a victim made by people who know them. Sadia Qureshi is represented as female Muslim villain who is responsible for carrying out the role of terrorist attack in India. She has been seen with compassion for her younger sister Farah Qureshi as they both become victim of circumstances created by male counterparts, Ikhlaq Khan.

Farah Qureshi, has been represented with naiveness as she becomes victim as a female under the instructions of Ikhlaq Khan as per the victim definition of Datta (2020). The Critical Realism Paradigm by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014) defines the identity of Farah and Sadia Qureshi and draws connections to their social and real identity as they embark on the journey of destruction.

4.2.1. Language and Identity in Special Ops

4.2.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations

4.2.1a.i. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *planted, cultivated my agents, tasked with giving us intelligence, we were giving him money, protect the 133-crore people of this country, expenditure of a few five six families, miscellaneous expenses, I cannot tell you, cannot share anything about my agents*

Himmat Singh has been seen to exercise mental control as proposed by Van Dijk (1995) and also supporting the Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) that society is built of human activities, Himmat Singh is seen to justify the usage of state machineries within his power and control. The dynamic modality of language used in words like *cultivated, planted, my agents, protect* has been seen with a positive connotation as it builds a collective identity of heroes who are out to accomplish a task as per the description of heroes by Hunt & Benford (2004). The representation of heroes here, determines the will to protect the country which evokes a strong sense of patriotism as they combat terrorism against the dominant dogmatic practices acting as repressive measures as stated by Hall (1985). The usage of words like *cannot share anything about my agents*. has been seen through positive connotation, where he safeguards the interest of his team members. The power and dominance exercised by Himmat Singh determines the control he has over by controlling the context of the discourse (Van Dijk, 1994) as he defends his stance over the usage of government's *money to protect his team of agents*.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *found Ikhlq Khan, Wasim Karachiwala held captive under Farooq and team, terrorist was killed*

Words like *found and captive* used as epistemic modality of language have a positive connotation as it represents patriotism as described by Guo (1998) where the spy agent Farooq Ali has managed to nab Wasim Karachiwala and found Ikhlq Khan. Labelling of Ikhlq Khan and Wasim Karachiwala, as wretched and notorious criminals as per the definition of Becker (1963), belonging to Muslim ethnic group has been stereotyped here within the discourse which is also supported by Welten & Abbas (2021) as discriminatory language like *captive, under, terrorist killed* has been used to represent Muslims as criminals through referral strategy as proposed by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Critical Realism paradigm of Norrie (2012) suggests the difference between good and evil defined by meta ethics. Farooq who is backed by the Government has more access to power and hence controls the discourse here where he has used the state machineries to provide the desired results by finding Ikhlq Khan and holding his counterpart's captive. The finding of information which had remained hidden for nineteen years finally brings in new changes in solving the unsolved case suiting the description of hero as proposed by Bontrager et al. (2005).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Now Karachiwala will find out how much a woman can torture someone*

The epistemic modality of language through the usage of referral strategy as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) with words like *woman, can, torture*, has been seen with a positive connotation as Juhi Kashyap shows the strength and vitality to achieve the unachievable target to make the villain give in to torture and finally surrender. The representation of Juhi Kashyap as capable spy has been represented as a hero, but has been subjugated to male reference as she possesses

masculine like physical strength when she counters the villain as per the definition of female representations by Datta (2000).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *scared, fear is good, level-headed, can't leave him, bring Bala home, you trained us not to*

Using the epistemic modality of language through positive connotative of words like *scared, fear is good* links to Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) that associates links of perception and reality within the discourse. *Scared* word determines the contextual references to the level of excitement of finally catching Ikhtlaq Khan and its references to the consequences if anything goes wrong. *Fear is good and level headed* also has a positive connotation to contextual references as it indicates that Farooq will be up on his toes and make sure nothing goes wrong in catching Ikhtlaq Khan as connoted by Van Dijk (1997). This builds the collective identity of individuals who see themselves coming together to take collective actions sharing similar beliefs supporting Hunt & Benford's (2004) concept of forming individual and collective identity

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *cannot leave him, bring Bala home, you trained us not to, let us give a final try, we have 24 hours*

The denotic modality of language used with positive connotations in words like *cannot leave him, bring Bala home, you trained us not to, let us give a final try* has a very evident representation of sense of belonging to a group which has developed into the formation of collective identity among the group members supporting the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) that the society is a result of human activities. The representation of heroes as martyrs and patriots has been applauded as they take

actions to protect the integrity of the nation and its people as described by Guo (1998). The usage of words like *you* leading to us and *we have 24 hours* are results of individual identity are trying to find their collective identity, representations and sense of belonging to a particular group, here as a group R&AW agent as heroes, trying to save the nation as proposed by Brewer and Gardner (1996).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *felt nice to hear me call Farooq by you. I am either called Amjad or Rashid. At times, I forget my actual name. I cannot bear it anymore, follow the leads to Ikhlāq Khan, proves your conjecture*

The dynamic modality of language using referral strategy as projected by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012), denotes Farooq's position as a hero in the discourse. Although he has been hiding behind various names to seek his purpose, his powerful position during the discourse has been established where his individual identity is compromised in the discourse to formulate a collective action against terrorism as seen by Morley (2019). The usage of words like *follow, leads, proves your conjecture* represents the social cognition that Farooq pursues has created an upper hierarchy for him as he persistently pursues the terrorist Ikhlāq Khan to bring the desired outcome of his arrest and to punish him.

4.2.1a. ii. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Alah ho Akhbar, Haider, terrorist attack, terrorist, Ikhlāq Khan, Afzal, Wasim Karachiwala, Firdaus Sheikh alias Jalaal Mansoor, alias Wasim, Ismail Hassan, Farah Qureshi, Sadia Qureshi, Shabaad Dry Fruits, Habib Naik, sells them in the Middle East, Pakistani Jamaat kingpin Noor Mohammed*

The representational strategy to represent group of members belonging to Muslim ethnic group through the negative connotations through epistemic modality of language has been used as projected by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Supporting the Critical Realism paradigm studies by Jermyn (2013) media have projected stereotyped notion about crime and criminals which defies reality. The sociological acts of deviants are seen as a threat to the community; hence rules are imposed to prevent crime by the labelled deviant groups where Becker (1963) sees offenders through the discriminatory lens. The stereotype labelling of people belonging to Muslim community with words like *terrorist, attack, sells them* and Muslim names to associate with criminal activities have been used by people who have a preconceived notions about the world they live in as suggested by Howarth (2007). The representations of Muslim ethnic group as stated by Hall (1997a) have been represented to have radical beliefs and thoughts which can provide necessary damage to the society; hence they have a very distinct representation of otherness in the text within the discourse.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *spent more than Rs. 28 crores of the secret service funds, if I took anything from those 28 crore rupees*

The epistemic modality of language used like *spent 28 crores, secret service funds* is negatively connotative as it refers to corruption charges against Himmat Singh. The access of information as put forward by Van Dijk (1989), reveals in the study that people belonging higher officials have exercised their power and position on Himmat Singh to demotivate him in pursuing his goals. The consequence of actions in the society as projected by Critical Realism paradigm by (1979), the usage of words like *if, I took, 28 crore rupees* negatively connotes corruption charges on Himmat Singh.

To clean the system, the hero often must get into corruption; however Himmat Singh justifies his actions of spending *secret service funds* on national security as projected by Ghosh (2013). His individual identity to self-categorise as stated by Ashmore et al. (2004) to belong to a collective identity of loyal officer here has been compromised and questioned as he struggles to keep his position under the joint power domination created by his higher officials.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *attack took place in Srinagar's J&K assembly, complete intelligence failure*

The epistemic modality of language used with negative connotations like *attack, Srinagar's J&K assembly* projected by Van Dijk (1989) is used to connote the gravity of the situation through incompetence has been represented in text. The lack of sense of achievement through negative connotative words like *complete intelligence failure* has been used which represents the failure of the system to safeguard the nation as described by Terpstra & Salet (2020). All the heroes who fail to safeguard the safety of Kashmir have been seen as failure of the nation, thus establishing a national group of collective identity of nationalism and patriotism as projected by Szivak (2021).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *I am a haji. I will not lie to you*

The representational strategy used along with negative connotative and denotic modality of language projected by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012), like *haji, will not lie* are representative of Muslim ethnic group who are seen as offenders and not credible enough to provide information as stated by Khan (2022a). The representation of Muslims here in the discourse has been connotative of having

radical beliefs which is apparent in the text used which confirms the representation of Hall (1997a) and Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) which states the logic behind knowledge generation and its usage. Here, knowledge has been used in the form of radical belief to achieve a goal.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Karachi, Istanbul, Tehran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Kabul, Azerbaijan, Dhaka, Colombo, UAE, Syria, Tbilisi, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Dubai, Deira, Islamabad, Karachi, Afghanistan, Abbottabad*

The representation of dominant Islamic countries in the discourse has negative connotative meanings here in the discourse. The interference of Middle East Countries and Pakistan to create violence and tension within the Indian borders have been reflected of the religious ideologies which believes in the single self-determining Muslim dominated nation has been used as threat, sheltering terrorists has a notion of mental borders capable of committing terror attacks on India as stated by Tripathi and RaghuVanshi (2020). As put forward by (Hall, 1997b), the preferred meanings of creating a collective identity based on religion and sense of meaning has been clearly depicted here in the text.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *ISI attacked our parliament, Jaish, Al-Qaeda, Hidayati, India gets embroiled in a war, Pakistan, brought its troops, Durand Line to Kashmir. The motive, to give Osama Bin Laden a safe passage from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Osama was killed in 2011 in Abbottabad, which, by the way, is in Pakistan.*

The political tension between Pakistan and India rising to conflicts between both the nation as stated by Garner (2013) has been evident here in the discourse the epistemic modality of language used in a negative connotation as stated by Van Dijk (1989).

The usage of words like *ISI*, *Jaish*, *Al-Qaeda*, *Pakistan*, *Afghanistan* leads to connotation of discriminatory talks leading to stereotyped representation of the neighbouring country as enemy to create terror attacks in India creating collective identity of the countries based on religion as stated by Tripathi and RaghuVanshi (2020). These words also indicate the Critical Realism paradigm as endorsed by Wilkinson et al. (2022), that offender is often stratified by socio-cultural and religious dimensions. The constructionist representation has been used with words like *Osama killed*, *fidaayati* has been to provide information through the language (Hall,1997a). Power and dominance here have been exercised here through controlling the context of text as stated by Van Dijk (1994) as Himmat Singh tries to establish the dominance of justifying his actions to kill the terrorists who has been creating nuisance in India. The social strategy to produce discriminatory talks towards the Muslim countries and people have been clear in this discourse to bring them into a negative limelight to Muslim ethnic group as projected by Van Dijk (1984).

4.2.1b. Quoting Verbs

I have instructions that I can never switch this phone off, neither can its battery be dead, nor can I put it on the silent mode. I must pick it up on a maximum of eight rings. This is the eighth ring. If my suspicion about the call is right, this call is not a hoax. Not one but multiple blasts have been planned in Delhi. Please share the security and stay details of the Pakistani delegation and everything else with me? I want both plan A and plan B. Sorry, sir, but my department was not held under consultation. Two months ago, we had received a memo, which required us to state the level of threat perception in India. That was it

Himmat Singh uses a constructionist representative approach where he represents his power and dominance within the discourse as someone who has been associated with an important task of safeguarding the country where his presence and availability is of primary importance through the use of words like *suspicion, not a hoax, share Plan A and B* as stated by Hall (1997a). As he controls the context of the discourse, he establishes power and domination through the use of quoting verbs like *my department, not discussed* as he refers to the contextual meanings attached with the discourse, by using words like *never switch off, must pick up on eighth ring, this is the eighth ring* establishing the notions of Critical Realism paradigm power and politics as projected by Sanchez (2006). The individual identity of Himmat Singh has been established here as on the context that he as a hero belongs to a specific category of group that has been assigned the task of the security of the nation through usage of words like *level of threat, multiple blasts, Delhi* as described Ashmore et al. (2004).

Our identity, importance and significance are from the conflict with India. We will lose our importance if the conflict ends. Who will recognize us then

Agreeing to the Critical Realism paradigm by Norrie (2012), the difference between good and evil lies in distinguishing between right and wrong that has been depicted in the study through the dynamic modality of the language used here with representational strategy denotic helps to reveal the collective identity of villains who have malicious intentions to harm India, as the uses of descriptive verbs like *our identity, importance and significance, conflict with India, loose importance, recognize us* forms the collective identity of these group members belonging to similar ethnic origin and beliefs of Berthoud (1998). The villains need the help of creating of *conflicts* and violence which becomes their way to exert dominance, or else it

jeopardizes their collective identity as failures. This discourse has helped to reveal who is more socially powerful and dominant as per the context of Van Dijk (1995).

Ismail Hassan funds Wasim, invests shipping tycoon Hafiz Ali's money, planned two bomb blasts in India

The referral strategy used here in the discourse through epistemic modality of language usaged as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) reveals the wealthy or upper socio – economic status of the villains. People who are rich and powerful to become a part of the terrorism as they fuel the attacks owing to the political situation they live in as they try to restore the lost power and dominance they once exercised according to Ehrlich, & Liu (2002).

The Pakistani Defence Minister and his delegation will arrive. If there is a bomb blast in Delhi, we will again lose ground in our bilateral talks, assured them that the security situation is ideal.

The epistemic modality of the language used with referral strategy to refer Pakistan holding important position in the discourse as projected by Van Dijk (1989) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Words and phrases like *Pakistani Defence Minister, if there is a bomb blast,lose ground in our bilateral talks* which has helped to identified who is more powerful and has dominance in the discourse as expressed by Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975). In this study, the representation of *Pakistani Defence Minister* having a powerful stance in the discourse has been effectively represented through the language and behaviour indicating that *Pakistan* holds the upper hand in negotiations with India has been depicted through representations of texts and its meanings as projected by Hall (1997a). Using words like *we, them* in the discourse

have relatively built the collective identity of group of people working as heroes to save the nation's honour calling for a collective action through *assured, security* as described by Hunt and Benford (2004).

4.2.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

The sixth terrorist, sixth person was not an ordinary handler but their leader

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) deals the connection between the reality and perception and the knowledge developed out of the texts. In the study, the uses of term like *sixth, terrorist, person* refers to the rhetoric metaphoric context of the notorious criminal Ikhlāq Khan who is portrayed as villain and leader of the group possessing extra ordinary quality unlike a normal human being as per the description of villain by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018). The metaphoric references here have developed individual identity of the villain which is representative of the collective identity of the entire group of individuals having similar beliefs which Ikhlāq Khan is representative of as stated by McMahon (2008).

The commander, Ikhlāq Khan, the embodiment of evil, Leave the devil alone, and he might return the favour

As put forward in the Critical Realism paradigm by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014), the individual and collective identities are a social construct of the society. This study links the Critical Realism paradigm with the rhetoric metaphoric reference of Ikhlāq Khan as the *commander, embodiment of evil* has helped to establish mental control over his group of members through his power and cognitive belief. He has been represented as a villain who possesses powers beyond the human comparison and can achieve extra feat to achieve their goal as described by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018).

This theory is not just legendary, it is my reality too

The knowledge is a production of logic as proposed by Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975). Himmat Singh through this crucial realism paradigm justifies his actions through the rhetoric metaphoric reference of existence of Ikhlāq Khan as a *reality and not a legendary* without any proofs. Here, he has control over the context within the discourse as he refers to the conceptual context of the existence of Ikhlāq Khan as stated by Van Dijk (1994).

Send them to all the houses with terrace from where the mosque can be seen

Himmat Singh instructs Abbas Sheikh to send the police to places where mosque can be seen. The metaphoric reference to *mosque* here represents that the criminal is from Muslim background and hence has been labelled here as perpetrators of crime through referral strategy as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012). The dynamic modality of the language here has been representative of collective identity of the terrorist as stated by Berthoud (1998) according to the context that indicates the background of the terrorist belonging to Muslim community Van Dijk (1997).

Whole world was confined to a cubbyhole. A tiny window was the only link to the outside world, from where he could see the sky

The usage of dynamic modality of the language has been used with referral strategy as projected by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) to refer spies working outside of their nation, as they face life threatening experience as a cost to safeguard the interest of the nation described by Guo (1998). The metaphoric reference of words like *tiny window and sky* refers to the hope that will bring about the change in the new dynamism of power.

Everyone has a job to do Sir. Some are there to defend, and some to render the enemy weak

The dynamic modality of the language used to represent the metaphoric reference to *job* here is representative of the display of societal position one has created as stated by Van Dijk (1997). The job is referred to good work or kills the enemies to retain the power and dominance within the state. Here, the word *everyone* metaphorically represents heroes, villains, and victims they are used to complete the tasks as they belong to a group as described by Hunt and Benford (2004).

Abu Hassan calling from heaven.

The society's existence is because of activities of humans has been proposed by Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975). Thus, the study establishes this notion through the rhetoric metaphoric reference used for *Abu Hassan to heaven* has been in reference to Abu Hassan from being the villain to victim of circumstances as he dies in the hands of Ikhtlaq Khan where he is seen as traitor as stated by Blain (2022). Ikhtlaq Khan kills Abu Hassan to exercise his mental control in establishing the authority and dominance and create fear amongst his group members as an example of price paid for betrayal as stated by Van Dijk (1995).

Courier charges, \$50,000

The *courier charges* here are metaphorical references to the price of hiding the identity of Farooq Ali whose cover might get blown out if he does not comply to the conditions of the blackmailer holding important information about him. Here, the discourse and access to information has been displayed by the people in power who

can change the societal structure of the society as they have more influence to access the information as stated by Van, Dijk (1989). \$50,000 has been metaphoric reference to the act of corruption as the hero needs to get into one in order to stop the crime as agreeing to Ghosh (2013).

Brother, we will meet in Sham, let us have a feast there next week, the kids will be there well in advance

Critical Realism paradigm helps to associate various events, activities and phenomenon as proposed by Fletcher (2016). The connection between the three has been established through the rhetoric metaphoric reference to the text here determines the context of *Sham* as in Delhi and *feast* for bomb blast. The text and the context have added to the construction of the political structure confirming the beliefs of a particular group as proposed by Van Dijk (1997). The *kids* here have been labelled as a metaphoric reference to terrorists who will be responsible for the terrorist acts and therefore have been categorised as offenders who have violated the rules and regulation to commit crime as projected by Said (1978) and Becker (1963).

4.2.1d. Hyperbole and metonymy

By the time we get that bulb, another bulb fuses out

The exaggerative expression of hyperbole has been seen with the representation of how the system function which here represents Himmat Singh's exorbitant expenditures towards maintaining his agents, which his higher officials are not approving as stated Hall (1997a) as he states the power dominance.

Find everything out, people do not remember something, we use rods, people start remembering everything

The denotic modality of the language used here represents the discourse and access of information through exercising power by the more powerful in the social structures. Here the usage of words like *find everything, remembering everything* is a hyperbole context which Himmat Singh uses to extract information from people who are less powerful than him as stated in access to power by Van Dijk (1989). The usage of words like *we; people* are defining collective identities of people who are together for a common cause and act as stated by Hunt and Benford (2004).

Every agent gets to a point of no return, if he goes past it, his life will then be one of deceit and hopelessness, he cannot differentiate between truth and deception, Farooq Ali was at the point of no return that day

As Himmat Singh describes the mental state of Farooq Ali, the changing identity of Farooq from hero to a victim has been seen evidently in the discourse. The failure of the system has led to deliver justice and thus face the consequences as a victim of the system as described by Best (1997).

Himmat's description of Farooq's situation shows interrelation of collective identity to individual identity as he shows the sense of belonging to same beliefs and experiences. The context of the text here, clearly defines the role of the heroes although under challenging circumstances, keeps the social hierarchy within the system as Farooq does not give up hope and his quest to catch Ikhtlaq Khan. Farooq is represented as a common man, who achieves extraordinary feat and skills in order to

save the nation regardless of the circumstances he is in as Kort-Butler (2012) describes the resilience of a hero.

And they will know that the consequences of ill-treating Kashmir are severe

The political tension of India with Pakistan for Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) has had serious impacts of attacks and counter attacks by both the countries. The discourse here has used the hyperbole of controlling the context for dominance for exercising power over another as stated by Van Dijk (1994). The language here determines how the mental control comes into play as the fight for power and dominance continues between two countries as projected by Van Dijk (1995). The representation of Pakistan here has preferred meanings where the language can be interpreted as having dire consequences if not complied with obligation by India by Hall 's (1997b) representation theory.

Had this attack been successful, then our government would have been negotiating with the sixth person now

The metonymy used as *sixth person* here is in reference to the context of Ikhtlaq Khan. Words like *had attack been successful* determines the context of the text that has helped to develop the social roles where India and its security agents are in a dominant position in than the terrorist attackers *had, the attack was successful* as projected by the development of social roles by human activities according to Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1979). The representation power and position of Ikhtlaq Khan with words like *our government, negotiating* has been representative of intentional approach in the creation of the identity of the individual as proposed by

Hall (1997a). The labelling of criminal here has a collective representation of the group he belongs to which causes deviance agreeing to the description of Berk (2015).

He should have known it, Hafiz sir, who you are and what consequences he would have to bear if he betrayed you

Agreeing to Critical Realism paradigm of consequences in the society as a result of human activity proposed by Bhaskar (1979), there has been dynamic modality of language used through referral strategy and metonymy here in terms of *consequences and betrayed* have been used in the context of discriminatory talks against a villain who has been categorised as a traitor. The context of *who you are* is evident of the mental control exercised through the usage of words to show power over in the social structure as proposed by Van Dijk (1995) who describes dominance through power centers.

Moderate threat is always 24/7, 365 days

The metonymy of epistemic modality of language here is determinant of the factor that the *threat, moderate always looms over at the system*. The *threat* here is determinant of the fact that of the social cognition and the capability in creating a social hierarchy and thus respond to the actions within the existing hierarchy confirming the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979). The metonymy of *24/7, 365 days* here is representative of preferred meaning as put forward by representations as put forward by Hall (1997b) as heroes are responsible for safeguarding the people irrespective of the circumstances, intensity of the crime without bothering about the power and positions they hold.

4.2.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Special Ops

4.2.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

4.2.2.a.i. Classificational Process

Figure 21

Exercising power and dominance by Himmat Singh



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 21, Himmat Singh, shows superiority amongst his senior officer as they interrogate him for corruption charges within his organization as shown through visual representations projected by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). This has brought about power and dominance within the social and professional hierarchy as he dominates the discourse through his presence as stated by VanDijk (1994).

Figure 22

Dominance and control over suspected terrorist by Indian Forces



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 22, Farooq and his team seem to have complete control and dominance over the circumstances, as they show superiority whereas Wasim Karachiwala is seen to be on his knees representing his inferiority over the situation as stated by Hall (1995).

Figure 23

Agreeing to take collective action by Himmat Singh and Surya Kumar against terrorism



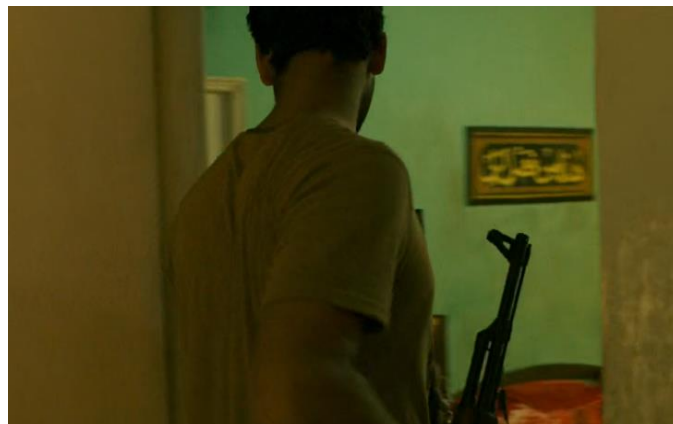
Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar
(<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 23, both Surya Kumar and Himmat Singh seem to share a common goal of countering terrorism although Surya Kumar being in superior professional hierarchy than Himmat Singh, thus jointly creating collective identity amongst themselves by as one community of heroes who safeguard the nation. This agrees to the notion of Critical Realism paradigm as proposed by Fletcher (2016) that reality of the social world finds relationship with various events, activities, and phenomenon.

4.2.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 24

Suggests members of Muslim religion preparing for terrorist attack



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar
(<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 24, the symbolic representation of collective identity has been showcased as per the visual denoting signs and codes by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) as the visuals shows a poster written in Arabic, where a terrorist is seen preparing for the

terrorist attack with a gun in the hand. The symbolic representations of Muslim as terrorist have been clearly represented to the description by Howarth (2007).

Figure 25

Ikhlaq Khan eyeing to attack the Indian Parliament house



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The symbolic representation through image in Figure 25 has been symbolic of the *sixth person* who was involved in the terrorist parliament attack as he symbolically looks at the Indian Parliament building, which is the epitome of strength, democracy and represents the Indian state as suggested through symbolic signs and symbols proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). As Critical Realism approach deals with knowledge generation as logic as proposed by Bhaskar (1975), this figure is representative of the villain who has been shown to be ruthless, spiteful, mean and capable of mass destruction as he stealthily plans attack on India.

Figure 26

Indian Parliament building, signifying the center of strength of India



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The symbolic representation of Indian parliament in Figure 26 has been a symbolic representation in the discourse, which justifies the action against the terrorists who has been harmful to the Indian state as the heroes fight against terrorism who provide a new power threat for the nation. The parliament also represents India as the strongest and robust nation where capturing the monumental structure and bring it down, will represent ultimate victory over India as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021).

4.2.2.b. Semiotic Choices

4.2.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 27

Indian Parliament on terrorist attack



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In figure 27, the ministers' gaze signifies fear of the terrorists attacking the parliament. The visual symbolises need of assurance from heroes to save them from the situation as projected by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Supporting Critical Realism approach about human's action affecting the society as proposed by Bhaskar (1979), the visual representations is symbolic of negative consequences of human actions.

4.2.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 28

Powerful figure looming over weaker man as he fails his mission



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 28, the subjective offer gaze gives information to viewers about a powerful person who is overseeing the injured terrorists as he lies helpless on the ground as projected by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). The shadow on the other participant in the visual takes complete control and dominance over the discourse agreeing to the Critical Realism paradigm by Žukauskas et al (2008) that an individual attempts to validate one's situation. As the shadow looms as a threat, the powerful man validates his situation to achieve the projected target that he prepared himself for even at the cost of losing his team.

4.2.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

4.2.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 29

Labelling of suspected terrorists



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 29, the visual through provides saliency as projected by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001). The collective identity of individuals has been labelled as criminals as supported by Critical Realism approach by Wilkinson et al. (2022) projected that crime and its identity have been stratified through various gender, socio-economic conditions, socio-cultural conditions, and religious dimensions.

Figure 30

Muslim women preparing for terror attack



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Figure 30 is a symbolic significance of Sadia Qureshi decorating herself with body bomb suit, thus labelling her as a criminal belonging to Muslim community as criminals and categorising them into a collective identity irrespective of gender supporting the Critical Realism approach by Wilkinson et al. (2022) which represents crime and its identity through various gender and religious dimensions.

4.2.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 31

Ikhlq Khan escapes through the hands of Indian security forces



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 31, the framing indicates the subjective view of Himmat Singh that Ikhlq Khan has escaped through the clutches of RA&W and hence dominates of the situation as he is projected to be just at distance, yet incapable of being arrested by Himmat Singh confirming change in the social situation as represented by Hall (1995) in representation theory.

Figure 32

Abu Hassan being trampled by camels on the instructions of Ikhlaq Khan



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Figure 32 represents the ruthlessness of Ikhlaq Khan, trampling Abu Hassan making a herd of camels run over with the intention to kill for betraying him as he exercises mental control over his people as stated by Van Dijk (1995). Here, a practice is used by invoking fear by punishing one extensively to have control over the rest of his group for the fear of similar punishment as stated by Foucault (1975).

Figure 33

Indian special agent dying in the hands of Ikhlq Khan



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Framing in Figure 33, portrays the characteristic of the villain who is ruthless and capable of killing people as described Bontrager et al. (2005). He has full control over the situation where he does not hesitate to kill people, thus establishing his dominance as Hall (1995) puts across in the discourse regarding the dominance of strong and powerful in changing the social structure and gain control over the system.

4.3. Identity in The Family Man

Srikant Tiwari: The member of Threat Analysis and Surveillance Cell (TASC). Studying the character of Srikant Tiwari under Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) states that an identity of an individual is based on the beliefs and principles he is exposed to. Srikant Tiwari has been characterised as a hero who is patriotic, diligent, protective, and skilled but also gets involved in telling lies to get his work done. He is quirky, intelligent, and persistent but is underpaid where he struggles to meet his family's end. He has been represented as a character who is manipulative but

at the same time having impeccable qualities to save the nation from terrorist attacks as described by Terpstra and Salet (2020). He has been represented as a common man who has both negative and positive qualities, feels disheartened and wronged but at the same time musters up enough courage to perform his duties as stated by Van Dijk (1994).

JK Talpade, member of TASC has been represented as a loyal friend and a patriot but indulging in unethical practices such as lying, threatening to perform a task. His role represents that of a balancer, when Srikant Tiwari adopts life-threatening measures to counter the terrorist.

Moosa Rehman has been represented with a cliched character of a criminal belonging to lower socio-economic background. The Critical Realism paradigm states that crime has a relationship with past experiences and exploitation as stated by Norrie (2012). This study supports the critical realism paradigm as Moosa Rehman has turned into a criminal as he was being wronged in the past and has therefore adopted violence as his way to get revenge. His role in the beginning portrays that of a victim which interchanges into a villain as he adopts terrorism to harm the innocent in a tit for tat technique that he believes in as stated by Khan (2022a).

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) states an individual's level of knowledge is based on perception and reality and the paradigm helps to bridge the gap. Studying the character of Major Sameer under Critical Realism paradigm, it states that he is a member of Pakistan Army, has been represented as a main character who has extreme discrimination and hatred towards Indians. In the entire discourse, he has been represented as a character that negatively brings another community in a negative limelight. He has been represented as a villain who has malicious and

spiteful intent towards India and plans to establish Pakistan's hegemony by dominating India and crumbling it under terrorist attacks as described by Garner (2013). His role from a villain to victim interchanges in the discourse as he becomes a sacrificial lamb in the hands of the politicians who ultimately showcases power and control over the situation.

Basharat Ali and Faizaan Ahmed are Muslim terrorists who also represent as catalysts in manipulating and deploying people for terrorist activities. They reason their beliefs and preconceived notions about terror attacks as a war against people who have wronged him as described by Garner (2013).

Saloni member of Indian Army, Kashmiri citizen, has been represented as a part of female hero as she struggles to justify the narratives of Kashmiris nation as she tries to bridge the gap between Kashmiris and mainland India as stated by Khan (2022a).

Sharma, direct head to Srikant Tiwari has been represented as a character who has benevolent attitude towards Srikant and entrusts him with responsibilities to save the nation.

The power access and control as stated by Van Dijk (1995) has studied the characterization of Kulkarni, Head to TASC. He is seen to have an objective approach towards countering terrorism as he entrusts Srikant with mission to counter terrorists.

Imran Pasha as leader of Force One team, belonging to Muslim community has been represented as a Muslim who is desperate to prove his loyalty towards the nation has been seen the definition of hero as per Jasper et al. (2018). He is thorough patriot (Guo, 1998) who extremely protective of his group members and is ruthless enough to

fight against terror as he possesses a polarized view against terrorists who harm the nation. However, he gets martyred while saving the nation.

Zoya, the female member of the TASC team, under Srikant Tiwari is represented as a character who has a keen eye for details and adds value to the team as she belonging to Muslim community tries hard to prove her loyalty to the nation as stated by the description of female police heroes by Khan (2022a).

Milind, member of TASC, under Srikant Tiwari, is represented as a hardworking team member who is always up on his toes possessing patience and endurance under challenging circumstances as described as a hero by Jasper et al (2018).

Punit, a member of TASC working under Srikant Tiwari is technical member who has amazing technological skills and helps to gather information to fight crime.

Kareem Bhatt a Muslim student from Kashmir is represented as an individual who keeps his radical beliefs and thoughts as he thinks that his community is not save in the Hindu nation. In order to change the opinion about people, he gets victimized amongst the more powerful people who sacrifice him to achieve their bigger target through terrorism as per the description of Khan (2022a).

Jonali has been represented a collateral victim between the radical religious philosophies where her attempt to prevent the death of Kareem Bhatt remains futile as described by Datta (2000).

Nurse Mary has been represented as a victim by gender that falls easy pray for the villain as she trusts the villain and does not see the malicious intensions of the villain beyond her beliefs as per Datta (2000).

Suresh Jhadav, an inspector, has been represented as a character who holds hatred and preconceived prejudiced notions about Muslims. The character of Suresh Jhadav has been seen through the Critical Realism paradigm which describes that the knowledge can be produced directly or by the meanings out of it as put across by Bhaskar (1975). According to Suresh Jhadav he has kept in his knowledge directly that all of Muslims are terrorists and therefore does not deserve to be treated properly.

Altaf belonging to Muslim community has an important representation in the discourse as he plays the catalyst element to fuel the terrorist movements. He categorises victims who can be potential candidates to work for the terrorist organisation especially among people coming from lower socio-economic conditions and possessing deep-seated beliefs in Islam.

Inspector Shinde has been represented as a fall in the system where lacks motivation and enthusiasm towards his duties is.

Major Vikram from the Indian Army has been represented as a character who carries a preconceived prejudiced notions about Kashmiris as he believes them to be as traitors who are yet to prove their patriotism as per the description of Guo (1998).

As per the Critical Realism paradigm by Fairclough (2005), an individual tries to change his social conditions through the texts and meanings. Similarly, Firdaus Macgray as Kashmiri citizen struggles to prove his nationalism and change his narrative about Kashmiris although being an Indian citizen and serving the Indian Army.

According to the Critical Realism perspective, crime is linked to prior experiences and exploitation as stated by Norrie (2012). Studying Sajid's character under the

Critical Realism paradigm, he represented as a Muslim terrorist, belonging to Kashmir, who plans on taking the vengeance after his previous experience where he has been wronged. He keeps a discriminatory view about Indians as he blames them for his point of view in life and thus justifies his acts of terrorism.

4.3.1. Language and Identity in The Family Man

4.3.1a. Vocabulary Choice of words and connotations

4.3.1a.i. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *the Srikant Tiwari, my operation, decision taken was min, I should be responsible, I wanted to ask you about the home loan*

The denotic modality of language used with referral strategy in this discourse represents the current social dominance within the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012). The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014) describes that the individual and collective identity is formed socially. In this study, Srikant Tiwari forms his individual identity in relation to the formation of collective identity with sense of belonging to a group as he perceived with the the positive connotation of the words like *the* to describe Srikant Tiwari represents his current situation where he exercises dominance in his field as proposed by Van Dijk (1994).

The representation of Srikant Tiwari as a hero who is strong and can stand up for upholding justice represented through words like *my decision, responsibility*. He also has the power and strength to solve the crime as it agrees to similar study by Kort-Butler (2012). Hence the individual identity of Srikant Tiwari has led to the establishment of collective identity where Zoya, his subordinate sees his as her leader as it resonates to the sense of belonging to the group as stated by Edwards (2009).

Ironically, Srikant Tiwari has been seen questioning about *home loan* representing his socio-economic status as he feels that he has underachieved as the head of the family to help his family meet the end as shown by the study similar to Cohen (1955).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *It is my responsibility to safely deliver those three guys to you, father threw me out, for killing Muslim brothers, I am killing terrorists, so just stay out of my way; his duty was his only priority*

In a positive connotation the dynamic modality of the language here has been used as a linguistic determination of the responsibility that Imaran Pasha similar to study by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012). He has been represented as a hero who would go to any extent to change the image of his community as Muslims are stereotyped to be perpetrators of crime and not the upholders of integrity of the nation. The positive connotative words like *my responsibility, duty, priority, killing terrorists* has represented him in Althusser's (1979) concept of interpellation from stereotyped misrecognition to recognition as a patriot unlike his father who held radical views of Imaran Pasha killing Muslim brothers. The positive connotative language has helped the individual identity of Imran to position him into a group of patriots in the discourse presented by Hall (1997a) while formulating individual identity.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Ataf bhai, I will not join your group. I prefer working alone, no connection with terrorist group, works alone*

Studying under the lens of Ashmore et al. (2004) and Hall (1997a), Kareem Bhatt establishes his individual identity as he self-categorises himself as an individual who wants to establish himself as an individual who does not belong to the collective

identity of terrorists with words like. The concept of representational strategy by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012), with words like *working alone* represents preferred meanings as stated by Hall (1997b) out of the language. Here, the words like *I will not join your group* has a denotic modality of the language used where he establishes his power and dominance by controlling the text within the discourse.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *call from Karachi, Khurshid in Islamabad, we have the location coordinates, nerve gas, Sajid, transporting, information from R&AW*

Using the denotic modality of the language with referral strategy as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) has been portrayed by positive connotative with words like *we have, Khurshid, Islamabad, Sajid, transporting*. These positively connotative words have represented the India on a powerful stance than Pakistan as they have passed out vital information to stop the terror attack in India as per the power and dominance exercised as stated by Van Dijk (1995). This also showcases the access of power as presented by Van Dijk (1989) through the discourse of India as they have access to information from *R&AW*, where Pakistan has been represented less influential than India, wherein they have provided access to information which can represent them weaker than India.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *They need to win only once... but we need to win every time. And that too, in the right way. fitting surgical strike, our enemies, shoot to kill, mujahid captured*

The killing of terrorist by the TASC force here has been justified on the moral grounds that they possess threat to the nation agreeing to the study by Goppel

(2013). The dynamic modality of the language has been used here to connote the evil intention by imminent threats through representational strategy stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012). The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), states that the society is built on the actions of humans. At the same time, the critical paradigm establishes the reality and perception of reality. By using words like *fitting surgical strike, enemies, shoot to kill* showcases the determination by the justification for killing terrorists as part of counter- terrorism act. The linguistic determinism as proposed by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) is expressed through words like *they win only once but we need to win every time, mujahid captured* here determines that labelling of criminals. As proposed by Becker (1963), the criminals are punished for committing crime so that the law and order of the society keeps functioning on the normal level. Here, the language like *in the right way* in the discourse determines that if there is damage to one, other benefits determining the power pattern existing in the society. The collective identity of *they* as villains in the form of terrorists and *we, our* as heroes has been the representation heroes being the social repressive machineries as stated by Hall (1985) confirms in this study for maintaining the existing balance in the social structure.

4.3.1a. ii. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Asif, Moosa, Aboobacker, Moinuddin, Kareem, Altaf, Iqbal, Junaid, Sait, Amir Peeran, Faizaan, Basharat Ali, General Ansari, Khursid, Major Sameer, Srinagar, Kashmir, Baluchistan, Pakistan, Baramulla, Syria, Saudi Arabia*

The negative connotations of the Muslim names labelling through representational strategy and stereotyping the representations Muslims as criminals by the TASC team

in their effort to save India from terror attacks is evident in the discourse as Howarth (2007) and Machin and Mayr (2012). The representation of ethnic minority as stated by Hall (1990) in the form of Muslim as others in the discourse is clearly visible in the study. Negative connotations and usage of Muslim dominated places in India and abroad has created the notion of mental borders as India carries a preconceived discriminatory attitude towards these nations as potential threats to the security of the nation which has been found similar to the study of Tripathi and RaghuVanshi (2020).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *hijacked, killed, bus blast, suspect, militants, brazen attack, terrorists went on a shooting spree, prime suspect in scooter blast*

The negative connotations of using language strategies through prejudiced talks as stated by Van Dijk (1994), has led to cognitive reasoning of painting a picture of a community as terrorists belonging to Muslim community, which has brought them into an undesirable and harmful limelight. Through usage of descriptive language like *killed, blast, militants, terrorist, shooting, prime suspect in scooter blast* has represented a collective identity as like the study by Said (1978) which states that Muslim ethnic group are responsible for creating turmoil and disorder in the nation.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *I am not a terrorist, have not done anything, I am computer engineer, they are not my friends, I did not start all this! I do not know anything about any mission. I just want to meet my mother, mob slaughter my father and my uncle, dragged out and thrashed like animals*

The negative connotation of the usage of words where Moosa Rehman's role changes from a villain to victim has been depicted in this discourse as he demands justice from the system as to not label him as a criminal similar to the study by Best (1997). Here,

he usage of words like, *I do not know, not my friends, meet my mother, computer engineer* has represented his socio-economic condition and at the same time as a smart, educated and tech savvy villain. The individual identity and the action taken by Moosa Rehman, has helped to establish empathy with words like *I did not start all this* for the crime he has committed agreeing to the study by Nilsson (2022). Words like *slaughter, father, uncle, dragged, thrashed*, are negatively connotative of Moosa's past experiences that has been a victim and now labelled as a criminal as has resorted to violence to get revenge for the past atrocities that fell upon him and his family similar to what Bernburg (2019) states in the study.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *repeated provocations, India has never retaliated to Pakistan's terrorism with a major assault, attack on their parliament, 26/11, Indian government sleeping, act of war, need mujahid, time for Pakistan, world its strength, need to get Zulfiqar back on track, without wasting any time*

The discourse here establishes discriminatory talks as stated by Van Dijk (1994) with prejudiced preconceived notions about bringing negative limelight of India as a nation through words like *Indian government sleeping*. This discourse also shows the power display through the control of the context in the text with negatively connotative words like *we, act of war, Pakistan, world strength*. This study also agrees to the perception made by Pakistan terrorist groups as per the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) who states that the world is perceived according to the belief and principles one exposes themselves to. Words like *need of Mujahid* represents Islamic fundamentalism of recruiting terrorists to carry out the activities in India to establish hegemony by Pakistan. Here, the action of an individual has led to the formation of collective identity through planning of terror attacks in India are similar to the study

by Nilsson (2022). The restlessness represented in the discourse as *Zulfiqar back on track, wasting time* where India has shown dominance in the discourse through mental control where India *never retaliated* against powerful attacks by Pakistan, yet exercises control over the situation through silent attacks to maintain the necessary fear and power in the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1995).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *You've arrested us because we are Muslims, keep questioning us*

The identity of the suspected arrests of a group of Muslim students for bomb blast has been used as a context of referral strategy of the language as suggested by Van Dijk (1998) which establishes the stereotyped image and referring people from religious Muslim community consisting of ethnic minority to label them as preparators of crime due to their religious affiliations.

4.3.1b. Quoting Verbs

General Ansari sends regards, Faizaan sends regards, Altaf, faced atrocities, we will avenge them all. God has chosen you; you are Allah's most special, does jihad, overwhelmingly passionate, team given a task, sleeper cell on standby

Supporting the Critical Realism Paradigm as stated by Wilkinson et al. (2022), crime is often an outcome of an individual's perception and reality sometimes based on religious dimensions. The study shows that the recruitment of terrorist as mostly from Islamic background which has been showcased through usage of words *sends regards* to, *God has chosen you, Allah's special*. Here, the religious belief to carry out the mission, and religion as an identity of individual to carry out the mission is evident in the discourse. Usage of descriptive words like *jihad, atrocities*, where individuals are

asked to take collective action as represented by words *team given task, sleeper cell on standby* hence developing collective identity against those who have created havoc and mayhem to their community as stated by Nilsson (2022). The representation of Muslim community who can provide potential harm to the nation through the referral strategy as stated by Hall (1997a) is represented by words like *we will avenge them* and thus rise above on the social structure.

I am upset about the fact that that we did not just kill them, we are also killing their reputation now, they were not terrorists, their families deserve to know this, because now the world will taunt them for it all their lives, I should come out and tell the truth. i will face the aftermath

The epistemic modality of the language used through representational strategy as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) has represented Srikant Tiwari as hero who feels responsible for the injustice towards Kareem Bhat who becomes the victim of circumstances. Srikant Tiwari has been represented as a hero who has good morals with usage of words like *they deserve to know, they are not terrorists, face the aftermath* as supported by the Critical Realism paradigm that the difference between the good and the evil lies in the meta ethics of moral and values as stated by Norrie (2012). Kareem Bhat has been the victim of circumstance, but he has been wrongfully represented as a villain owing the beliefs and thoughts, he possessed against the people who committed atrocities to Muslim community, similar to the study by Van Dijk (1995) as he is a strong representation of collective identity where the power of an individual has been neglected in the discourse.

I've sent you all the videos on WhatsApp, delete them from your phone, I hope we are even now

The representation of gay character in the discourse has that been of the victim who has been subjected to victimization owing to their sexuality. The gay characters have been blackmailed, abused, and used under the social issues and stigmatization already existing within the context of discourse. They become easy targets to achieve goals to fulfil by the villains similar to the study by Monaghan (2020).

4.3.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

Martyred

The Critical Realism paradigm by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014), states that the formation of collective identity is through the social construct. This study uses the concept of critical paradigm through rhetoric metaphoric reference of *martyred* with reference to the terrorists who are killed during terrorist attacks as their main purpose of recruitment is to attain martyrdom and selfless sacrifice following the fundamentalism of Jihad similar to the study by Kurzman (2018).

Zulfiqar

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) states that difference between reality and perception is achieved through the critical paradigm. This study uses Zulfiqar in the rhetoric metaphor reference to Prophet Mohammad's Sword between reality and perception signifying that it will serve to attain victory from evil similar to what has been stated by Rizwan et al. (2013). The power and dominance exercised here is using contextual reference in discourse that is reflective of the dominance in the social structures as stated Van Dijk (1997). Here, the word "*Zulfiqar*" has been used to symbolise the terrorist attack which can ruin India forever causing mass destruction and loss of innocent lives.

If there is ever heaven on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) states knowledge is acquired by making meanings of the texts that one sees. Supporting the critical paradigm, the rhetoric metaphor is referencing *if there is ever heaven on earth, it is here, it is here*, and *it is here* referring to Kashmir. As seen through the eyes of Srikant Tiwari, he interprets that the beauty of Kashmir has been disrupted due to constant terror attacks by Pakistan as they reclaim the part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and now has the dominance of Indian army who are used as state machinery exercising suppression as stated by Hall (1995).

Wedding, bride, groom, turban

Following the critical paradigm stated by Bhaskar (1975) by making meaning out of the texts, the rhetoric metaphoric reference of *wedding* refers to bomb blast, *bride*, refers to the weapon used for terrorist attack and *groom* refers to the terrorist who has been the chosen one to carry out the task and *turban* refers to the nerve gas using which mass destruction will take place. Using Van Dijk's (1994) concept regarding understanding of the texts, metaphors used here represents the complex cognitive meanings of the language as it lays its hidden meanings that are comprehensible through the context within the texts.

4.3.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

Anything, anyone that could be a potential terror threat

Using the denotic modality of the language used with referral strategy as proposed by Van Dijk (1994), hyperboles are used to denote meanings from discourse by labelling

the Muslims as stated by (Becker,1963) who can be potential terror threats supporting the critical paradigm by Bhaskar (1975, 1979) where an identity is formed according to one's beliefs and principles. Here, the representation of Muslims as potential threat has been represented in the form of collective identity as they are together with the same belief of terror attacks based on the Islamic fundamentalism similar to the study by Welten and Abbas (2021).

Need a taste of their own medicine, call 26/11 child's play

The use of denotic modality of language as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) has been used as hyperbole with words like *taste own medicine* referring to the tit for tat measures adopted by terrorists to justify their attacks. Using Van Dijk's (1997) principles to understand the meaning of the texts, words like *child's play* have been used which is denotic of the influence the Jihad fundamentalist in contextual reference to create fear and dominance within the discourse.

Everything is great Sir. We are ruling everywhere here

Supporting the critical paradigm by Bhaskar (19975), where meanings are generated by what one sees. Words like *greatruling everywhere* are representative of the epistemic modality of usage of language as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012). Using Van Dijk's (1994) concept which says that to portray control, the greatest way is to control the context of the discourse, words like *we, ruling, here* are clear depiction of control in the social hierarchy. The collective identity of *we* in reference to Indian army has been established as they play the role of suppressive force over the Kashmiris hence establishing dominance over the discourse through their discourse as

stated by Hall (1995) where he states that dominance in the discourse can be achieved by suppression.

Slaughter each one of them! Do not worry about the police

Supporting the study by Siyech & Narain (2018), the denotic modality of the language used here in terms of *slaughter each one* has been represented of hatred towards Muslim community as India mainstreams Islamophobia which is agreed in the critical paradigm by O'Mahoney & Marks (2014) that identity is socially constructed. The religious violence upon Muslim communities has catapulted into stereotyping and stigmatization of the Muslim communities in India. The strategy to produce discriminatory talks to achieve their goals as stated by Van Dijk (1995) through words like *do not worry about police* has negatively highlighted the Muslim community as well as creating centers of power has been clearly depicted in the discourse

Someone told me the number of tourists here has shot up. I can see the tourists

Using critical realism by Bhaskar (1975) of creating meanings out of what one sees, the metonymy used here is with reference to *tourists* as army men on Kashmir's Street has been represented as Indian army men working under Hall's (1985) concept of repressive machineries to exercise power and control in maintaining peace within the social structure. The words metonymy of words like *someone told me the number of tourists here has shot up. I can see the tourists* are representative of suppression created by Indian army in the state of Kashmir.

4.3.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in The Family Man

4.3.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

4.3.2.a.i. Classificational Process

Figure 34

Suspected criminals tied and brought into custody



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 34, the visual represents the superiority as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) of police and inferiority of the criminals as they get dragged with discrimination and derogation as they have been socially labelled as criminals.

Figure 35

Srikant Tiwari cornered by Muslim men



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

Figure 35 has a clear depiction of Sajid being superior to Srikant as he gathers a crowd to support him, thus making himself a part of the group resulting in collective identity to gather empathy similar to the study by Nilsson (2022).

Figure 36

A group of Muslim men attacking Srikant Tiwari



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 36, the group, portraying their collective action has led to the formation of collective identity, who came together to safeguard their own community.

4.3.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 37

Shooting down of suspected terrorists by Force One member Imran Pasha



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Figure 37 represents the collective identity of individuals that have been labelled as criminals as they get shot down by Imran Pasha. The symbolic representation as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), and objective view of the information provided by the point of view shot symbolises the power and dominance over a situation through multi-layered meanings developed through the meanings in the visuals as stated by Fairclough (2013).

Figure 38

Montage of terror attack in waiting



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Figure 38 represents the symbolic representation as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) of scooter standing the middle of the busy street is symbolic of the fear similar to the study by Sparks (1992).

Figure 39

Suspected terrorist crosses the Indian Border



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Figure 39 represents the symbolic representation of a man dress in stereotypical Muslim scarf which is symbolic as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) in the Islam, suggests a suspected terrorist crossing the India-Pakistan borders with weapons of destruction has been depicted. This represents the malicious intention of Pakistan to cause chaos and disruption in India.

4.3.2.b. Semiotic Choices

4.3.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 40

Meticulous eye on the suspected terrorist



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 40, Srikant Tiwari has a demand gaze (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) as he keeps an eye on Sajid, the suspected terrorist who is alleged to be responsible for terrorist attacks in India. The armed forces as repressive machineries as stated by (Hall, 1985). has been depicted in the image where the machineries are used to control and end terror within the state

4.3.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 41

Battered and betrayed by Major Sameer's own country Pakistan



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 41, the offer gaze by Major Sameer has that been of a failure, who lacks the sense of achievement where gaze as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) that symbolises his dream to attain hegemony of Pakistan around the world has been shattered.

4.3.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

4.3.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 42

TASC logo represents the fight against terrorism



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

The saliency and importance of text to symbolise as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) given to visual in Figure 42 to the TASC logo represents the importance of TASC and its role is establishing the order safeguarding the interest of the nation in case of terror threats confirming Hall's (1995) concept about exercising dominance and power in the social structure.

Figure 43

Surveillance by Indian Army over terrorist camp



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 43, army is represented as stated by Hall (1985) acts as repressive machinery to establish law and order through presence and surveillance has been depicted in the images.

Figure 44

News about Pakistan PM changing sides thus shifting the power dynamics



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pc_rid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Supporting the Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1975), society exists because of human activities, in Figure 44, the information of General Ansari to become the new Chief of Army has been represented as the trait of the villain who has very low moral and ethical standards and does not hesitate to use information and circumstances to his advantages.

4.3.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 45

Police van under terrorist attack



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

Figure 45, has a clear depiction of failure of the law and order through the framing with extreme wide angle shot as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). The visual represents collapsing of the police Van which was carrying the suspected terrorist. Agreeing to Van Dijk (1995) about the social change, the tumbled police van is representative of the loosing of the stance in power and dominance in the social structure.

Figure 46

Wanted terrorists planning their next attack after failed attack



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

The framing in Figure 46 as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) symbolizes the negative intent of two wanted terrorist Moosa Rehman and Sajid as they discuss about their plans for terror attack with determination. The small window is representative of lying low and small, yet at the same time, the buildings around them represents the intensity of the destruction they plan.

4.4. Identity in Sacred Games

As per the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975), the social construct of the identity is through beliefs and principles. Looking Sartaaaj Singh through the critical paradigm and Hall's (1997) theory of representation in the formation identity, Sartaaaj Singh comes from low socio-economic background is a Sikh police hero who wants to come above the prejudice and discrimination he faces professionally and

personally. He has been an under achiever, living under the shadows of his father also a former policeman. His is an under achiever as police officer who is under constant pressure to perform. His view of the world, with his preconceived notions about the people around him who constantly judge him and his ways provides initial hinderance in his performance and growth thereby defining his individual identity. However, with a break through case, he manages to change his role from victim to hero as he maneuvers his path as a righteous police officer who takes the responsibility to protect his city from malicious and lethal terror attack.

Ganesh Gaitonde's identity has been seen through the Critical Realism paradigm by Wilkinson et al. (2022) where an individual's identity is dependent on socio-economic conditions, socio-cultural conditions, and religious dimensions. As Brahmin Hindu with lower socio-economic background, he breaks the stereotype notion of Brahmins as pure and having righteous beliefs basing their actions on virtuous Hindu philosophy of Karmic deeds as similar to the study found by Sathyamala (2019). Agreeing to Hall's (1995) social construction of power and dominance, he adopts all criminal measures to rise up in the social ladder where he conspires, murders, creates religious violence, indulges in prostitution deeds and drug trafficking. However, he fails to be the judge of characters who betray him in the process of changing the power dynamics as he become victims from a villain owing to circumstances and past experiences

Constable Katekar has been represented as a police officer whose constantly supports Sartaaaj Singh as they both become a part in establishing the *joint power* as stated by Van Dijk (1995) to create dominance in their profession as it establishes his

individual identity to belong to a group for collective action leading to formation of collective identity.

Parulkar's identity has been looked from the Critical Realism paradigm by Norrie (2012) which states that identity and crime have relationships with one's morals and values. He has been represented as a character who indulges into corruption and possessing low moral standards as he discriminates, conspires, kills innocents against his fellow police officers consisting of people who are less powerful than him in the process of creating power center around him as stated by Van Dijk (1989).

Majid, a Muslim police officer, has been represented as a corrupt police officer who has been under constant pressure to please his immediate boss Parulkar to maintain his power in the professional hierarchy as stated by Van Dijk (1995). His individual identity as a role of a police officer often takes the turn of a villain.

The representation of female victims like Nayanika, Jojo Mascarenas, Zoya Mirza, Subhadhra have all been due to their gender. Females being the weaker gender has been portrayed as less powerful and being exploited in the hands of the system, often by people who are close to them as described by Datta (2000).

Anjali Mathur, the female counterpart of Sartaj Singh, is the only representation in the entire discourse where she has been seen as strong, yet are expected to possess man like physical qualities in order to be considered as a part of the collective identity as heroes as described by Datta (2000) for female police heroes. However, she too becomes a victim of professional hierarchy owing to the gender discrimination due to the stereotyped perception of the social structure.

Kukoo, has been represented as an objectification of desire as a gay character, as she serves the love interest of Ganesh Gaitonde and Isa Suleiman, finally subjugated to being a victim because of gender similar to the study by Monaghan (2020).

Bunty Sharma has been represented to have extreme radical thoughts against Muslims, thus developing his individual identity to represent the collective thoughts of radical Hindu community safeguarding the Hindu philosophy to safeguard the sanctity of sacredness in Hinduism as described by Siyech & Narain (2018).

Isa Suleiman, has been represented as a part of the Muslim affluent community as he displays power and position to maintain his dominance in the social structure. He resorts to violence to exercise his mental control over as stated by Van Dijk (1995) in the social hierarchy he belongs to, thus developing his individual identity of being the most powerful man in the system.

Malcolm Mourad, has been represented as a part of the collective identity of terrorists capable of creating mass destruction on innocent people, establishing his position in the social structure as represented by Hall (1997a).

Guruji, has been represented as an individual, who establishes a collective identity of Hindus, as the members of the group associate themselves as a part of the group through religion as stated by Alesina et al. (1999).

Kulkarni and Dwivedi, upper caste Hindus, have been represented as individuals who try to bring in the change in power centers through the discourse and action, thus creating collective identity within the discourse.

4.4.1. Language and Identity in The Family Man

4.4.1a. Vocabulary Choice of words and connotations

4.4.1a.i. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *I will help, good policeman, like my father destroy evil, messenger of God in the kingdom of devil, your father, Dilbagh Singh*

Supporting the Critical Realism paradigm by Norrie (2012), Sartaaaj Singh has been represented with a good moral character who as hero save the victims from the crime through the usage of positive connotation of the words like, *I will help, good policeman, like my father, messenger of God* where he wants the goodness of a hero as a saviour to become a part of his identity which his father was known. His intentions to save the world with words like *destroy evil* is representative of the power and dominance as put forward by Van Dijk (1995), as Sartaaaj Singh's role as a hero tries to change the world for a better place, however, owing to the failure in the system with words like is reflective of his power and position within the social hierarchy.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Nayanika did not get justice, my fault, I'm sorry.*

Nayanika is victim who has been shown sympathy by the hero as he tries to protect her, but fails to do so. She being a woman, became an easy target by people that she has been closely associated with similar to the study by Garrett (2023). However, Nayanika becoming the victim provides a new turning point in Sartaaaj Singh's life, as he strives towards being the saviour and save his city through words *my fault, I'm sorry.*

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Your destiny will change, we will change each other's destiny*

The epistemic modality of the language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) with a positive connotation used here represents the social cognition that Ganesh Gaitonde seeks in terms of associating himself with Sartaaaj Singh where he needs his support and help to establish the dominance within the social hierarchy as he seeks to establish his collective identity through a sense of belonging to Sartaaaj Singh.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *I'm doing my job, you do the same, earn some good karma*

Sartaaaj Singh has been a victim of discrimination of owing to professional hierarchy and rivalry. This discourse represents his view of the world on which it functions as he advises Parulkar to stop his corrupt practices as a police officer and do his duty sincerely as represented by Hall (1997a). This epistemic modality of the language through referral strategy used as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) has also represented the construction of individual identity which leads to collective action as Sartaaaj Singh becomes responsible to represent his community thus establishing collective identity.

4.4.1a. ii. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Junaid Sheikh, Majid, Salim, Isa Suleiman, Usman Sheikh, Chota Badariya*

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975), states that one's knowledge is a consequence of one's beliefs and principles. Supporting the critical paradigm,

representational strategy used here in this discourse represents group of names *Junaid Sheikh, Majid, Salim, Isa Suleiman, Usman Sheikh, Chota Badariya* belonging to Muslim ethnic group as perpetrators of crime. The negative connotations through epistemic modality of language have been used for Muslim names as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) suggests that the people belonging to Muslim community as seen as deviants are threat to the community and thus are labelled deviant groups agreeing to the concept by Becker (1963). The Muslim people has been represented to be violent and capable of which can provide necessary damage to the society; hence they have a very distinct representation of otherness through collective identity in the discourse which confirms the concept of othering by Hall (1997a).

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *ISI, Hizbuddin, Pakistan, Balochistan, Kashmir, they, planning, disastrous against India, Indian support, our freedom, give you names*

Agreeing to the representation of identity by othering as referred by Hall (1997a), the discourse here shows age-old border problems between India and Pakistan and constant threats to both the nation has been reflective in congruence to the similar study by Garner (2013). The negative usage of words like *they, ISI, Hizbuddin, planning, against India* represent the intentions of Pakistan and how they can project the negative portrayal of nation in front of the world confirming the critical paradigm by Wilkinson et al (2022) that crime and its consequences are related to the socio-cultural conditions, religious dimensions.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *Two terror, Junaid had a weapon, surrender, firing, Constable Raut shot, run away, Parulkar Sir went after him. warned, put the weapon*

down, Junaid pull the trigger, before he could fire, Parulkar fired three rounds at him, he was surrendering

The representation of Junaid's individual identity is related to the collective identity as he belongs to Muslim community, labels him as a criminal as stated by Becker (1963) through the usage of referral strategy as stated by Van Dijk (1998) through negative connotation of words like *had weapon, firing, shot Constable Raut*. Belonging to Muslim community and low socio-economic status, Junaid has been labelled as a criminal and has become a victim in the discourse although he was *surrendering*. Thus, the justification of Parulkar firing at Junaid is a repressive measure as stated by Hall (1985) to bring about stability in the societal structure suppressing the threat towards society and his fellow police officers.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *My father was a Hindu priest there, but he was nothing more than a beggar like a drought for 1000 years, I will hit you, your wh*** of a mother*

The epistemic modality of language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) used here labels Ganesh Gaitonde coming from lower socio-economic background for his acts of deviance which has more inclination coming from his social background which develops his individual identity as a criminal. Hall's (1985) talks about representation of individual identity seeking sense of belonging to form collective identity has been represented through negative connotation of words like *your wh*** mother, beggar, hit you*, signifies traumatic past experiences which Ganesh Gaitonde has faced owing to his lower social class.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *got a tip, as per the intelligence, this breach was from the Mumbai police, he was with the GIA, First Gaitonde, now Malcolm Mourad in India, not a good co-incident*

The epistemic modality of the language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) used here negatively connotes the presence of terrorist and anticipated terrorist activities in India. The access of information as stated by Van Dijk (1989), has led to representation of India, being in a more powerful position connoted with words like *got a tip, as per intelligence, Gaitonde and Mourad in India*. Use of words like *not a good co-incident* represents preferred meanings which can have various representations like the size, time, type or place for attacks as stated by Hall (1997b).

4.4.1b. Quoting Verbs

I benefited from being a Brahmin's son, this is the Hindu Hotel, everything here is clean and pure, everyone here is Brahmin

Through the epistemic modality of the language used here in the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1997) Ganesh Gaitonde has represented upper caste Hinduism as superior in the social structure. The usage of language here in terms of *everyone here is Brahmins, benefited from being a Brahmin's son* represents the upper caste dominance in the Indian social structure. *Everyone as Brahmins* is representative of collective identities due to religion. The word *pure* is symbolic to upper caste Brahmins being pure as they do not consume meat similar to study by Sathyamala (2019).

Can this 5-star hotel be attacked too, for serving this, not when I am here

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1997), it divides the knowledge consumed as direct meanings and meanings generated by texts. Supporting the critical paradigm, the epistemic modality of the language used as stated by Van Dijk (1997) with words like *servicing this* here, is in reference to beef. The *5-star hotel* represents the socio-economic status of Zoya Mirza, a Muslim actress, consuming beef. Cow being the sacred animal of the Hindus has often led violence related to beef consumption has taken place in India similar to the study by Siyech & Narain (2018). Zoya Mirza, belonging to upper socio-economic status, showcases social cognitive dominance in the presence of Parulkar who is a police officer as he dominates the discourse by controlling the context of the discourse to exercise his power and control in the social hierarchy as stated by Van Dijk (1994) through words like *not when I am here*.

4.4.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

I feel like I am God, I am Ashwathama, I am immortal, even God cannot harm me, I am above him too, one God in Gopalmath, and that is me

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1997) states that an identity of a person is in relation of his own beliefs and principles. It supports the critical paradigm in the discourse as the texts have been analyzed according to the epistemic modality of language through rhetoric metaphoric reference in metaphor as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Words like *I am Ashwathama*, a mythological character in the Mahabharata, is representative of Ganesh Gaitonde, avenging all the people who have wronged him and led to his downfall similar to the study as stated by Hooper (2018). Ganesh Gaitonde has exercised his power, that through controlling the context of the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1994) through the usage of the

words like *I feel like I am God, I am immortal, above him, one God in Gopalmath* in the social structure and the hierarchy that he belongs to, hence developing a collective identity as the representative of his community. The representation of villain with words that denotes a powerful and unbeatable of a character who is *God-like, cannot harm me* and *that is me* draws similar representations of villains that has been presented by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018).

Next Ramakant Jadhav, in the last ten years, catch Sonu, a pickpocket

Epistemic modality of language is used here through metaphor as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Sartaj Singh has been represented as a police officer who has a low esteem about himself for being an underachiever who wishes to be a good police officer. Words like *next Ramakant Jadhav, in ten years catch pickpocket* which narrates what Hall (1997a) represents as the functions of the society where an individual's identity is constructed with the power and dominance he exercises in the social structures.

What is religion, the mother or the father, I was free of it now, I needed a new religion, Bombay, religion found business in purity, and my job was to make these sin my business, religion is the biggest business in the world, they use the fear of God to rule over people, chicken bone in a Hindu hotel can cause more damage than any notorious gangster to create a rift, incite riots amongst the Muslims and Hindus, dump pork in a mosque and dump beef in a temple, for devout Hindu, a bone was enough

Supporting the Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) , of social identity relating to existing beliefs and values of a person. The study sees epistemic modality of language through metaphoric references as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) and the relationship between reality and perception through word like *religion* represented with power and dominance through words like *free, fear of God, need a new religion* as a part of individual and collective identities which has been created through leaving one group and adopting another. Through words like *my business, rifts, riots* represent religious violence. Upper caste Brahmin's hegemony over the food with context to *purity* within the discourse with words like *chicken bone in Hindu hotel, for devout Hindu* has been reflected in the study similar to the study by Sathyamala (2019).

Isa's red car. Isa was invincible, nothing could kill him, to defeat him, I had to take Kukoo away, obsessed with Kukoo, whoever won over Kukoo, ruled Bombay

The epistemic modality of language through metaphors as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012), *Isa's red car, invincible* represents the reference to the power and dominance which Isa Suleiman has in terms of the car, a woman, *Kukoo* reflecting the socio-economic status in the social hierarchy as put across by Van Dijk (1995). The Critical Realism paradigm by O'Mahoney and Marks (2014), states that social identity through the representations of collective and individual identity. Looking from the lens of critical paradigm, words *obsession* of *Kukoo* has a metaphoric reference to a transgender who has been represented with a stereotypical love interest. *Kukoo's* role changes from the most powerful sought after human being to being a victim. The words like *won, Bombay, take Kukoo away* too has references from Van Dijk's (1997) about social changes in the societal structure and social

cognition in order to develop individual identity of Ganesh Gaitonde who holds lower social status. Taking away Kukoo will thus help him establish a sense of belonging and power in the society.

Lord Ram, Sita, Hanuman, killed Ravan

The metaphoric reference as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) to the Hindu mythological God like *Lord Ram* has been represented as the ultimate hero for upholding the deed of the good over evil, *Ravan*. This has been used as a reference to Ganesh Gaitonde who believes to have God like power to kill his enemy has been similar to the study by Mankekar (2002).

Guruji, my third father, betrayed me

The rhetoric metaphor and its usage of words through epistemic modality of the language as represented by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) has a representation of Guruji who exercises mental control as suggested by Van Dijk (1995) over his group members. He has been perceived to possess most power in the existing social structure. Guruji has been represented as a villain who has weak moral character as he can *betray* his own group members for his gain.

4.4.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

*Missing for 17 years, has not been in India for 23 years, it cannot be him, he has 158 murder cases against him, he f*** both RAW and ISI before disappearing*

Ganesh Gaitonde has been symbolising crime as he represents fear, terror and ruthlessness as represented by Hall (1997a). The language here represents the representational strategy used represent Ganesh Gaitonde who is seen as an offender

who will not falter to commit crime and takes pride in the symbolic significance he represents within his community. Social labelling of Ganesh Gaitonde as per Bernburg (2019) through the usage of denotic modality of language and hyperbole as suggested by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012) forms the deviant who has been seen with prejudiced notion as he develops a strong sense of individual identity reflected through *missing for 17 years, has not been in India for 23 years, it cannot be him, he has 158 murder cases against him, he f*** both RAW and ISI before disappearing.*

Save this city. You love this city

Through this hyperbole, Sartaaaj Singh has been asked to save the city as terror and threat looms over in the city is represented by Hall's (1995) concept of ushering new social change. The denotic modality of language through Van Dijk's (1994) and Machin & Mayr's (2012) strategy has been used here which establishes the joint power as proposed by Van Dijk (1995) as Sartaaaj Singh, being a police officer and upholding the system of justice, has the power to stop the destruction where he has been the chosen one by the villain and makes Sartaaaj Singh's responsibility to save the city.

The Mumbai police has solved this case in record time

By this hyperbole, *the Mumbai police has solved this case in record time* has presented the crime through radical presentation of facts, as they resolve to take care of notorious criminal Bunty Sharma. With the perspective and justification that killing of Bunty Sharma, labelled as a notorious criminal as per the description of Berk (2015)

was a collective action as stated by Hall (1995) to kill in order to maintain social order and justice within the system.

Look at the records to know if I am a man or God

The metonymy used through denotic modality of the language as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012) in terms of *if I am man or God* establishes Ganesh Gaitonde as villain who is equivalent to God fitting the description by Bergstrand and Jasper (2018). According to Van Dijk (1994), the language within the discourse establishes Ganesh Gaitonde's power and dominance he exercises as he controls the context of discourse, establishing himself in a higher position in the social structure.

Learn your job first, I will take your life when I need to later

The metonymy used here through denotic modality of the language through words like *job first, life later* as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012) denotes the importance of collective action. This develops collective identity bringing a sense of belonging to the group as Ganesh Gaitonde asks Bunty to acquire the skills of the trade. The metonymy used in the form of *learn, I will take* possess the ruthlessness of Ganesh Gaitonde has where meanings of the text generated shows as referred by Van Dijk (1997) shows contextual reference that he keeps the power to exercise his dominance by taking Bunty Sharma's life.

Prime ministers were changed as often as underwear

The dynamic modality of metonymy language as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and Machin and Mayr (2012) through words like *Prime Minister, underwear and changed*

refers to system in terms of political reference to what Hall (1997a) represents that the functionality of the existing system is changing. The text here has been found to be representative of what Van Dijk (1995) states about degrading the socio-political structures which is existing within the system. Ganesh Gaitonde narrates the failing system which has created political and religious violence in the nation.

He says he has one last job to finish before leaving.

The metonymy used through epistemic modality of the language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) and Machin and Mayr (2012) through words like *last job to finish* refers to the terror attacks that will take place in India, for which Sartaaaj Singh is in charge to prevent it from happening. Referring to Hall's (1995) concept of ushering new change in the existing structure, an under-achiever police tries to stop the terror attack that could change the course of history. The text here in the discourse refers to the satisfaction of the goal which the communities achieve in fulfilling their motive to create centers of power on Sartaaaj Singh as discussed by Van Dijk (1997).

4.4.2 Decoding Visual Representation of Identity in Sacred Games

4.4.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

4.4.2.a.i. Classificational Process

Figure 47

Jojo Mascarenas dragging herself on the floor to save herself from Ganesh Gaitonde



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Figure 47 using the classificational element as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) showcases the superiority of Ganesh Gaitonde upon Jojo Mascarenas as she is seen dragging herself to run away from Ganesh Gaitonde as she knows she will not be able to escape his clutches. Thus, become the victim of violence and abuse as a woman in the discourse.

Figure 48

Sartaj Singh discriminated at workplace by his colleagues



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 48, through the classificational process as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) Sartaj Singh is portrayed as a victim of professional hierarchy represented by Hall (1997a) facing discrimination as his stand within the social hierarchy lies low in in the discourse.

4.4.2. a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 49

Dog thrown down the building represents lower social hierarchy



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 49, the symbolic significance as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) of the vertical long shot of dog flying down in the air has been used as representative of the social hierarchy as suggested by Hall (1995) of Ganesh Gaitonde. The buildings are significant of the high social structure and the dog in the air signifies his lower and helpless status in the society. He narrates his perspectives to define the meanings of the society showcasing power and dominance within the social structur

Figure 50

Sartaaj Singh defending his territory



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Sanchez (2006) lays the concept uprising of the suppressed by the challenges faced by the suppressed symbolising shift in the social structure. Figure 50 confirms the critical paradigm and establishes the subjective symbolic significance as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) of Sartaj Singh and constable Katekar guarding the area of crime marking as their territory from other police officers where Ganesh Gaitonde lies dead. The establishment of power in the discourse to bring in individual identity of Sartaj Singh as a police hero showcases the responsibility of safeguarding the society against crime.

4.4.2.b. Semiotic Choices

4.4.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 51

Ganesh Gaitonde looks helpless at Dilbaag Singh through the prison bars



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 51, the demand gaze as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) has been established as Ganesh Gaitonde looks at Dilbaag Singh, father of Sarttaaj Singh, when he feeds him with water after Ganesh Gaitonde suffers from police torture. Here, the identity of compassionate police hero has been established and Ganesh Gaitonde's role of changing from villain to victim too has been established owing to political dominance within the social structure.

4.4.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 52

Insolvent gaze of Ganesh Gaitonde



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The insolvent offer gaze suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) in Figure 52 has been established through Ganesh Gaitonde's gaze that he has lost his battle. Along with it represents the loss of power and position as suggested by Van Dijk (1995) in the social structure hierarchy where he no longer is at the top in the social hierarchal structure.

4.4.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

4.4.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 53

Sign board of Sathyanarayan Shukla Hindu Hotel Pure vegetarian



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The sign board in Figure 53 mentions the name of *Sathyanarayan Shukla, Hindu Hotel*, pure vegetarian and emphasis on the term Hindu thus establishing saliency Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) leading to the formation of collective identity by attracting Hindus to the hotel. The dominance of upper caste Hindus on food for maintaining purity amongst those who do not consume meat has been clearly depicted in the study has been found similar to the study by Sathyamala (2019).

Figure 54

Identity of Ganesh Gaitonde revealed through Malaysian passport



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix
(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Figure 54, establishes the salience as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) with the *Malaysian passport* belonging to Ganesh Gaitonde by giving the information about him, which establishes the supremacy of Ganesh Gaitonde who had the capability to create a fake international passport hence supporting the critical paradigm by Wilkinson et al (2022) which states that identity can be formed based on gender, socio-economic conditions, socio-cultural conditions, religious dimensions.

Figure 55

Nayanika being revengeful on her abuser Bunty Sharma



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The salience in Figure 55 gives information that (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) victim Nayanika's individual identity has been established. She resorts to violence and criminal act, attempting to murder to free herself of her past traumatic experiences with Bunty Sharma as she faced abuse and exploitations in his hands (Sarat, 1997).

Figure 56

Pakistani passport of Zoya Mirza



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix
(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975), addresses that knowledge is developed through meaning. Addressing the critical paradigm Figure 57 has been analyzed as it establishes the salience as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) giving out information on Zoya Mirza, a leading actress having her past revealed as a citizen of Pakistan. Pakistan has been given prominence in the visual; as it gathers attention about the identity of Zoya Mirza leading towards stereotyping as an enemy, immediately converting her identity to collectively see her as a citizen of Pakistan.

4.4.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 57

Ganesh Gaitonde shoots himself



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix
(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figures 58, the wide-angled shot is used for framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), establishes the lost power and dominance as suggested by Van

Dijk (1995) of Ganesh Gaitonde as he kills himself and lays lifeless by blowing off his head.

4.5.1. Shaping individual and collective identities in Hindi crime genre web series in India

As put across by Stuart Hall, language can be the major factor in developing individual identity as it can represent the struggles of representation through the context. The individual identity in this chapter has been shaped through various factors like religion Garner (2013), socio- economic status Vandrick (2014) and the need to arise in the social structure with an aim to shape the discourse Morley (2019). The Critical Realism paradigm as suggested by Wilkinson et al (2022) states that identity is subjected to gender, identity, socio-economic conditions, socio-cultural conditions, religious dimensions. Supporting the critical paradigm, the individual and collective identities of ethnic group has been formed in the discourse.

The representation of individual identities of heroes in characters like, Hathi Ram Chaudhary (Paatal Lok), Himmat Singh (Special Ops), Srikant Tiwari (The Family Man) and Sartaaaj Singh (Sacred Games) have all been based on their representations to lower socio-economic group also facing professional discrimination in their work by their seniors as stated by Althusser (1979) and the try to create a collective identity through sense of belongings similar to the study by Ashmore et al. (2004). The common individual identities amongst the heroes have been that of estranged family ties. All the heroes in the study depicts how each one struggles to find a balance between work and home. Their relationship with their spouse is divided between their work and personal relations. They all portray life struggle of a common man, although being portrayed as heroes in the study, as a common man who has needs to explain

his deeds and at the same time prove their identity as a husband and father worthy of the respect, they deserve in the family struggle.

The individual identities within the discourse of the villains have been an outcome of suppression in the past leading to labelling them as criminals and adopting criminal practices in characters like Hatoda Tyagi (Paatal Lok), Tope Singh (Paatal Lok), Moosa Rehman (Family Man), Sajid (Family Man) and Ganesh Gaitonde (Sacred Games), who have been the victim of abuse and exploitation owing to caste, ethnicity and lower social income group similar to the study by Sarat (1997). However, Donullia Gujjar (Paatal Lok), Gwala Gujjar (Paatal Lok), Ikhlq Khan (Special Ops), Major Sameer (Family Man), Isa Suleiman (Sacred Games), has been represented villains belonging to higher socio-economic status. Ikhlq Khan (Special Ops), Major Sameer (The Family Man) and Isa Suleiman (Sacred Games) have intentions to establish a self-governing and sovereign Muslim state across the world, having the resources and capital to fund the terrorist organizations and recruit terrorist for attacks thus creating collective identities with people who are associated for collective action as stated by Ehrlich & Liu (2002). Donullia Gujjar (Paatal Lok) and Gwala Gujjar (Paatal Lok) aims at establishing collective identities of lower caste hegemony over upper caste people as they break away from the social hierarchal structure and rise in power through exploiting their groups members and sacrificing them for to achieve their goal.

The critical paradigm by Khitrov (2019), says that digital communications present the distorted image of reality. Agreeing to the critical paradigm, the collective identities of transgenders and gay characters like Mary Lyngdoh and Kukoo has been represented as victims by gender where they are portrayed as weak characters and are

seen as downgraded and seen with discrimination similar to the study by Monagan (2017). These characters have been portrayed as collateral victims who always lived with the fear of publicly declaring their identity related with their gender for the horror of being exposed leading to social stigma and discrimination. Their purpose is to gain acceptance in the society. However, these existing fear and stigma made them victims as they fall easy prey. They are more susceptible and vulnerable to be used as an instrument to commit crime.

The shared aims between the villains in the study among Hatoda Tyagi (Paatal Lok) and Tope Singh (Paatal Lok) were significant as they all belong to lower socio-economic class, lower caste system and also belonging to the same ethnic community along with their similarities to the place of origin belonging to North India thus forming collective identity. The continuous quest to end the discrimination of the caste system after being exploited and oppressed creates their individual identities as they become representative of the community they belong to. Similarly, Moosa Rehman (The Family Man) and Sajid (The Family Man) has significant relationships among crime and identity with relation to socio-economic class, sexuality and ethnicity. Both Moosa and Sajid has been a victim of ethnic discrimination, hence, adopting violence and destruction as they see it a means to find justice within the system through collective action to achieve collective identity for the injustice done to them as individuals and their community owing to ethnic discrimination.

Labelling criminals either as an individual or collectively in the society leads to different judgement about individual and groups stated by Becker (1963). The villains have been represented with physical characteristics as common man who can blend easily with the background, hence posing problems in recognizing them thus making

it easier to hide their true characters. Hatoda Tyagi has a background as a shot-put player, looks like a common man and can easily blend with the crowd. Tope Singh, too looks ordinary and can easily camouflage in crowd. Ikhtlaq Khan looks well-groomed as he is represented as a business tycoon. Moosa, has been represented as a typical man who has been wronged. Sajid has been represented as a common adult pursuing his higher studies. Major Sameer has a tenacious look, but represents the sharpness an army man possesses. Ganesh Gaitonde has been represented as a middle-class man who has risen to power, but still relatable to the crowd as he represents collective identity in his group. Villains are educated and are tech savvy, therefore their acts are more ruthless. Hatoda Tyagi, Tope Singh, have both been educated in school, Sajid pursues his degree and Moosa is an IT graduate. Major Sameer is in the army and Ikhtlaq Khan as the business tycoon himself.

The individual identities are often representative of the need to be associated with a collective identity in the form of group as represented by Hall (1997a). The villains seek towards developing collective identity through the sense of belonging to a group, their affiliation through social cognition with people more powerful than them has been seen the study. Hatoda Tyagi has sought the attachment with Donullia Gujjar. Hatoda Tyagi becomes his hitman and ultimately transforms from Vishal Tyagi to Hatoda Tyagi, a gangster as he finds shelter and less disadvantaged belonging to Donullia Gujjar's group. Tope Singh finds attachment with Hatoda Tyagi, who is more powerful than him in order to find a sense of belonging to the group. Moosa Rehman and Sajid finds their sense of belonging with Major Sameer, who possesses more power than the two who can take their revenge for the wrong that has been done to them and their family members. Ganesh Gaitonde takes help of Salim Kaka, Guruji, Kukoo who are socially higher up in the hierarchy as he works towards

achieving his goals and climb up the social ladder which has been found in the similar study by Fiske & Dépret (1996).

Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) that suggests that one's identity is dependent on one's activity in the society. Supporting the critical paradigm, the development of collective identity has been formed by mentioning distinct mention of groups like ISI, Jaish, Al-Qaeda, Hizbuddin, GIA, Lashkar-e-Taiba having distinct association with terrorist groups involved in terrorism attacks in India. The mention of Pakistan and ISI, associating themselves with terrorist organizations for endorsing and encouraging terrorism has been prominent in the creation of collective identity which has been found similar to the study by Kuszewska (2022). The recruitment of terrorists belonging from lower socio-economic group (Vandrick,2014), for creating a Muslim dominated hegemonic state (Ehrlich & Liu,2002), based on Islamic religious belief (Garner,2013), supported by Jihadi fundamentalism has been one of the strong factors in creating collective identities who have come together to take collective action. At the same time, groups like R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing), TASC (Theat Analysis and Surveillance Cell), CBI, Force One, NSG, ATS, IB, BSF, Mumbai Police, Delhi Police have all been reflective of the collective center of power as stated by Van Dijk (1997) which is established to combat terrorism and hence becoming successful in countering crime and emerging victorious thereby establishing a collective identity which shares common target and aim. This has also helped in establishing the change in the power dynamics (Van Dijk, 1995) and thus establish the dominant group by creating power centers in the existing social structure (Van Dijk,1989, 2008).

Hence, the formation of individual and collective identities in this chapter has been representative of the existence of various social structures, power struggle, vengeance and overcoming the short comings of failure ultimately leading to triumph and saving the world from disaster. This has led to the formation of collective national identity based on patriotism and nationalism, martyrdom and sacrifice.

Chapter - 5

5. Creation of Centers and Peripheries

The Critical Realism paradigm as put forward by Bhaskar (1975) lays down that identity is a social construct which is dependent on the human activities in the world. At the same time, Sanchez (2006), puts forward in the critical paradigm, identity is subjugated to raise the voices of the oppressed in the social construct of gender, class and politics that outline the importance of identity in the sphere of power and dominance. This chapter has analysed centers and peripheries that have been represented, labelled, othered and created through various representation of socio-economic status, ethnicity and sexuality and its interrelationship between crime and identity. This chapter was analysed through the discriminatory lens of ethnic minority group in relations to crime based on terrorism, corruption, religious violence and caste-based crime in the web series.

The society has been constructed on centers. Hence, as we examine the creation of centers and peripheries, there are few elements to consider. The first, being the stereotyped notion about a particular community and othering them through discrimination and prejudice. Second, being the change in the power center. Third is the division between top officials and lower ranking officials creating a dissimilarity of social status and thus defining the hierarchy and fourth being the cultural dissimilarities (Mardin,1973).

Centers and peripheries as stated by Langholm (19971) have their groundwork based on demands of communities and groups where one needs to have an affiliation with the community, a sense of proximity to the center, and sense of participation within

and outside of the community. As centers are concerned, it consists of people on the policy level making, people in politics, elected members in government, the chosen leaders in the community etc make the centers as they are the makers of the policy for their “*own*” (Langholm, 1971: p.276) community as they are centrally accessible. At the same time, the peripheries consist of those who need to access to the centers.

Galtung (1971) puts forward the concept of centers and peripheries in terms of dominance of center nation to another periphery nation in the form of imperialism leading to territorial dominance. The center nations exercising control and dominance on periphery nation refers to the dangers of conquest and possible occupation in a power balance relationship.

On the other hand, Schneider et al. (2022) states that the creation of centers and peripheries are often related with stereotyping, othered or socially alienated by coworkers in the workplace as a result of their imperialism. Similarly, religious identity are other possible factors for othering in the workplace. At the same time, othering of gay, transgenders and lesbians in the web series have always been looked in the form of other community as they try to find visibility in their representations through their peripheral roles in the media (Day, 2018). As sexuality and genders have been concerned, they have always been the victim in the politics of marginalization creating centers and peripheries (Lewicki, 2020). The othering of people from lower socio economic background has always created the us and them category as the and find recognition due to the involvement of upper status people (Barlow et al., 1995).

This study has associated creation of centers and peripheries through the discriminatory lens with regards to terrorists and terrorism associating it with ethnic

minorities. The stereotypical discriminatory representation of ethnic groups makes the understanding of us and them as centers and peripheries more inclusive or exclusive of the ethnic groups as they define the broad category of interpretations in the discourse (Edwards, 2009). Referring to the criminals as outsiders or others and labelling of criminals on their basis of ethnicity, sexuality and socio-economic status creates a distinguishable discrimination (Becker, 1963). Therefore, social labelling of criminals builds crime and formation of collective action by creating centers and peripheries in the societal system (Ashmore et al., 2004).

It has been understood that there exists a complex structure of caste system in India. Therefore, discrimination and caste-based crimes in the country has been seen through the study of Rizwan et al. (2013), Moffatt (1997) and Sathyamala (2019). According to Quigley (1993), caste system in India shows distinct division of the social structure as superior and inferior. The upper caste Hindus sees the lower caste as outsiders, compromising of closed groups and based on the hierarchy of purity in terms of occupation. Along with the above division, caste has also been seen as a status and centers of power exercised by the Brahmins over the lower caste people. Therefore, the center and periphery relationship has established between the upper caste as center, with additional power and lower caste as periphery with fewer power (Moffatt,1997).

Religion has its deep-rooted connections with the identity of an individual or a group. It has been seen thorough collective and individual identity as stated by Robinson (2013). Religion also been seen as the center nation and periphery nation trying to establish hegemony over each other as stated by Chaturvedi (2002). Adding to it, religion has also led to religious violence as per the study by Rudolph & Rudolph

(1993). Therefore, religion and religious beliefs plays an important part in the construction of center and periphery (Fearon, 2003).

This study has undertaken the lens of socio-economic status, ethnicity and sexuality that are represented in the web series. Therefore, this chapter discusses the centers and peripheries that have represented and discriminated the ethnic minorities, the othering and discrimination of criminals by labelling, crime based on religious violence, terrorists, and terrorism in association with ethnic group by othering and creating us and them, othering in workplace by creating centers and peripheries in terms of individual and group, othering based on sexuality and caste-based violence.

5.1. Centers and Peripheries in Paatal Lok

5.1.1. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations

5.1.1a. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Hathi Ram need not wreck his brains, follow the rule book, handle the case, follow, its course*

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1995), states that the gaining of knowledge is an outcome of person's beliefs and principles. Agreeing to the critical paradigm, this study reveals the perception of Hathi Ram Chaudhary in the eyes of his superiors as someone who incompetent in handling important tasks. Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery connotes that decisions are made by those in power and hence they become the centers. Here, DCP Bhagat exercises his power over the people like Hathi Ram Chaudhary, who are following the orders and are pushed around as peripheries, as DCP Bhagat decides that Hathi Ram should take the case.

The power and dominance in the discourse has been exercised here with positively connotative words like *handle the case, wreck brains, follow* as DCP Bhagat controls the context of the text as stated by Van Dijk (1994) in the discourse.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *responsibility towards your community, oppressed for centuries, time to hit back, no to upper-caste oppression*

Language has a way of affiliating to a community and imbibing a sense of responsibility towards a community as stated by Evans (2016). Supported by the critical paradigm of society dependent on human activities as stated by Bhaskar (1979), the discourse here has brought about the various functionality of the group, in order to get the anticipated results by influencing the members of the group. As the rise of the lower caste of Manjaars uproar, they find courage to create centers of power as the oppression seems to be ending. The approach used by the community members to win in their motives have been seen in this discourse thus making them a part of their centers as proposed by Van Dijk (1997) as they work against their peripheries in terms of oppression from upper caste communities.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *gave me this case that I could never solve it, you are an as***, Chaudhary a much bigger one, not anticipated*

Hathi Ram Chaudhary was selected for a reason to act like a pawn in the hands of the system. He was already portrayed as incompetent; hence his downfall was evident as he takes the necessary fall when it came to executing the crime, if anything should go wrong which is similarly depicted in the study by Terpstra and Salet (2020). However, with his vigour to prove himself worthy of his family and his colleagues, although faltering in his ways, emerges as the underdog from the periphery as he

fighters the centers of top dogs who created power and dominance as proposed by the Langholm (1971) in the formation of center and periphery. The language used here as a discourse describes the journey has been of social structure relevant in the system. Hathi Ram Chaudhary becomes center as the hero who has been defined as a common man who achieves extraordinary feat similarly found in Zimbardo's (1960) study by taking risks and multiple considerate decisions related to other people in order to safeguard the moral values and principles.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *You keep a hold on your community, Bajpayee take that risk*

The representation of ethnic minority according to Hall (1997a) states that in order to provide existence dominance on a class or in a group, there will be formations of us and them if they want to continue exercising their control. Power and dominance can also be exercised through cognitive and ideological beliefs which have been shown by words like *hold your community, take risk* which portrays mental control as stated by Hall (1997a). The way power is distributed in the society can be as gain for some and loss for another. As proposed by Van Dijk (1995), the power dynamics and Bajpayee's community's balance over a group is seen through how one can hold on it, during the shift in the power dynamism.

5.1.1b. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Chaudhary cannot to handle it. Virk charged you with insubordination, not as a boss, as a friend you could have been happy, do some investigation yourself, intelligence, reluctant, giving full information,*

headquarters think dumb people police station, worthy of making arrangements, not investigations, without permission, don't snoop, suspended from duty

The access to power has a major portrayal of centers and periphery as stated by Langholm (1971). In this discourse, Hathi Ram Chaudhary has been seen as the other police officer as he holds a low position in the society and work place. Therefore, his higher officials have put him in periphery in professional hierarchy thus discriminating him as incompetent. Agreeing to the critical paradigm that the existence of social structure lies in humans as stated by Fairclough (2005), this study sees social strategy to produce discriminatory talks as proposed by Van Dijk (1997) in terms of words like *Chaudhary cannot to handle it, charged you, boss*, have been used in the discourse as they create centers of power with lower class police officers as periphery. In the similar manner, comments to produce social hierarchy in the profession with words like *reluctant, giving full information, headquarters think dumb people police station, worthy of making arrangements, not investigations, don't snoop, suspended from duty* as the higher-class officials access the information as they are in power as stated by Van Dijk (1989, 2008) representing the discrimination he faces in his personal life because of this social status.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *arrest these four under your police station Conspiracy to murder*

As per Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery, the higher-class police officers take complete dictatorship as centers over the crime scene, hence directing the lower-class police officers serving as peripheries to comply to the situation. In the context of Hathi Ram Chaudhary, the study here shows that the upper-class crimes are hidden from lower rank police officers. The texts have been anonymized here as

stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) as there are vague information which has been passed on to Hathi Ram Chaudhary by DCP Bhagat. Words like *these four, to your police station* are used in the discourse in terms of othering the criminals.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *I am not resigning, I was making editorial decisions, vocal critic of the government*

As proposed by Van Dijk (1995), the languages used in the discourse have been very characteristic of the change in the power dynamism for Sanjeev Mehra the owner of the news channel. Langholm (1971) states that people at the center are decision makers. Referring to the concept of center by Langholm (1971), Sanjeev Mehra serves as the center of power as an established journalist, who is discriminated in his profession for lacking efficiency. Each one tries their best to hold on to the power they are already exercising. Taking advantage of the other's situation and turning into one's gain has been a very evident characteristics between the power and ideology displayed in the study similar by Guinote (2014)

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *One of our brightest*

The Critical Realism paradigm as proposed by Žukauskas et al. (2018) states that an individual's experiences are an attempt to justify personal views and principles. Supporting the critical paradigm, in this study, Imran Ansari has been treated with recognition by his higher officials for his actions. Belonging to the Muslim community he is often been treated as the other in his profession. However, to make him efficiently function in the police department for an expected outcome, there has been a negative connotation of the words used by higher officials he is recognised as "*one of the brightest*" as stated by Guinote (2014) for making him a peripheral

individual, who has performed just because he has been assigned the task by those in centers of power.

Vocabulary and Choice of words: *ISI, Friendly Neighbour, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), they, terrorist from PoK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir), Pakistani passport.*

Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery has been in terms of nation. Here in the discourse, India has been seen as the center nation dominating their power and positions to other peripheral nations like Pakistan. The periphery has been created by using negative connotation of words used as *Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), PoK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir), Pakistani passport* as India sees the neighbouring country of Pakistan as the other in the form of antagonist. The concept of othering as proposed by Wright (1991) in the context of Pakistan has been visible in the discourse through the usage of words as *they*. Within the discourse, the Indian state has created a mental border on Pakistan claiming it to be its enemy who is responsible for creating unrest in India. Languages used can provide preferred meaning in the creation of us and them as proposed by Hall (1997b). The usage of words like *ISI, Lashkar-e-Taiba trained terrorist from PoK, Pakistani passport* represents Pakistan with negative connotation in order to be seen as the main perpetrators of crime in India. The contextual reference language usage to stereotypically discriminate a community as stated by Van Dijk (1997) has been represented by words like *terrorist, they*, in the discourse.

5.1b. Quoting Verbs

Whatever happened with three of Tyagi's sisters, there is no single report in any of the police files

According to Kumar (2004), the caste-based crimes have always been seen with sense of discrimination towards the lower caste. Through the epistemic modality of language as stated by Van Dijk (1997), this has been distinctively reflective through the discourse. The Critical Paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975) states that the creation of knowledge is what one makes meanings of out of the texts. Agreeing to the critical paradigm, communities belonging to upper caste have been on upper hand with regards to crime and gets away easily. The oppression in the form of othering of the lower caste continues as the upper caste exercises hegemony in the functioning of the system, which has been passed on to them in ancestral hierarchy. The abuse of power by those in power to the shift in power control to an individual who brings about the power change as stated by Van Dijk (1995) is found in the above discourse.

Gwala Gujjar as hitman, financial benefactor, but not as a politician, Tyagi out of Bajpayee's way, no relief for a Manjaar kid

As Becker (1963) points out that labelling is done by those in power, the labelling of the criminals belonging from lower caste as committers of crime for upper caste people has been very evident in this study confirming the similar study by Kumar (2004) through the usage of words like, *financial benefactor, Tyagi out of Bajpayee's way* have been used revealing discrimination by upper caste on lower people. The rise of the lower caste is not welcomed by the upper caste which is depicted through words like *Gwala Gujjar as hitman, but not as a politician* which will bring the people from lower caste as centers of power from being the periphery and create power and dominance as stated by Van Dijk (1995). Tope Singh being a *Manjaar kid*, from a lower caste, has been subjected to discrimination and abuse which is reflected

in the discourse *no relief* which creates periphery as stated by Van Dijk (197) of lower caste people.

One more inquiry, you will lose your job, I will not be able to help you

Langholm (1971) states that creation of center and periphery is based on people holding power position in the society as powerful and those with lower position are placed as peripheries. Agreeing to Langholm's (1971) concept of center and periphery in this discourse, *I will not be able to help you* is used in the context of being DCP Bhagat as center holding higher social position who is capable reprimand for action for not performing the task according to the desired outcome and the periphery of *you will lose your job* as the lower rank police officer in the context of Hathi Ram has been clearly defined in this discourse. According to Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery, DCP Bhagat has created a center as he exercises higher control in the social status than Hathi Ram Chaudhary who gets peripheralized for being lower in lower class, hence cannot make decisions by himself. Also referring to Hall (1997a), this also creates the you and me concept denoting discrimination on the basis of social structure.

The CBI's charge-sheet accuses these four of anti-national and terrorist activities

The Critical realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), states that one's identity is an outcome of one's principles and beliefs and hence the social structures exist because of human activity. Agreeing to the critical paradigm, in this study, the use of words like *anti-national* has been seen as sentiments in the Indian context that are widely associated with nationalism. Hence, any connections which arises, related to Pakistan, has deep rooted impact as on Indian nationals as they consider Pakistan as the other

nation who sees India with malicious intent has been found in this study which is similar to study by Ansari & Riaz (2020). As Galtung (1971) creates centers and peripheries out of territories of nations, this study sees the territorial boundaries associated with Pakistan and Muslim in the process of otherization with words like *these, terrorists*, that has been associated with negative labelling of Muslims from Pakistan confirming to the similar studies by Welten and Abbas (2021). The usage of words like *CBI's charge-sheets* as has established a center of power and position while creating center and periphery as stated by Langholm (1971) which establishes the notion of power of display of power amongst the two nations.

Careless, Mr. Chaudhary, unacceptable, file police complain, Madam, I am police

As stated by Langholm (1971) social positions matter in displaying power and dominance which leads to the creation of centers and peripheries. In this study, Hathi Ram Chaudhary, being a police officer faces the life struggles of a common man as the peripheral police officer who does not have social stand owing to his social position as he juggles between strengthening his relationship with his estranged son and deals with professional discrimination. His duty as suspended police officer and a father oscillates between catching the criminals and at the same time taming his teenage son who has now adopted criminal ways to combat social class injustice in his school. *Madam, I am police*, shows Hathi Ram's weak and feeble way of explanation and justification for his son's misconduct as it represents his current status of underachievement where he is not able to provide enough provisions for his son. Derogatory comment passed by his son's Principal who perceives him as weak, irresponsible and careless according to the portrayal of social status has been found similar to the studies by Cohen (1955) and Norton (2013).

5.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

Friendly neighbour

Words like *friendly neighbour* have been metaphorically used to connote Pakistan as the *neighbour* through referral language referring to country for terrorist activities. The word *friendly* has been used as a satire which denote that Pakistan appears to be friendly from outside but at the same time connote that they are cause potential damage to the state as well trying to shift the power dynamics through social change as proposed by Hall (1997a).

*They look like shit, they smell like sh**... Manjaar*

There has been a distinct creation of us and them as stated by Maalej (2012) as in upper caste people as us and *they* as in lower caste people consisting of Manjaars in the discourse. The critical paradigm addresses the issues and voices from the oppressed as stated by Sanchez (2006). The critical paradigm in this study thus addresses the discriminations are faced by lower caste people from upper caste, as they refer to them as *they look like shit, they smell like sh*** and see them in a derogatory limelight as they are ripped off their pride and status.

Lord Ram could not destroy them, what can a mere SHO Ramavtar do Sir

Ramavtar although sharing the rhetoric in metaphors with Lord Ram with references to the study by Mankekar (2002) he finds himself incapable of failing himself in providing the justice as the villain is much higher to him than his capacity. The discourse here determines that the social roles and the purpose to exercise power as stated by Van Dijk (1997) over other is directly related to the influence one holds in

the society. While Ramavtar does not try to exercise his power over the criminals, as the power is held by criminals as the other which he refers to them as *they*, exercising dominance as a police officer.

We worship Donullia in our village

The critical paradigm suggests that reality is based on what one experiences in the form of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting (Žukauskas et al., 2018). Looking through the lens of critical paradigm, Rajbir Gujjar, belonging to low caste, sees Donullia as an annihilator of breaking away from the caste system for lower caste people who are treated as a periphery by upper caste people who forms the center in India similar to the study by Kohli (1996). The words like *we worship Donullia in our village* has been seen in the form of rhetoric metaphor devotion towards hero, who has risen from lower caste to climb up the social ladder which has proved him worthy of respect and adoration from his community.

Give to me what Eklavya gave to his guru

The rhetoric metaphor of *guru* represents the ultimate sacrifice which has been asked to Hatoda Tyagi as he becomes the sacrificial lamb in the powerful Donullia Gujjar's group who will be committing crime for Donullia Gujjar. Hatoda Tyagi is asked to sacrifice on of this thumb as his loyalty as referred by words like *Eklavya gave*, which is the price he pays for being protected by Donullia Gujjar. As stated by Van Dijk (1994), the social cognition to belong to a group has been seen here, as the text here determines how the powerful makes the less powerful do their work as represented by Hall (1997a) who puts forward that identity and representations are often from within. In order for the group to function for bringing out the preferred outcome which the

group wants, the powerful members persuade weaker members of the group to complete the task with words like *give me*.

5.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

In all Bundelkhand, just one place, Tyagi could find refuge, only Masterji can decide to make him a part of the army

As per Schneider et al (2022), centers and peripheries are created through the positions of various locations as hyperbole. Here, *one place* refers to Donullia Gujjar's place. Here, the center of power, which can save Hatoda Tyagi, has been seen under the umbrella of Donullia Gujjar who holds the highest position among the Gujjars and Hatoda Tyagi has been seen as periphery. Hatoda Tyagi needs shelter under Donullia Gujjar. Donullia Gujjar as Masterji becomes the deciding factor for decision making as he holds highest social position as the center for the periphery who are dependent on him as per Langholm's (1971) concept of center and periphery.

Getting someone killed here is cheaper than buying a cow

The epistemic modality of language in hyperbole used here has used the reference of people who are compared to cow. The centers and peripheries due to the social economic status and social positions as per Langholm (1971) have led to creation of centers and peripheries of lower-class human lives as periphery and upper class as centers.

Become the army's eyes and ears on the ground

The metonymy used here in the discourse as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) represents the access of information by those in power as stated by Van Dijk (1989).

The center and periphery concept by Langholm (1971) states that people who are at the center of place of action have more accessible to information than those who are in at the periphery. Hence, Rajbir Gujjar needs to inform Donullia Gujjar of all the activities happening amongst his enemies by being near to the place of action and having information accessible to other members of the organization.

The poison of selfless sacrifice

As stated by Schneider et al. (2022), the peripheral people are always obliged for the help in terms of materials and security they have received from the powerful people at the center. The center protects and provides security for the people in periphery. Hence, the center and periphery sometimes benefit from each other's position as they both fulfil each other's goal. The center can exercise their power and the peripheries will continue to receive security from the center

Weapon in pocket, thinks one is invincible, the system which has been going on for generations, can change

Hall (2006), states that power represents a signifier which gives an individual whether the person may exercise or not in the cultural background. The dynamic and changing relationships of various social structure and their representations through the usage of epistemic modality of language as metonymy have been seen trying to bring in new waves of changes as stated by Van Dijk (1997) as the peripheral caste against struggle and repressions of the upper castes as centers of power. However, the self-esteem, respect and pride of these communities are always crushed whereas the socio-economic status as well as access of power by the powerful centers as stated by Van Dijk (1989) plays as hinderance in achieving the target.

5.1.2 Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries

5.1.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

5.1.2.a.i. Classificational Process

Figure 58

Display of social hierarchy



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

Langholm (1971) conceptualises centers and peripheries as people who are socially in higher position dominate the situations. Here, in Figure 58 depicts the centers and peripheries amongst the police and the criminals. The police as the center of power are sitting on the chair as superior, while the criminals have been made to squat on the floor as inferiors, pushing them into the periphery for their crimes conducted.

Figure 59

Changing sides resulting in shift in power



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 59 establishes the construction of new social hierarchy as stated by Van Dijk (1997) with Gwala Gujjar and Bajpayee forming new political alliance and therefore beginning the new centers of power Here, the rise of the people from lower social caste in creating a new social class for themselves and establishing to become power centers has been depicted via this visual. The representations of changing phase and beginning of the new phase as determined by has been depicted through this portrayal of visual.

5.1.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 60

Vishal Tyagi's signature murder style with hammer



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

The Critical Realism paradigm states that digital media has unrealistic representation of crime as stated by Jermyn (2013). Similarly, Figure 60, portrays that the act of crime has sparked fear and anxiety amongst the community members. This visual has unearthed the crime which determines the journey of Vishal Tyagi to Hatoda Tyagi which proposes ushering of new change on the social structure as suggested by Hall (1997a). This visual therefore establishes the shift in the center of power dynamics existing within the social structure and marks the rise of Hatoda Tyagi as the notorious criminal from the periphery.

5.1.2.b. Semiotic Choices

5.1.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 61.

Displeased SHO Virk as Hathi Ram Chaudhary finds prominence at work



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

Fiske & Dépret (1996) suggests that in order to gain prominence, less successful people associate themselves with power centers. Confirming the study, in Figure 61 shows the demand gaze as suggested by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) depicts that SHO Virk is irked by Hathi Ram Chaudhary as he is deputed by DCP Bhagat for a high profile case. He shows displeasing attitude towards Hathi Ram Chaudhary's progress. As Guinote (2014) states that those in power as centers reprimands the ones at periphery. Similarly, SHO Virk being powerful than Hathi Ram Chaudhary, tries to reprimand him.

5.1.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 62

Uprise of lower caste



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

As Hall (1997b), states that representations in images have various meanings and can be interpreted in preferred meanings that it generates. Figure 62 depicts the subjective information about the rise of the lower caste people. The text written reflects choice of leader in the creating centers of power visible and uprising of the group collectively.

Figure 63

Labelling of criminal Hatoda Tyagi from Vishal Tyagi



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Figure 63 showcases the act of labelling by those in power as suggested by Becker (1963) with subjective information as it labels Hatoda Tyagi as the notorious criminal by Sanjeev Mehra. Sanjeev Mehra gazes the at the audience with an accomplished look on his face, clearly defining the power centers as suggested by Langholm (19971) as he holds the information to expose Hatoda Tyagi as a criminal and making Hatoda Tyagi as the periphery as he belongs to lower socio-economic status.

Figure 64

Rajbir Gujjar pleading Gwala Gujjar to save Hatoda Tyagi



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

The concept of center and periphery as suggested by Langholm (1971) states that people at power centers demands tasks from the periphery people. In Figure 64, Rajbir Gujjar's offers gaze as suggested by (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) shows begging Gwala Gujjar to take Vishal Tyagi who later becomes Hatoda Tyagi into his group which will help Hatoda Tyagi to save him from his enemies. As stated by Fiske & Dépret (1996), the protection offered by Gwala Gujjar as power center will help Vishal Tyagi to be part of the group. This visual has helped to establish the power centers as stated by Van Dijk (1989) through mannerisms such as folded hands. Tyagi's out of the frame gaze, and Gwala Gujjar although sitting, showcases holding an important position amongst the participants in the particular frame giving Gwala Gujjar enough power to decide on taking Hatoda Tyagi as his gang member.

5.1.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

5.1.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 65

Sanjeev Mehra dominating the discourse



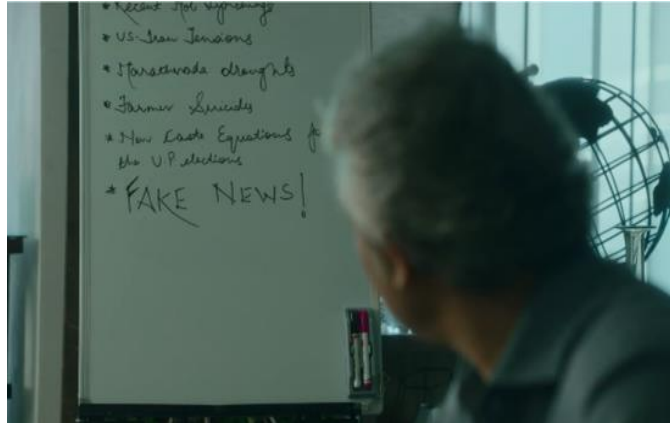
Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

The saliency as stated by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) in Figure 65 as Sanjeev Mehra is seen with a smirk on his face depicts the feeling of triumphant. He has successfully made ISI as the other nation whom he accuses for his attempted assassination. The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975) suggests that knowledge is created through one's exposure to beliefs and principles. Supporting to the critical paradigm, the othering of ISI has been seen here in this discourse as people with dangerous intentions in creating turmoil in India through killing of a famous journalist.

Figure 66

Narrative of Indian media



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al., 2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

In Figure 66, the salience in the text (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) represents, equality for caste system in India, accompanied with fake news. This showcases the concept of center and periphery, where people who belong to good social backgrounds are higher in social hierarchy can build the narratives of the society than those who are at lower social backgrounds as suggested by Langholm (1971).

5.1.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 67

Discrimination due to ethnicity



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>)

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) states that one understands consists of one's belief and principle. Supporting the critical paradigm, Figure 67, shows framing in wide angle shot (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) of Imran Ansari standing attentively. Similar to what has been stated by Schneider et al. (2022). Imran Ansari faces discrimination at work, due to his ethnic religious background. He is treated as the other community by DCP Bhagat and Rachana Dwivedi hence creating center and periphery of discrimination in work places.

Figure 68

Punishing the traitors



Note. From *Paatal Lok*, by (Sharma et al.,2020), Amazon Prime Video

<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/PaatalLok/0G9IEOHCN8KMY6COD9ILGH7IY5>

Canales (2020) presents the concept of ingroup and outgroup, creating centers and peripheries within the group. The power center exercises their power on the peripheries has been a concept stated by Langholm (1971). Similarly, Figure 68 shows the center as Gwala Gujjar who exercises his power over his group members by killing them once he finds out about the betrayal. The gun in Gwala Gujjar's hand establishes the power center as stated by Van Dijk (1989). The wide-angle framing of the shot encompasses all the power centers Gwala Gujjar possesses as he has Hathi Ram under control too and kills his group members by treating them as peripheries for betraying him despite providing amenities to them as peripheral groups.

5.2. Centers and Peripheries in Special Ops

5.2. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: Special Ops

5.2.1a. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Nine have attained martyrdom, Say only nine*

The police as heroes who lost their lives in the terrorist attack have been seen as achieving *martyrdom* which has been depicted through epistemic modality of the language as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012). The representation of martyrs through numbers as *nine, say only nine* has represented the centers of power as stated by Van Dijk (1989), which lies with the terrorists as they kill the police during the Parliament attack. Being unprepared and outnumbered the police here have been seen as the periphery.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Amjad Sharif is not my real name, real name is Rashid Malik. work for Indian Mujahideenwith Riyaz, meeting you is my destiny, compulsion*

Farooq Ali has controlled the level of discourse here through the context as stated by Van Dijk (1994) about giving personal information about him to Hafiz Ali who is Ikhlāq Khan in reality has been seen securing his position and dominance in the discourse as Farooq Ali seeks sense of belonging as stated by Van Dijk (1983) in Ikhlāq Khan's group. The positive connotation of words like *work for Indian Mujahideen, meeting you as destiny* has been representative of the reference to center of power being the center nation confirming the concept of center and periphery by

Galtung (1971) about center nation and periphery nation. The center here is *Indian Mujahideen* and Farooq Ali's association with terrorist organization. The periphery are the terrorists belonging to *Mujahideen* who are seen as the other for creating disruption in the country as stated by Said (1978).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *are searching my flat, feel offended, do you want to take my place, had I been in your place, I'd have done the same*

The words like *searching my flat, take my place, offended* determines the center of power as stated by Van Dijk (1989) lying with Ikhtlaq Khan as he is socially more powerful than Farooq Ali as Ikhtlaq Khan searches for information about Farooq Ali. As Langholm (1917) states that concept of center and periphery, Ikhtlaq Khan has more access to information about the members in his organization due to socially powerful position he holds than periphery, Farooq Ali who is less powerful as Farooq Ali surrenders with words like *done the same, your place* as he knows the capability of Ikhtlaq Khan

5.2.1b. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *spent more than Rs. 28 crores of the secret service funds, pay, enquiry is being conducted against you, the entire credit of the intelligence failure goes to you, not be in a position to change alter, deny or retract any of your answers, for 19 years you have been looking for sixth person and using the government's secret service funds*

Creating the center and periphery considering higher social positions as stated by Langholm (1917) those in higher professional hierarchy takes action against the lower-class professionals for the system to function. This has been reflected through

negative connotation of words like *intelligence failure goes to you* as the higher officials other Himmat Singh for his actions for the failure to stop the attack. This creates the center and periphery for power and dominance in the hierarchy as stated by Guinote (2014). This study shows that Himmat Singh has been discriminated in his profession with corruption charges as the other who has been seen to utilize *government's fund*, to find Ikhlaq Khan for *19 years* which is considered a waste by his higher officials where he tries to shift the power as stated by Van Dijk (1995) since Himmat Singh takes independent decisions to bring about the change in the system.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *you're a Muslim, Allah's servant. We are Allah's army. Infidels, kill these scoundrels, we have tormented India, we will continue, think they can stop u, 2001, Parliament. 2007. 26/11, Join us. Allah will guide you*

The Critical Realism paradigm as suggests that Bhaskar (1975) states that principles and beliefs guide the reality. Like the critical paradigm suggests, suspected Muslim terrorists perceives about Islamic religious superiority with negative connotation of the texts in the discourse like *we, Muslims, Allah's army join us, Allah will guide*. Muslims here are labelled as offenders of crime. Through negative connotative words terrorist activities against India are referred to as *they, Parliament attacks, 26/11, tormented India* by terrorist organization fueled by Pakistan has been depicted. Pakistan as center sees India as the periphery nation whom they conspire to exercise dominance and control as seen through the concept of Galtung (1971).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *I am upset that he has betrayed, am I being unfair, he has betrayed you, should have known who you are, consequences to bear*

The mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995) is exercised by Hafiz Ali or Ikhlāq Khan in terms of negative usage of words like *I am upset, he betrayed, he should have known, consequences to bear* has been display of power as the center to people who are less powerful than him like Abu Hassan and Ismail Hassan. The power to rebuke and punish the less powerful in the social hierarchy has been seen evident in the discourse through words like *unfair, upset, and betrayed* as stated Guinote (2014). As stated by Langholm (1971) the center and periphery explore that people who are more socially powerful take the center and less powerful takes the periphery as in the case of Ikhlāq Khan, Abu Hassan and Ismail Khan.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *mole, suspect, it is you and Abu, called me up, keep an eye, how can Mr. Hafiz doubt me, Amjad, tend to like vile things easily, need to know everything about him, help me understand how big of a scoundrel he is*

The othering of the in group as an outgroup through the power and dominance as stated by Canales (2000) has been evident in the discourse through the usage of words like *suspect, doubt, vile things* as the roles of the participant within the discourse has been shifted according the circumstances. Ikhlāq Khan has strategically made Ismail Hassan as he creates him as the outgroup with words like *mole, it is you and Abu* but at the same time includes Farooq Ali as the member within the in group which is depicted through words like *keep an eye, called me up*. With words like *find out everything* about Amjad referring to Farooq Ali, *vile, scoundrel*, he has made Farooq

Ali as the other who needs to validate his loyalty on the ingroup. This also denotes Ismail's stance as the periphery for the decision taken by Ikhlaq Khan to punish him for betraying him.

5.2b. Quoting Verbs

Your Ajmal Kasab, we will parade you; we will show unimportant 5 lakhs jihadi looks like, you and the commander that Kasab kill more than 150, we will kill you and the commander

The epistemic modality of the language through descriptive words used here determines the othering of Pakistani terrorists as stated by (Welten & Abbas, 2021) with words like *we will parade you*, and negative labelling of Muslims as terrorist like *your Ajmal Kasab, your commander, unimportant jihadis* determining the othering of each nation as mental borders as stated by Tripathi and RaghuVanshi (2020) are drawn between Pakistan and India. This creates the center nation as Indian and periphery nation as Pakistan as proposed by Galtung (1971). Hence, constructing violence and aggression in uplifting each other's image of powerful us, here in the discourse as India as compared to weaker them in reference to Pakistani terrorists who are representing their nation Pakistan collectively, as to exercise hegemony against India.

*Find you intoxicated, on duty again, shove up the bottle, all deployed agents, put them through a test, believed there is Osama bin Laden, despite 19 years, neither the government, Delhi Police, ATS, IB, CBI or any mo*** is ready to believe that Ikhlaq Khan really exists*

As proposed by Langholm (1971) regarding social positions, the center and periphery have been displayed here as Himmat Singh talks about punishing Abbas Sheikh, for his action in neglecting his duty affecting the functionality of the system has been reflected through words like *find you intoxicated, shove up the bottle*. Himmat Singh practices, inclusive of the in group and exclusivity of in group as stated by Canales (2000) by with his agents which is depicted through words like *deployed agents, have been put through test* to check their skills and capability in combatting skills. Himmat Singh too has been put under test as he justifies the existing of Ikhlaq despite *19 years* of search. He has been outcasted as the other as his role shifts from being a hero to victim as he defends his stance in the organization as he strives for social cognition as put forward by Van Dijk (1994).

Jamaat's plans for Kashmir are very important for me, your passion, zeal for our people and our religion is inspiring, people like you are important for Jamaat

The epistemic modality of the language used implies the terror attacks planned by Pakistani terrorists. Words like “*Jamaat*”, a religious rebel group in Pakistan (Khan, 2022b) have been mentioned. The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975) states that one’s belief and principles shapes one perception about reality. Under the critical paradigm, the religious superiority as stated by Laskar & Amir (2022) creating Muslims as power center, have been portrayed in words like *our religion, important* have clearly been depicted in the discourse. The representation of Muslims as represented by Hall (1997a) as people who consists of fundamental Islamic beliefs is evident in the discourse. The usage of words like *need people like me, Jamaat plans for Kashmir, your passion, zeal for our people and our religion is inspiring, people like you are important for Jamaat* has been represented with

recruitment to carry out terrorist attacks in India to establish dominance and control by Pakistan. The malicious intent of the villain Ikhtlaq Khan to recruit people for terror attacks to works on the beliefs and fundamentalism justifying their acts of terrorism on the pretext on religion Islam has been depicted in the discourse.

Hafiz is suspicious of me; my cover is about to be blown, that is good, I'll call in a while

Following the center and periphery concept of Langholm (1971) Farooq Ali has been seen as a periphery for betraying Ikhtlaq Khan who holds the dominance in the discourse for being socially powerful. This has been depicted from words like *suspicious of me, cover blown* where he fears the action being taken by Ikhtlaq Khan. At the same time, Himmat Singh by exercising his power within the ingroup to bring a desired result as stated by Guinote (2014) saves him from getting exposed in his ingroup as he tells *that is good, and will call in a while*, as he fears that action will be taken against Farooq if he fails the mission. Here, the mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995) exercised by both Ikhtlaq Khan and Himmat Singh determines the power balance of each having over Farooq Ali, so that counterpower emerges in the form of Farooq Ali as he strives to change the power dynamics.

5.2c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

Amjad many flaws that devil himself will be ashamed of his misdeeds

The rhetoric used here in the form of metaphor as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) as *devil, flaws* have symbolic significance to the ruthlessness, low moral values which are the traits to belong to a group which will be made useful to in the right time while displaying power as stated by Norton (2013). Words like *devil*

himself will be ashamed of his misdeeds adds to the strengthening of adverse emotions towards an out group as stated by Bergstrand & Jasper (2018).

This is chicken feed, created for Farooq, under Rashid Malik's name, he will use it only when

The rhetoric metaphor as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) in connection to *chicken feed* refers to false identity for made for Farooq to gain trust as he becomes an ingroup in Ikhlāq Khan's gang. The information has been made accessible through power as proposed by Van Dijk (1989) by India through words like *he will use it when* it will be necessary to cover up his real identity. As per Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery, India is the center for territorial dominance and Pakistan as the periphery as the control the information to provide to the other nation Farooq emerges as hero while safeguarding the information of his nation showing strong sense of patriotism similar to the definition of hero by Guo (1998).

You do not know anything about this call, from Karachi

The power center is controlled by Himmat Singh, as he refuses to share the information he has accessed. The *call from Karachi* has rhetoric metaphoric references as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) about the vital information regarding the plans of terrorist attacks in India, and Himmat Singh has access to the information as stated by Van Dijk (1989), which has been used to manipulate Surya Kumar, his higher official to work according to Himmat Singh's condition. *Karachi* has been used as a rhetoric metaphor in determining mental borders as stated by Tripathi and RaghuVanshi (2020) where Pakistan has been seen as the other nation, capable of harming India.

Sonia will solve this problem

The rhetoric metaphor as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) here refers to *Sonia* being used to *solve problem* is representative of victim as stated by Datta, (2000) she turns in the battle between Ikhlq Khan and Farooq Ali. The pushing of the subordinates to the periphery by the more powerful ones at the center within the ingroup as per Canales, (2000) in the situation has been very evident within the discourse where the roles of the subordinate changes from being inclusive to being excluded to serve a purpose.

Young people do not use brains, search for solutions on Google or they just call me

The rhetoric metaphor as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) used here in terms of *young minds* being restless, *solutions on Google* as to being impatient and find temporary solution are representative of the aggression and impatience. By making himself a center of power to find solutions for the young people, Himmat Singh establishes the dominance and control over the context as stated by Van Dijk (1994).

You have associated Farooq's story with your theory. How do you justify these expenses

The rhetoric metaphor as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) used here in terms of *Farooq's story* and *theory* has reference to finding Ikhlq Khan after 19 years. Himmat Singh has been asked to justify his expenses related to finding Ikhlq Khan. The enquiry commission members are chastising him for his actions against the system by othering and discriminating him as someone who has used up state machineries to fuel his personal vendetta of unsolved case of Ikhlq Khan.

5.2d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

A rookie from your team did what no one ever could

The hyperbole used here in terms of *rookie* has been used as a strategy to produce discriminatory talks for Himmat's *team* as DK Banerjee and Naresh Chadda tries to define the center with words like *rookie did what no one ever could* with a strategic periphery with words like *your team*, to target the motives that Himmat Singh's team has achieved in catching Ikhlāq Khan. The rookie as a hero has shown to have provided the resolution to the long-standing problem of finding Ikhlāq Khan.

I have been hiding these people for years; you have found them in three days

The hyperbole used here in terms of *hiding for years*, signifies a conceptual reference to protecting the ingroup where Himmat Singh's department tries to bring negative light confirming their prejudiced notion about nonexistence of Ikhlāq Khan and expenses related to it as Himmat Singh tries to protect his team where he remarks *you have found them in three days* Himmat Singh has shown undefeatable feat as a hero to protect his own thus showing his patriotism towards the nation.

Himmat Singh's life in danger, my name is Abbas Sheikh, torture, spend the rest of his life on medicines and prayers, you people stay away from Himmat Singh

The hyperbole in terms of epistemic modality of language (Machin & Mayr, 2012) used here in terms of *torture, spend life in medicines and prayers* refers to protection offered by Abbas Sheikh for Himmat Singh as he is seen to be as a hero who needs to protect his ingroup from the other people as outgroups who intent to harm Himmat Singh.

Did not spare his wife, what mercy can he show me

Here, the hyperbole he *did not spare his wife* has been used to signify the mental control of fear and terror as stated by Van Dijk (1995) by Ikhlaq Khan on his group member. The words like *what mercy can he show on me* has shown the representation of language in a group leading to discourse on the changing relationship leading to the creation of us and them as stated by Hall (1997a) in terms of Farooq Ali, Ismail Hassan, Ikhlaq Khan and his team.

You are just chasing a name, a theory, raises a question on your competence, you are just building castles in the air, what can we possibly do, sir, all this is nothing but castles in the air, right

The metonymy here as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) used as *chasing a theory, building castles in air* has reference to Ikhlaq Khan, as he seems to have no traces although with 19 years long search. Himmat Singhs' reference to *what can we possibly do* to save the terror attacks with references to *castles in air* has been representative of the control of the text in discourse he exercises power and control via his language as stated by Van Dijk (1995). He fights the dominance of his higher officials for othering him as an outgroup by *raising question on his competence* for not finding Ikhlaq Khan.

We attacked your parliament, did not nab him, he was right there, he was just 50 feet away from Mr. Advani, you, your government, your police, army, he escaped from right under your noses, you can never nab him

The Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) suggests that human activities make up the society. Addressing the critical paradigm, the metonymy here represents

that Ikhlaq Khan has been seen as an invincible by his group members. For someone who is the leader of group the perception of his group members as the centers of power in Ikhlaq Khan to destroy the other periphery nation as per the center and periphery concept on nation by Langholm (1971) has been clearly depicted in this discourse. The representation of othering as presented by Hall (1997a) of Pakistan having the center of dominance in the discourse has been represent with words like *you, your government, escaped right under your nose, never nab him*. India, on the other hand has been seen as the periphery where they lost Ikhlaq Khan when he was *just 50 feet away*.

No one told us Pakistani VVIPs have been invited and that we must opine if they should be invited or not in these current situations

The metonymy used here in dynamic modality of language as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) in terms of *no one told us*, showing the exclusivity of the ingroup of subordinates referring to Himmat Singh's team has depicted the center and periphery of the existing dominance in the discourse. The access to information by higher officials as stated by Van Dijk (1989) to work on saving India from terrorist attack signified by words like *current situation, Pakistani VVIPs, opine* signifies centers of power in accessing information by the influential and privileged in the social hierarchy.

5.2.2 Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries

5.2.2.a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

5.2.2.a.i Classificational Process

Figure 69

Dominance in discourse by Himmat Singh



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar

(<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

In Figure 69, Himmat Singh seems to dominate the group, in the meeting as he puts across justifying his findings against the terrorist attack on India fuelled by Pakistan. He tries to find social cognition to gain power as stated by Van Dijk (1989) as he gets judged and othered by his ingroup nulling his justification of his claims on the terrorist attacks.

Figure 70

Creating periphery in group by punishing the traitor



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Following the center and periphery concept of dominance by higher social status figures as stated by Langholm (1971), Figure 70 has established Ikhlaq Khan's dominance as center which he creates due to his higher social position, represented as a superior to Abu Hassan who betrayed him by making him periphery. Thus, Ikhlaq Khan punishes his subordinate as he abused his power on the weak as stated by Van Dijk (1989).

5.2.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 71

Disguised terrorists escape the eyes of police



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The symbolic representation as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) in Figure 71 represents the proximity of terrorists Sadia and Farah Qureshi who are at an arm's length from Abbas Sheikh, although being very close to them. However, Abbas Sheikh cannot exercise his power and dominance as he is unaware of the centrality of location as per the center and periphery concept of Langholm (1971) and fails to recognise them. As Hall (1997a) states, the representation of ethnic minority can be both positive and negative, the stereotypical representation of terrorist as a male has been challenged in this discourse as the suspected terrorists are female in the discourse.

Figure 72

Protected by another group when made a periphery



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar
(<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Figure 72 symbolises protection of ingroup member as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) where Ismail Hassan is protected by Farooq Ali, as the center of power has been shifted from Farooq Ali by creating a situation where Ismail Khan becomes the victim. Ikhlaq Khan tries to kill Ismail Hassan to punish him for betrayal.

5.2.2. b. Semiotic Choices

5.2.2. b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 73

Dominance in work hierarchy



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The demand gaze as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) in Figure 73 by Himmat Singh on Abbas Sheikh who stand with his head hung low has been seen to exercise his dominance over his subordinates and threatening to punish him for his action to result in smooth functioning of the system as stated by Guinote (2014).

5.2.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 74

Female terrorist prepares her attack



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The Critical Realism paradigm suggests that society is a result of human actions (Bhaskar, 1979). Relating to the critical paradigm, the offer gaze in Figure 74 as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021), has portrayed the labelling of a Muslim woman as perpetrator where she does on reiki of her environment preparing for attack. She establishes her center of power as per the accessibility of centrality of location as determined by the concept of center and periphery stated by Langholm (1971).

5.2.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

5.2.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 75

Half Burnt Pakistani passport of suspected terrorist



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

The Critical Realism paradigm as suggested by Bhaskar (1975) states that one's knowledge is because of one's belief and principles. Confirming the critical realism, the saliency as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) in Figure 75 indicates through the text *Pakistan* as Himmat Singh finds half burnt Pakistani passport indicating that the offender Ikhlaq Khan belongs to other nation Pakistan who has attacked India. Following the concept of center and periphery nation as proposed by Galtung (1971), India as the center nation suspects terrorist from periphery nation Pakistan for its involvement in terrorist attack in India.

Figure 76

Sonia as a sacrificial victim to safeguard greater interest of the nation



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

Bhaskar (1975), states that Critical Realism paradigm suggests that the world is made up of human activities. Confirming the critical paradigm, in Figure 76, Sonia gets shot as she becomes the victim getting sacrificed for the greater cause of the nation. The center of power has now shifted as stated by Van Dijk (1994) from Ikhtlaq Khan to Farooq Ali, who kills Sonia for safeguarding the information of his identity from getting exposed which would jeopardise the mission of catching Ikhtlaq Khan.

5.2.2.c. ii. Framing

The framing in Figure 77 is as below:

Figure 77

Farooq Ali gets corned



Note. From *Special Ops*, by (Pandey & Nair, 2020), Disney + Hotstar (<https://www.hotstar.com/in/shows/special-ops/1260022894>.)

As per the framing suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) Figure 77 portrays Farooq Ali being grabbed and kicked by few Muslim community people as the show hatred and aggression for people other than those belonging to their religion and community.

5.3. Centers and Peripheries in The Family Man

5.3.1a. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations

5.3.1a. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *I work for the welfare of Kashmiris, I am a Kashmiri myself, for the sake of Kashmir, the army will barge in, I will not be able to help you then, this valley has already seen too much bloodshed*

The creation of centers of power by Indian Army and periphery as Kashmiri Muslims the terms through mental representations as stated by Hall (2020) has been seen through positive connotation of words here are represented of Muslims community. Kashmir has been the victim of hostility and war between India and Pakistan. The words like *welfare of Kashmir, I am a Kashmiri, for the sake of Kashmir* represents the fighting against the other nation as suggested by Galtung (1971) where terrorists are planning destruction and disturbance in Kashmir. *This valley* refers to Kashmir; *too much bloodshed* has been the outcome of regular wars and conflicts for Kashmir which both the nations fight for. The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1979) states that society are built through human activities. Supporting the critical paradigm, words like *army barge in, will not be able to help you*, refers to Kashmiris who have been suppressed by the Indian Army being used as suppressive state machineries as stated by Hall (1985) for the sake of maintaining peace and order in the society.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *You're doing Allah's work; infidels in hell God will punish them.*

The establishment of Jihadi's in Kashmir has been seen as protection of Muslim community and fundamentalism of Islam. Here the language used has been in positive connotation as *you* refer to Jihadi's and *them* refers to Indian who have been subjugating to suppressing the Kashmiri people. *Allah's work*, here represents the religious superiority of the Muslim ethnic group of us has been established. The *them* here has been represented as Indian army for their suppression upon Kashmiris which has come out in the form of anger and fury with words like *punish, the infidels*.

5.3.1b. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *We are here for your protection, Americans will not find you, American custody, Prime Minister trying to impress Americans, CIA announced million-dollar reward on my head*

The discourse here has followed the center and periphery of nation as stated by Langholm (1971). It states the differences between two nations, each trying to project their power and dominance over one another. The hostility towards America by Muslim nations, here Pakistan, has been represented in the form of America as the other nation, who has tries to create control and dominance on these nations. The negative connotations of words like *Prime Minister impress America, CIA announced million-dollar reward* depicts the control which America tries to establish on a political context. Pakistan on the other hand tries to bring back the power back in their hands as they want to stand independently which has been depicted by words like *we, protection Americans will not find you*.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *call the shots in Srinagar, its oppression, in the name of security, we enforce curfew for weeks, shut down the*

internet mobile services, businesses, and schools, children pay the price, people living at our mercy, not to let people live freely and with freedom is oppression, Kashmiri people caught in the crossfire, objective of stopping the bloodshed in Kashmir

The Critical Realism paradigm as suggested by Bhaskar (1975) states that society is built on human actions. Supporting the paradigm, the negative connotations used in epistemic modality as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) has been used where *calling the shots* are representative of the power which has a stance as stated by Hall (1997a). Here, *call, enforce curfew* has been representative of the Indian Army who has been oppressing as stated by Hall (1985) on the Kashmiris due to the violence amongst Kashmiris and Indian Army. *Oppression in the name of security, shut down internet, business, schools, children as victims, bloodshed in Kashmir*, represent the victimization of Kashmiri people as the Indian Army tries to bring control and dominance through suspicions and assaults. The labelling of us in terms of mainland Indians and them as Kashmiri Muslims represented through the language and the group, they represent has been reflected through words like *not let people to live freely, people in Kashmir at crossfire, living at our mercy* as both the Kashmiris and Indian Army try to dominate the socio-political perspectives through their collective actions has been found in the discourse as similar to the study by Valocchi (2001). Therefore, force, oppression and tyranny amongst the Kashmiri citizens has been seen as a result of finding power and dominance in the state as stated by Van Dijk (1994).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *They launch an attack, Pakistan civil government, the army, the ISI, our government, local politicians, the Hurriyat, no difference between us and those militants*

The negative connotation creates center nations and periphery nations as proposed by Langholm (1971) though of words used here in the discourse like *they attack*, *ISI* and *Pakistani*, *the army* has been in relationship to creating insurgence in India with attacks and creating terrorists from Kashmiri citizens they perceive to have the fight against the freedom from oppression as stated by Hall (1985) from Indian *government* and Indian Army as the other state suppressing Kashmiris' rights and demands Pakistan army being a strong political force behind the socio-economic policies in Pakistan, hence ousting the *political parties* in Pakistan leads to creating more victims in Kashmir. The negative connotation of words used in the context of us and *those militants*, *no difference*, lies in the perspective of winning the moral battle of us as in Indian army doing their duty as a part of counter-terrorism and the other, referring to militants as a part of their duty to safeguard their religious beliefs.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *we will surrender*; *they are trying to kill us*

The atrocity of the Indian Army has created a distinct center and periphery of power. As *we* here refer to terrorists and *they* refer to Indian Army. The negative connotation of words like *they are trying to kill us* represents the concept of center and periphery suggested by Langholm (1971) as the Indian army who are in a higher social position forms the center of power as they keep the ability to kill, and the terrorists who are weaker and want to *surrender* are placed as periphery where they can be killed anytime by the powerful Indian army

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Amjad Ali and Rehman Sharif were beaten to death by a mob of 50 under suspicion of carrying beef*

Human activities determine the society has been a concept proposed by Bhaskar (1975) in the Critical Realism paradigm. Thus, by supporting the paradigm, this study shows the creation of us and them in a prominent manner as represented here by people with Muslim names. The Hindus claim their dominion over protecting the sanctity of the sacred animal cow as words like *suspicion of carrying beef* has been used. The study shows that Hindus do not hesitate to commit crime and violence by using words like *beaten to death, by mob of 50* when it comes to protecting their religious beliefs related to similar study by Siyech & Narain (2018), where in Muslims are labelled as criminals as stated by Howarth (2007).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *They keep abusing the country, I suspect them, too. One of these b*** is behind the blast, all are anti-nationals, Pakistan wins a match against India, they will party till dawn*

Reality is an outcome of one's own beliefs and perception as stated by Bhaskar (1975) in the Critical Realism paradigm. Using the critical paradigm, the discourse here shows the negative connotation of words to represent Muslims as being referred to as *they, abusing the country* and claimed as anti- nationals with their activities and sentiments. Words like *they will party; Pakistan wins match against India* creates the other nation Pakistan. The labelling of Muslims as criminals as stated by Howarth (2007), have been seen here with derogatory words like *behind the blast*. The discriminatory language as stated by Van Dijk (1997) here in the discourse has created a clear center and periphery as the perception about an ethnic community belonging to Muslims has been created as the periphery nation, hence othering of terrorists belonging to Pakistan.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Shinde, local police, Jadhav out of this, with small brains, keep your eyes open too*

As per Galtung's concept of center and periphery, Srikant Tiwari who holds the center position of decision making, decides that inspector Shinde and Jadhav belonging to local police does not participate in completing the task as it shows his incompetence reflected through negative connotations of words like *small brains, out of this*. The social cognition of power within the center of decision makers as Srikant Tiwari and periphery as Shinde and Jadhav reflects the exercise of power and control to penalize the lower ranking police officers for their incompetence in performing their duty. This has led to the creation of outgroup as in Shinde and Jadhav and ingroup as in Srikant Tiwari and team within the group, as per the demand of the situation deciding the participation of the outgroup as per the ingroup activities.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *I have sent you all the videos on WhatsApp, delete them from your phone, I hope we are even now yes, not a word about this to anybody*

Here, the gay characters have been victimized using their sexuality and preference as one gay man is used as a pawn to trap the other to accomplish the mission of the terrorists. They have been both used as victims who are afraid of showing their true sexuality as they have been portrayed as someone who lives a dual life for the fear of being stigmatized and ostracized from the society similar to the study by Monaghan (2017).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *do we need to prove our loyalty every day*

The epistemic modality of language used here as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) has been seen where any acts of negative activities related to Kashmir has a direct relation to nationalism. Firdaus Macgray, a Kashmiri Muslims has been seen as the other who needs to prove their loyalty and their patriotism to India for being stereotyped as a community intending harm.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *an important mission to me, I failed, Major Sameer was arrested by Pakistani army, General Ansari turned out to be a traitor*

The villain here in the discourse is a *traitor*, where the Pakistani militant see the *Pakistani Army* as the other which has challenged the dominant belief to establish a sovereign hegemonic Islamic state as suggested by Hall (1985). The center and periphery as per the concept of Wright (1991) establishes that India holds the center of power and Pakistan as the periphery, as people with malicious intent has been suppressed which is indicative with words like *important mission, failed, arrested* shows army as suppressive machineries as stated by Hall (1985) working to establish law and order in the society.

5.3.1b. Quoting Verbs

A clear shot, slaughter everybody, they killed my boys

The Critical Realism paradigm as suggested by Bhaskar (1975) states that reality and perception is based on one's belief and perception. Studying under the lens of critical paradigm, Imran Pasha believes in resorting to *target killing* of the Muslim suspected terrorists who are referred to as *they* with reference to other, for killing *my boys*

referring to Force One team members. Hence, words like *clear shot, slaughter everybody*, has been in reference to the moral grounds of justification elimination terrorists believed to cause harm to the nation as part of counter terrorism measures as stated by Goppel (2013).

He was inciting them in broad daylight; they kill two Muslims, pre-planned murder

The religious split between the fundamentals of two religion Hindus and Muslims in India as per the study by Kohli (1996) have the cause of religious violence where the Hindus in India are seen to be propagating Islamophobia. This has been depicted with words like *inciting them*, them referring to Hindus, *kill two Muslims*, pre-planned murder as a part of growing violence against Muslims in India similar to the study by Siyech & Narain (2018).

Brothers! This man is from the Indian army, here for my encounter, they forcibly enter our homes and brutalize us, if we protest, they call us terrorists

The aversion towards Indian army by Kashmiris has been an outcome of suppression and fear generated by Indian army being used as state machineries as stated by Hall (1985). Here in the discourse, *this man* has been seen as the other belonging to *Indian army* where *brothers, my* represents Muslim community from Kashmir and *our homes* as Kashmir, who has been traumatized by the army through their atrocities visible through words like *forcibly enter, brutalize*. Here, *we* represent the center referring to Kashmiris and *they* refers to India and its suppressive forces as stated by Hall (1985) leading to negative labelling (Becker, 1963) of Muslims as *terrorists* and the other who are capable of damaging the nation.

5.3.1c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

Even a stray dog does not give birth to so many puppies. We need to stop them before they outnumber us

The rhetoric used here in terms of metaphor as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012) for *stray dog, puppies* represent Muslim communities, who have been ridiculed for their population count in India for the fear of conversion to Islam by Hindus. Words like *must stop them* in reference to Muslims, *outnumber* refers to population explosion and *us* refers to Hindus in India as stated by Frydenlund & Leidig (2022) in their study.

You dare slaughter the holy cow, our mother

The rhetoric metaphorical reference as suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) to Hindu's sacred animal as cow here has led to religious violence by Hindus on Muslims for killing the cow where *you* as the other refers to Muslims and *our* refers to Hindus. The discriminatory talks as stated by Van Dijk (1997) in terms of *dare slaughter, holy cow, our mother* has been used to protect the motives of the community which ultimately lies in safeguarding the religious Hindu beliefs and fundamentals.

Did you squeal like a rat to the infidels about Zulfiqar, potassium. injected into your bloodstream

The rhetoric used here in terms of metaphor like *you* refers to Asif, Moosa's accomplice and *infidels* refer to TASC led by Srikant Tiwari. Moosa has created Asif as the other in the form of outgroups as he questions the loyalty of Asif regarding the terrorist mission *Zulfiqar*. The act of punishing within the dominance of power

centers to those in the periphery who are less powerful as suggested by Guinote (2014) has been represented within the discourse with words like *potassium, injected into your blood stream* where the punishment for betrayal contextualizes to death.

5.3.1d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

They will barge into our houses, cut us up, eat us, eat our women, throw us out of our own country! Bloody traitors! our sacred duty to save our motherland

Here the hyperbole has been used in the context of the text where *we* as center of power represent Hindus and them as periphery refers to Muslims. The words like *our duty, save motherland* depicts the justification of violence on Muslims for safeguarding the sanctity of Hindu religion similar to the study by Siyech & Narain (2018). Muslim as the other religion have been seen here in the discourse as people who marry Hindu women and convert them to Islam as depicted by words *eat our women* has been shown. As Hall (1997a) states that ethnic minorities have representations in crime, words like *traitors, they will barge in, cut us* have been used to represent violence by Muslims labelling them as criminals as stated by Becker (1963) fueling the anger towards each other where Hindu community elevates their image by othering the Muslim community as criminals.

These guys understand only one language, we need to speak to them in their own tongue, it is our turn to strike

The Critical Realism Paradigm by Bhaskar (1975) discusses that reality and perception is related to one's belief and principles. Under the critical paradigm, the denotic modality of language used as hyperbole with words like *these guys* referring to Hindus used by Kareem Bhatt, *understand only one language* refers to the

retaliation measures planned by Kareem and his group as justify their attacks on Hindu political leader. Words like *we need to speak* refers to Kareem and group as they form the periphery being Muslims, as Hindu leaders kill Muslims in on context of saving religion. Usage of words like *our, time to strike* have been used as denotic modality of the language which evokes revenge for the injustice done as Muslims turn religious victims in the hands of Hindus as contextual reference to create fear and dominance within the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1997).

Things I have done for my country, is this my reward, this is not for what you did for your country but what you were going to do to your country

The hyperbole used here in terms of *my country and reward* signifies the othering of Major Sameer as he gets arrested and pushed to the periphery for his criminal activities as an outcast. This has been reflected with words like *not what you did, but were going to do, for your country*, referring to Pakistan. Major Sameer gets treated like an outgroup as stated by Canales (2000) as his higher officials to exercise power and positions decides to reprimand him for his actions as stated by Guinote (2014).

*They call Kashmir the crown of India, but they treat us like sh**. If they had as much concern for the Kashmiri people as they have for Kashmir, things would be different*

Kashmir here has been used as a metonymy as *the crown of India* for its exceptional scenic beauty. *They* is referred to India and Indian army who have been oppressing Kashmiris referred to as *us* portrayed by words like *if they had as much concern for the Kashmiri people as they have for Kashmir, things would be different* where India is more concerned about the center territorial dominance over Kashmir over the wellbeing of people living there as periphery.

I will say a word which is on everybody's lips! Freedom

The use of hyperbole here in terms of *I* refers to the Sajid, who has been labelled as terrorist planning to attack India. Sajid fights against the Indian government and army for *freedom* towards oppression as stated by Hall (1985) by India. *Everybody* here in the discourse refers to Kashmiris who want to live freely and protect their religion and family.

5.3.2 Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries

5.3. a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

5.3.2.a.i Classificational Process

Figure 78

Atrocity on suspected terrorist by Force One Officer Imran Pasha



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid dat-](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-)

2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Figure 78 shows the superiority as stated by Hall (1997a) by Imran Pasha where he shoots down Moosa and his gang represented as terrorists, while they are run away after killing police officers.

Figure 79

Mob lynching of Muslim man by group of Hindu men for carrying beef



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_-dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_-dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)))

Figure 79 depicts mob lynching on Muslim man on the pretext of carrying beef by Hindu creating us and them thus giving rise to religious violence has been a clear depiction of Islamophobia as Hindu men are represented superior in the visual as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021), to the Muslim man who has been represented as inferior in the discourse as stated by Van Dijk (1995).

5.3.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 80

Srikant Tiwari giving safe passage to suspected terrorist Moosa Rehman



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

In Figure 80, Srikant Tiwari is seen with suspected terrorist Moosa as he gains Moosa's trust of not getting him killed. The creation of center of power as suggested by Van Dijk (1995) has been significant as Srikant Tiwari dominates Moosa, the periphery who is seen to have lower hand in the given circumstances.

Figure 81.

Army as working repressive machineries in Kashmir



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 81, the Indian army has been seen as repressive machineries as stated by Hall (1985), on the streets of Kashmir where the civilians are not visible walking on the streets are very symbolic visual as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) from Srikant Tiwari's point of view of the oppression by Indian army in Kashmir.

5.3.2.b. Semiotic Choices

5.3.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 82

Hindus demonstrating power and dominance



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

In Figure 82, Hindu mob has been seen with a demand gaze as stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) creating centers of powers while holding poles and sticks suspiciously looking at Muslim men carrying beef with the intent of harming them as they being the periphery and thus becoming victim of religious violence.

5.3.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 83

Gazes portray invasion of freedom of Kashmiri Muslims



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

In Figure 83, the offer gaze as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) positions the center and periphery of power as Srikant Tiwari tries to convince Kashmiri Muslim men pointing gun at Sajid of his terrorist activities. Srikant Tiwari gets pushed to the periphery and labelled as an outsider as stated by Becker (1963) who has come to threaten their freedom and independence.

5.3.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

5.3.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 84

Indian army repressively on guard in Kashmir



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

In Figure 84, the India army is positioned as repressive machineries as stated by Hall (1985) shown through saliency as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) to establish law and order through significant presence which has been depicted in the visual.

Figure 85

Slogans supporting ISIS in Kashmir and demanding freedom



Figure 86

Pro-Pakistan slogans



Note. From The Family Man, by

(Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon

Prime

Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn>

[1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_-](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

Note. From The Family Man, by

(Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon

Prime

Video

(<https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn>

[1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref_=dvm_pds_gen_in](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_-](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[dc&mrntrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

[_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn)

Figure 87

Slogan of terrorist as martyrs



Figure 88

Slogan unwelcoming Indians



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

The Critical Realism paradigm as suggested by Bhaskar (1975, 1979) suggests that reality and perception are an outcome of one's beliefs and principle. The paradigm also suggests that the society is built by human activities. Supporting the critical paradigm, the Figures 85-88, has been used as salience as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) depicting slogans on the streets of Kashmir as anti-nationals. The

concept of center and periphery in terms of territorial dominance as stated by Langholm (1971), the visuals evoke negative sentiments about India as the periphery with words like *Indian dogs go back* as the other and positive sentiments for Pakistan as center in Kashmir like *Great Pakistan zindabad*. With words like *Shaheed Burhan*, *ISIS* represents people who are martyred as a part of Jihad fundamentalism. The word *Azaadi* meaning freedom represents liberty from oppression from Indian government and army as they act as repressive measures as Hall (1985) suggests.

5.3.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 89

Parallel representation of division of power



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video (

The framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) of wide-angle shot in Figure 89 has been used to represent power and dominate the context of the discourse

as suggested by Van Dijk (1994). It shows parallel stance in power with relation to power access where Srikant Tiwari as a hero has reached Kashmir to save India from terrorist attack and Sajid has reached to destroy India.

Figure 90

Gay men used for achieving goals



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrnrk=pcrid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

Bhaskar (1975), states that Critical Realism paradigm suggests that the world is made up of human activities. Confirming the critical paradigm, in Figure 90 wide-angle shot has been used as framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) as two gay men have been used against each other's weakness in terms of sexuality. They become victims in the hands of terrorists acting as centers who utilize them to their advantage.

Figure 91

Othering of ingroup members as outcast for personal gains



Note. From *The Family Man*, by (Nidimoru & Krishna, 2019), Amazon Prime Video ([\)](https://www.primevideo.com/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.dab66cb3-94b0-d70a-b0cd98e382fa19ad?ref=dvm_pds_gen_in_kk_s_bt_dfeedn147_mkw_dc&mrntrk=pclid_76210058612587_slid_pgrid_1219358880194203_pgeo_1673_x_ptid_dat-2328009713516639:loc-90.)

The framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) in Figure 95 depicts Pakistani army working as repressive machineries as stated by Hall (1985), as they hold Major Sameer captive for planning attack in India. Major Sameer becomes an outcast for his terrorist activities and thus becomes the periphery as the center of power lies within the Pakistani army to punish him for the actions.

5.4. Centers and Peripheries in Sacred Games

5.4. Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations

5.4.1a. Positive Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Parulkar, Majid pissed if you are late, just say what Parulkar wants you to*

Inspector Katekar has been the supportive of Sartaaaj Singh as he reflects through positively connotative words like *say what Parulkar wants you too*. The process of creating center and periphery within the group where Katekar and Sartaaaj Singh have been seen as the outgroup and Majid and Parulkar as the in group, deciding the actions of the outgroup members for their participation in the group reflected through words like *Parulkar, Majid pissed, if you*, referring to Sartaaaj Singh has been revealed here as per the concept of center and periphery by Canales (2000). Here, Parulkar and Majid power and dominion in the social hierarchy as they seem to have mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995) over Sartaaaj Singh and Parulkar as they punishment over the action which is not favourable for the functioning of the system as stated by Guinote (2014).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *the guy in the red car, finds out what you just told me, he will chop you into pieces and throw it in the ocean, Kukoo is no one's property*

The mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995) exercised by Isa Suleiman through his presence in the societal hierarchy has been reflected through words like *guy in red car, he will chop you* in relationship with Ganesh Gaitonde who holds lower position

than Isa Suleiman. The representation of gay character in the discourse as *Kukoo* represents love interest that hold the power reflected through words *no one's property* of central characters like Ganesh Gaitonde and Isa Suleiman has been portrayed in the study as similar to Monaghan (2020). The center and periphery here have been seen according to Langholm's (1971) concept as Isa Suleiman, higher in social position has been placed at the center and Ganesh Gaitonde in the periphery reflected through words like *chop, throw* representing the capability of Isa Suleiman.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Then prove them by coming with me, Isa's reign is over, it is my time now*

The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975) states that one's perception of reality is based on one's belief and principles. Supporting the critical paradigm, the positive connotation of words by reflecting the shift in the hands of power from Isa Suleiman to Ganesh Gaitonde has been seen in the discourse. The representation of ushering of new power shifts in the social structure as represented by Hall (1997a) have been represented by words like *Isa's time is over, it is my time now* are clear reflections of change in the dynamics of power. The power threat established by Ganesh Gaitonde with words like *prove them, come with me* shows creating new center and periphery in terms of him being at the center has been an outcome of discrimination and oppression faced due to social class in the system.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *war between you and Isa has gone on for too long, have shed a lot of blood, but you do not see it*

The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1979) states that human activities make the society. Confirming the critical paradigm, the purpose of power

and dominance as stated by Van Dijk (1995) over one other in a group, straight away impacts the actions against the dominance and role they play in the societal relationships with each other reflected through words like *war, long, you*, referring to *Ganesh Gaitonde* and *Isa*. Here, in order to establish the center and periphery of power, as a result of which Isa Suleiman and Ganesh Gaitonde has been on killing spree killing each other's group members resulting in shedding of *lot of blood*.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *The law protects when it is protected. We protect those who protect the law, our mottos are similar*

The sense of center and periphery has followed the concept by Canales (2000).in terms of ingroups and outgroups. Here, *our* refers to Anjali Mathur as R&AW member and Sartaaaj Singh as police officer in Mumbai who share similar intentions of saving and protecting the people through law as they represent the justice system and providing resolutions to the problem similar to the study by Kort-Butler (2012). A significant way of creating us and them in terms of us being the police and other agents protecting the people as stated by Edwards (2009) and them as others who are labelled as criminals for committing deviance, harm and destruction to a nation or its people as stated by Becker (1963).

5.4.1a. Negative Connotations

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *you ever solved a detection case, report will state that you killed Junaid, good thing Megha left you, Parulkar comes to know that you are still on the case after suspension, you will be in deep trouble, teach you how to take the safety off the gun*

The representation of people belonging to lower social hierarchy has always been represented from the perspectives of moral entrepreneurs as stated by Hall et al. (1978) who according to their self-proclaimed responsibility take care of how the system functions. Sartaaaj Singh has been seen as the periphery, where centers like Parulkar and Majid in the existing system ridicules Sartaaaj Singh for his incompetence reflected through negative connotation of words like *ever solved detection case, teach you to take off safety off the gun*, The strategy to produce prejudiced and discriminatory talks as stated by Van Dijk (1994) like *under suspension, good Meghna left you*. where Sartaaaj Singh lacks a sense of belonging to the group and face discrimination to become a strategic periphery. Words like *Parulkar finds out, deep trouble, you killed Junaid* made by the existing centers of power as stated by Van Dijk (1997) have been seen in the discourse. Sartaaaj Singh has been a target of constant judge has been reflected in the discourse.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *they are going to kill me. I cannot trust anyone in this city, then I remembered Dilbagh Singh*

The Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1979) suggests that knowledge is basically generated out of one's own understanding of the meanings of the texts as *they* here represents Guruji, Dwivedi and their group members. The concept of center and periphery has been reflected as those in higher social position establish centers of power as suggested by Langholm (1971). Here, *I* is being referred to Ganesh Gaitonde as periphery as less powerful reflected through words like *they are going kill me, cannot trust anyone* has been connoted with negative connotations of words. Here, Dilbagh Singh, father of Sartaaaj Singh has been projected as a hero with good moral character, therefore, a key element in establishing the authority of center and periphery in the group.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Babri Masjid's gates unlocked in Ayodhya, Muslim community in turmoil, demolish it and build a temple instead, the Hindu-Muslim riots began, to avenge the demolition, Isa bombed Bombay, the whole city turned into a graveyard, he took his revenge*

Supporting the Critical Realism paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975) which suggests reality is an outcome of one's beliefs and principles, the religious violence is reflected with words like *demolish Babri Masjid, build temple* brought about hatred and hostility towards amongst Hindus and Muslims towards each other reflected through words like *Hindu-Muslim riots*. The critical paradigm by Bhaskar (1979) also suggests that human activities makes the so city, hence words like *Isa bombed Bombay* labelled as a criminal as stated by Becker (1963) has been the outcome of revenge for committing crime based on anger for the injustice to Muslim community, as reflected with words like *whole city turned into a graveyard, avenge demolition, he took his revenge* determining the centers of power and dominance over periphery as stated by Van Dijk (1995) which has been justified by the actions for the role they have played in the society.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *Isa killed Subhadra, awoke the Hindu in me. kill 50 of Isa's men, No one has been spared. Abdul, Rajab Rangeela, Ismail, Rajju, Vicky, Sufi, but I could not kill anyone who mattered to Isa, Gopalmath demanding revenge on the Muslims, all of Isa's men killed, Isa eloped to Dubai with his family*

As an outcome of human activities in the society, as stated by Critical Realism paradigm by Bhaskar (1979), *Subhadra* has been represented here as the victim who

was supposed to be protected by Ganesh Gaitonde from *Isa* who *killed her*. She is the victim of circumstances as she becomes an easy target in the fight between Isa and Gaitonde. Negative connotations of words like *Hindu in me awoke*, reflects the hatred towards the Muslim community and taking *revenge on Muslims* for the wrong by Ganesh Gaitonde resorting to crime has been reflected in the discourse Ganesh Gaitonde establishing the centers of power as stated by Van Dijk (1995) as *Isa eloped to Dubai* and creating Isa as the periphery in the social hierarchy has been established.

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *his veins had hatred running, especially for Muslims, triggered the Hindu-Muslim conflict, sister married to that circumcised pig, I will make him run like a dog for his life, I will cut him into pieces.*

The negative connotations of words with discriminatory labeling of Muslims through prejudiced talks by *he* referring to Bunty Sharma, with words like *cut him into pieces, run like dog*, where *him* refers to Chota Badariya, represented through denotic modality of language reflects hatred towards Muslims resulting in Islamophobia as stated by Siyech & Narain (2018). *Sister married to circumcised pig* has been reflected of Hindu woman marrying a Muslim man. This represents a center and periphery based on religious beliefs of Hindus and Muslims making the us Hindus at the center, as Indian being Hindu nation as more powerful than them Muslim at the periphery who are ethnic minorities as suggested by Hall (1997a).

Vocabulary: Choice of words and connotations: *send Sharma in, thank you Anjali, your contributions to this case has been duly noted, I will have a team look into it*

The negative connotations by using of words like *thank you, your contributions noted* has been used as a representation of people in lower social position in the profession

with prejudiced notion by upper class officials as suggested by Hall et al. (1978). Consequently, following the exclusivity of as a subordinate Anjali Mathur, which has been represented by words like *send Sharma in, I will have a team look into it* creates centers and peripheries in the form of Anjali as outgroup by superiors, Sharma and team, as ingroup, this providing discrimination in work as suggested by Canales (2000) in his study. Anjali has been a victim of professional hierarchy as stated by Hall (1997a) for being a female as well as a subordinate.

5.4b. Quoting Verbs

My name is Aasiya Bi, my son, Shamsul, is missing from Bengali Bura

Here, *her* refers to *Aasiya Bi* who has been a victim corresponding to effects of causal process for being a Muslim. She has been seen to be fulfilling an important role for reflecting the good and evil and to whom the law has failed to deliver justice as her *son* is been *missing*. The concept of center and periphery as suggested by Langholm (1971) with words like file *her FIR, never leave* has been seen as means to exercise dominance on the periphery considering the lower social position of *Aasiya Bi* than the police constable.

Sartaaj, get out of there, it is an order, understand the situation, will shoot you

Here, the concept of center and periphery as suggested by Galtung (1971), Sartaaj Singh has been seen as periphery by Anjali Mathur who is at the power center of decision making for Sartaaj Singh as a periphery has been reflected with words to order him to *get out, an order and shoot you* (Langholm, 1971).

5.4c. Rhetoric and Metaphors

Beast like Bunty

The rhetoric metaphor used here in terms of *Bunty* with reference to *beast* represents the mercilessness and ruthless which he possesses as a villain, who exercises fear through cruelty and brutality using force as stated by Foucault (1975). Here, Bunty's *beast* like quality will be used in destroying Isa Suleiman, as Ganesh Gaitonde creates a new center of power as suggested by Hall (1997a) with him as he side-lines Isa Suleiman to periphery.

India to turn into a battlefield, we need a general

The usage of the rhetoric metaphor of *India* consequently turning into a *battlefield* has been relational to the Hindu-Muslim religious violence in India. The concept of center and periphery as stated by Maalej (2012) established by *we* as the center has been referred to as Hindus and *general* referred to as Hindu leader Ganesh Gaitonde against the periphery who will stop their growth in India.

Ganesh, you radiate, power, strength, like Lord Shiva

The Critical Realism paradigm helps to establish the reality based on one's principles and beliefs (Bhaskar, 1975). The critical paradigm here supports the rhetoric metaphor used here in terms of Shiva; the Hindu God as referred by Low and Muniapan (2011) is being referred to Ganesh Gaitonde who will restructure the organizational structure like Lord Shiva has extreme power for stability and consistency needed for change. Here the concept of center and periphery as stated by Langholm (1971) has been established as Ganesh Gaitonde has been seen as center

with *power* and *strength*, whereas Dwivedi and others have seen as periphery holding lower social status.

*Barbar's b*** burn in their own hell*

This discourse reflects Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery where Hindus with center of power have made the decisions to *Barbar's b*** burn in their hell*. Consequently, *their*, has been established here with reference to Muslims as the periphery, who hold less power in the given situation. The rhetoric metaphor Babar refers to the Mughal emperor and the hatred towards Muslims has been evident in the discourse.

5.4d. Hyperbole and Metonymy

If you shoot, we will riddle you with bullets; there will be nothing left of you

The discourse here, has used hyperbole like *riddle with bullets, nothing left* in order to represent the mental control as stated by Van Dijk (1995). *We*, here is referred to Bunty Sharma creating center of power and *you* is referred to Sartaj Singh and his team representing the periphery.

Kill ten Muslims for every Hindu killed

Words like *kill ten Muslims for every Hindu killed* has been used as hyperbole used here as Hindus hold the center of power to make decisions upon Muslim as periphery according to Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery.

25 years go by in the blink of an eye, revolution will come when we have our people both here and on foreign lands too, support, help our people grow, spread our wings

The use of metonymy refers to words like *revolution, 25 years in blink of an eye* where power status has been distinctly developed to establish dominance through *support* in social roles as the villains plan their attacks and changing the existing structure of the system as represented by Hall (1997a). The concept of center and periphery of territorial dominance as suggested by Langholm (1971) has been used here in this discourse. Guruji and Dwivedi discuss about territorial dominance by creating centers as *we India* and periphery as *foreign lands, spread wings and help our people grow*.

Bunty created all chaos, now responsible for the world's end

Bunty has been the outcast as stated by Becker (1963) who is held responsible for all the crimes and violent activities in the world. The metonymy used here indicates Bunty as the center of power who will disrupt the functioning of the society to achieve the goal of the group where all rules will be broken to create mass destruction.

5.4.2 Decoding Visual Representations of Centers and Peripheries

5.4.2. a. Decoding Signs in Images and Various Denotations

5.4.2. a.i. Classificational Process

Figure 92

Ganesh Gaitonde's first murder marks the beginning of his dominance



Figure 93

Ganesh Gaitonde establishes supremacy in Gopalmath



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Figure 94

Ganesh Gaitonde captures Kukoo to begin domination



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix

(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Figures 92-94 depicts superiority of Ganesh Gaitonde as now he ushers new changes the power relation in the social structure as suggested by Hall (1997a) in the discourse. He brings in new center of power change by killing Salim Kaka to establish new control, Bunty Sharma touches Ganesh Gaitonde's feet and wins over Kukoo over Isa Suleiman thus establishing power center as stated by Van Dijk (1994) and rising up in the social hierarchy.

5.4.2.a. ii. Symbolic Process

Figure 95

Isa's shining red car represents power



Figure 96

Dusty red car portrays Isa's downfall



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The symbolic visuals in Figures 95 and 96 symbolically signifies Isa Suleima's red car as symbol of socio-economic status and power that comes with owning the red car. In Figure 95, the car symbolically represents of sparkling and shining car represents power and dominance existing in the social hierarchy as stated by Van Dijk (1994), and in Figure 96, it shows the fall in the power and dominance as it lays covers in dust and sheets thus creating new center and periphery in the social structure.

5.4.2.b. Semiotic Choices

5.4.2.b.i. Image act: Demand gaze

Figure 97

Discrimination of ethnic minority belonging to lower social economic class



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix

(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In the demand gaze in Figure 97, shows the police constable offers an annoying gaze at Aafiya Bi victim Junaid's mother, who constantly visits at the police station to find her missing son. The concept of center and periphery as suggested by Langholm (1971) with centers being higher social position and periphery being lower social position supports the discourse, where the police station has been referred to as center of power for decision making, as Aafiya Bi continuously visits the police station to find her missing son. Aafiya Bi has been seen as the periphery that is less powerful.

5.4.2.b. ii. Image act: Offer gaze

Figure 98

Victim due ethnicity



Figure 99

Seeking justice for victim



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by *Note.* From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>) (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 98, Junaid is asking for help to save him and in Figure 99. Figure 99 exemplifies the offer gaze of Sartaaaj Singh on the family of Junaid as they seek justice for him in front of police station as centers of powers as suggested by Van Dijk (1994) been established. This portrays his representation as victim from the periphery owing to the Muslim community he belongs to. It also represents the wrongful labelling of criminal as stated by Hall (1997aa) because they belong to ethnic group of Muslim community.

5.4.2.c. Technical Articulation in the Visuals

5.4.2.c.i. Saliency

Figure 100

Bunty Sharma shows hatred towards Muslims



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix

(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

The Critical Realism paradigm, helps to establish the reality based on one's principles and beliefs (Bhaskar, 1975). Supporting the critical paradigm, in Figure 100, Bunty Sharma has been depicted to show extreme violence and hatred towards Muslim community thus representing Islamophobia. The stereotypical behaviour towards Muslims by Hindus has created an exclusive representation of centers, consisting of Hindus and periphery, consisting of Muslim has been interpreted in the discourse similar to the study by Edwards (2009).

Figure 101

Bunty Sharma abusing Nayanika



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix
(<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 101, Bunty Sharma has been seen captivating Nayanika as she is tied up in bed. He seems to possess the of center power as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) showing cruelty and brutality on the periphery on weaker gender possessing less power than him as stated by Foucault (1975). Nayanika, being a woman has been seen as a victim who is abused by Bunty. She remains helpless tied down on the bed as Bunty overpowers her owing to her weak physical strength as a female.

5.4.2.c. ii. Framing

Figure 102

Kukoo dies as victim due to sexuality



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 102, the wide angle shot for framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) has been used to frame Kukoo lying dead on the pool of blood as she becomes the victim as similar to the study by Monagan (2017), in the war between Isa Suleiman and Ganesh Gaitonde as they constantly try to shift the power centers as stated by Van Dijk (1995). Hence, Kukoo is the periphery as the victim between the power struggle of Ganesh Gaitonde and Isa Suleiman, as both claimed her theirs and needed to be protected by the powerful, but loses her life instead.

Figure 103

Anjali Mathur dies as a victim out of organisational discrimination



Note. From *Sacred Games*, by (Motwane & Kashyap, 2018), Netflix (<https://www.netflix.com/in/title/80115328>)

In Figure 103, framing as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) shows the mid-long shot of Anjali Mathur shot on head by Malcolm Mourad, the suspected terrorist. This is representative of the victim due to organisation's letdown and discrimination as is an outcast as suggested by Becker (1963). Following Galtung's (1971) concept of center, Malcolm Mourad, having upper hand over Anjali Mathur as periphery, becomes victim. Malcolm kills her as she posed a threat to the terror attack planned by Malcom and his team.

5.5.1. Creation of Centers and Peripheries in Hindi crime genre web series in India

Hall (1997a) puts forward that representations can be produced both in a negative or positive manner, creating a distinct us and them in the language used. Language can be produced in various representations which can connote and denote various latent meanings in the form of chosen meanings deciding to be interpreted the way they

want to make logic out of the meanings. Therefore, the discourse can lead to construction of various meanings representative of thoughts and actions about ethnic minorities. The centers and peripheries can be distinctly created and constructed through usage of various strategical elements in the languages used such as I, we, they, you, us, them and majorly as self and other in the language of the discourse as stated by Markina (2015) and Maalej (2012).

The Critical Realism Paradigm as stated by Bhaskar (1975, 1979) suggests that reality is a manifestation of one's own personal beliefs and principle. The critical paradigm also suggests that society is made up of due to constant human activities. Supporting the critical paradigm in this chapter, the centers and peripheries have been created through territorial dominance between nations for Kashmir in India, Muslim dominated nations like Pakistan and Middle East as per the center and periphery nation according to the concept of Galtung (1971). The heroes fight for the nation's security, dealing with territorial threats from the neighbouring countries and within. The distinct peripheries have of the terrorists belonging to Muslim ethnic religion from both India and Pakistan been created through the usage of words like *conspiracy to murder, ISI agents, member of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), anti-nationals, Indian Mujahideen, your Ajmal Kasab, Jamaat's plans for Kashmir, you're doing Allah's work, they launch an attack, beaten to death under suspicion, behind the blast, they call us terrorists, Bloody traitors, kill ten Muslims, circumcised pig, Isa bombed Bombay*. The constant reference of *they* is for Pakistan, Pakistani and Indian Muslim terrorists, and terrorist groups for causing malicious and intent harm to Indian states has been very distinguishingly used in the language within the texts. *They* as term have been in reference to the peripheralized terrorists displaying extremism and fundamentalism within the language used. This has been reproduced as a reflection of

how the extremism is portrayed in the language used as this adds fuel to the radical beliefs and thoughts of the terrorist organisations causing damage and destructions to achieve their target. The centers, however has been portrayed here as India and Indian security forces and intelligence services as heroes who have worked towards attracting the centers of power within them. The representations of Indian security forces and intelligence services like *Delhi Police, Mumbai Police, RA&W, TASC, CBI, Force One, NSG, ATS, IB, BSF, Indian Army* have made a strong center of power as they encounter terrorism and crime. These centers of security agencies have been created as centers of power superseding intelligence of the international security agencies like the CIA, Interpol and US Seal. The heroes as centers have shown loyalty and devotion to work relentlessly although facing discrimination within their organization to combat crime and terrorism within and outside of Indian territories.

Within the discourse, another major factor leading to centers and peripheries have been through caste dominance or hegemony by upper caste to lower caste people. Upper caste people see it as a system of exercising control in the form of social, political and economic growth (Mosse, 2018). The centers of power through caste system have been very prominent in the study. The upper caste characters hegemony as centers of power in the Indian context has been evidently represented through the discourse. The lower caste characters have been victimized by the upper caste and hence have been pushed into the periphery. The deviants in crime and the rise of the lower caste characters have been the outcome of discrimination, oppression, cruelty and tyranny by the upper caste characters. The usage of derogatory words to discriminate them as peripheries and marginalized have been represented through words like *belongs to lower caste, slashed upper caste boys, bl*** Manjaar, they look like shit, they smell like sh**... Manjaar, benefitted from being a Brahmin's son*. The

references used in terms of *they* as people belonging to lower caste and us referring to upper caste people have been continuously used in the context of upper caste hegemonic discourse within the text reflects similar to the study by Schneider et al. (2022).

The religious conflicts leading to religious violence among Hindus and Muslims have created as the centers and peripheries of power in the discourse as stated by Kohli (1996). The Hindus avenging the Muslims for their deaths and destructions and Muslims avenging their death through similar revenge strategy has been depicted within the discourse. Galtung's (1971) concept of center and periphery nation has been clearly established here in the discourse. The Muslim nations being the periphery of possessing malicious intentions and harm to India as the center nation has categorically been represented in the discourse as the heroes are represented predominantly as Hindus and Sikhs whereas the villains are largely represented by Muslims. The malicious intent of harm towards India and Indians has been represented in the form of words like *terrorist from PoK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir), work for Indian Mujahideen, we've tormented India, we will continue, kill these scoundrels, people like you are important for Jamaat, we attacked your parliament, they launch an attack, this man is from the Indian army, here for my encounter. They forcibly enter our homes and brutalize us, if we protest, they call us terrorists, we need to show them their place, our duty, Isa bombed Bombay*. Here, the words like *we, us* have been depicted as Pakistanis and Muslim terrorists, whereas words like *they, them, these* have been referred to Indians and Indian security forces who are represented as centers of oppression towards Pakistan and Muslims in India with special reference to Kashmir and Kashmiris. The Indian police heroes have however shifted the centers of power as suggested by Van Dijk (1994) from the

Muslim terrorists as they counter terrorism through words like *your Ajmal Kasab, we will kill you and the commander, I work for the welfare of Kashmiris, they killed my boys*

The victims have been exploited and used as per their sexuality and gender. Transgenders have been pushed as peripheries through usage of derogatory words that have been used to discriminate them as peripheries like *Nepali w***, take Kukoo away, operation done after the job, using gay factory manager to extract information through another gay where both are afraid to showcase their true sexuality to the outside world* similar to the study by Monaghan (2017, 2020).

The process of othering within the discourse has been done by creating ingroups and outgroups and outcasts as suggested by Becker (1963) within the social organization. Words to showcase discrimination within the ingroups has been represented through various words like *send Sharma in, thank you Anjali, your contributions to this case have been duly noted, I'll have a team look into it, enquiry is being conducted against you*. There has been distinct representation of ingroup and outgroups within the discourse with regards to professional hierarchy, superiority and inferiority in the organization. The professional discrimination in the hierarchy of social position as stated by Van Dijk (1997) has been represented by words like *for 19 years you have been looking for sixth person and using the government's secret service funds; do we need to prove our loyalty every day? Chaudhary will not be able to handle it, you're an as*** Chaudhary, Sartaaaj have you ever solved a detection case*. Creating clear peripheries of the under-achiever police heroes while seeing them as incapable, incompetent, and unskilled to handle high profile cases has been seen in the discourse.

The peripheries in the discourse have been created mostly through the crime and labelling the criminals associated with socio-economic status and ethnic minority group as stated by Hall (1997a), Becker (1963) Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Hatoda Tyagi, Tope Singh, Moosa Rehman, Ganesh Gaitonde have been villains who belonged to lower socio-economic status and wanted to achieve their goals either as revenge or committed one as a result of oppression by upper caste.

The discriminatory and prejudiced talks as stated by Van Dijk (1997) have been used to create strong centers and peripheries within and outside of the communities. The othering of the religion and religious beliefs, ethnic minorities through strong usage of discriminatory talks through words like *Amjad Ali, and Rehman Sharif were beaten to death by a mob of 50 under suspicion of carrying beef, they kill two Muslims, even a stray dog does not give birth to so many puppies. You dare slaughter the holy cow, our mother, circumcised pig, Barbar's b*** burn in their own hell, kill ten Muslims for every Hindu killed* have been used to target a community or elevate the achievement of a particular community. The solution to problems has been seen through discriminatory lens by othering the groups and nations by using prejudiced talks and creating biased opinions about the other have been represented by the concept of power and dominance as stated by Van Dijk (1994, 1995) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Therefore, the actions taken against each other have been justified in the form of *duty* and safeguarding sacredness of religious sentiments (Kurzman, 2018, Siyech& Narain, 2018), counter terrorism activities (Goppel, 2013) and revenge (Sarat,1997).

Chapter – 6

6.1. Conclusion

The web series in India have made a significant growth and has dealt with sensitive topics on transgenders, gay and lesbians and have addressed issues of religious conflicts within the Indian state. Web series in India have shown initiatives to address the concerns of social and cultural hierarchies existing in India by promoting regional languages and storytelling, highlighting varied personalities and perspectives, and offering opportunities for minority groups. With this, has come the imperativeness to study various narratives of portrayal of identities in the web series. Studies of Hindi web series in India have addressed issues related to future of OTT services through web series (Gupta, 2021), progress of OTT services in India (Tiwari, 2020), through the lens of OTT capitalism via web series (Aathique & Parthasarathi, 2020), a brief mention about web series Sacred games on Netflix's success in India (Nafees et al., 2021), hierarchies in masculinity (Peter & Raj, 2021) and unequal rights for transgenders (Dalvi & Shinde, 2022). However, studies on the representation of identities through role players of heroes, victims and villains remains an area which does not provide enough representations in the array of studies of web series in India. This study, therefore, has addressed the research gap in the adding to the study of Hindi web series in India through the representation identities of role players portrayed in the Hindi web series across OTT platforms.

Addressing the statement of the problem, related to representations of identities in the universal content style of storytelling in the Hindi web series in India, the various representations of identities of ethnic minorities (Hall, 1997), comprising of heroes, victims, and villains (Jasper et al., 2018) and the distinct creation of centers and

peripheries through identities have been undertaken and analysed in the study through usage of languages Van Dijk (1989, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2008) and visual representations within the framework of (Kress Leeuwen, 2001, 2006, 2021) under the Critical Realism Framework of Bhaskar (1975,1979). The discriminatory perspective of ethnic minorities following Islam has also been significantly apparent in the study. The creation of centers and peripheries in terms of dominance by the powerful to the weaker sections of the society has been evidently reflected in the study.

The patterns in outlining role of social players address the research question: *Is there a significant pattern followed in outlining the key roles in the web series?*

The roles of heroes, victims and villains have been outlined and drawn on specific elements depending on patterns of ethnicity, religion, caste, place of origin, socio-economic status, sexuality, and nationality. The role players as social actors in the discourse have an important way to establish their identity among themselves either individually or collectively. These tools help to establish, find and determine the patterns in the role played by these social actors in the web series in the Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

The heroes, victims and villains have been categorised in terms of gender, religion, place of origin, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, and caste. The patterns identified in the role players are as follows:

a. Role Allocation: active or passive

The role players are often allocated into active or passive roles. Representations of various roles in the discourse have helped to establish relationships of the participants

and their relationship in the society. The active roles have been identified with dynamic and positive participation and contribution of role players whereas, passive roles have been identified with people who are less active and have been seen as the other in the social structure (Van Leeuwen, 2008). The active and passive role players in the discourse have consisted of various mental and physical processes which has led to the identity formation of the heroes, victims and villains according to their ethnicity, socio-economic status and caste in the discourse as stated in the Critical Realism paradigm (Basker, 1975).

The heroes have been actively portrayed as people belonging mostly to upper caste Hindus or Sikh with few representations from Muslim community, with their places of origin from North India from places like Delhi, Lucknow, and Mumbai. The identification of male heroes is more than female heroes. Heroes have been seen to be sensitive towards the nation and have portrayed strong sense of nationalism. They have also been actively engaging in bringing the down the threats towards the nation. However, some police heroes have engaged in discriminatory talks regarding the Muslim community due to the mental process they have built as barriers against the other community confirming the basic attitude towards the understanding of the reality where meanings are generated out of the texts produced as proposed by Bhaskar (1975).

The victims in the discourse too have been seen passively where their participation where they are regarded as objects in exchange of benefits the powerful reap out of them. The discourse has the role of heroes interchanged from heroes to victims, as they are seen with discrimination, professionally and religiously as one becomes the victim of center and periphery within the group.

The villains in the discourse have been seen passively seen as others where their behavioural process through the usage of language is used with discrimination, biases and prejudices. The villains have also been actively portrayed as criminal heroes who have been adored and adulated in the discourse similar to the study by Penfold-Mounce (2009) bringing a sense of belonging to the group with social cognition where the weak ties up with the strong in the society to elevate themselves and achieve their goals and achievements, hence creating collective identity of group members.

b. Individualization or assimilation pattern

Confirming the study of critical realist (Bhaskar, 1979), the individual's identity is coherent to basic principles of beliefs and principles that an individual is exposed to. The discourse has made a significant individualisation of Hindu and Muslim ethnic minorities and at the same time has made collectivisation through assimilation where ethnic groups have been categorised with collective identities denoting a nation, community, caste or socio-economic status.

As stated by Van Dijk (1997), the text and the context in the study has made contextual references to the social structure, as the texts are interpreted where the language has been used to create social hierarchies within the discourse. The heroes have been basically assimilated as people belonging to Hindu backgrounds and have been portrayed as upper caste Hindus. The lower caste Hindus have been individualized or collectivised as they are associated with failures and disgrace to the society with their existence.

The victims in the discourse have been assimilated with collectivisation with their sexuality and gender. Portrayed as the weaker sections of the society, their association mostly has been showed as a trade in by those in power in terms of dominance subjected to exploitations in the hands of the powerful.

The villains have been assimilated with the collectivisation to destroy and be evil and malicious. Mostly belonging to the Muslim community, the villains have been collectively seen as spiteful, vindictive and cruel. However, in the discourse, apart from the Muslim being the villains, the upper caste groups are significantly represented as villains. Their association has been mostly with the weaker lower caste people, as they believe their existence only exists due to suppression, clamping down and depriving the lower caste people.

c. Functionalisation and Identification

Identification in the discourse has been classified according to the groups, ethnicity, class and sexuality where individuals and groups are classified according to the role and functionalisation they play in the social structure. The identification process has been seen through the relational functionalisation of the role players in terms of family, colleagues and nationality.

The heroes have created distinct identification of the villains belonging to Muslim communities and in bringing the down the threats towards the nation. Some police heroes have engaged in discriminatory talks regarding the Muslim community due to the mental process they have built as barriers against the other community. This has thereby created identification of the Muslim community as they are classified offenders, hazards and menace towards the nation. The relational functionalisation of

the heroes in the society showcased that they suffer from low self-esteem, financial crisis and have been portrayed as common people struggling with work and family life. They have been neglected and dejected in their professions; however with extra tenacity, persistence and determination, they overcome their flaws and emerge victorious in upholding and providing justice within the system and saving the nation of terrorism and murder. The study therefore agrees to Bhaskar's (1979) critical paradigm that the activities of humans are based on their power that exists in the society. This study too agrees to the Van Dijk's (1994) which states that the power structure over one another is directly related to the dominance and exercise of power in the society.

The functionalization of victims in the discourse have been portrayed as weak, having to be saved from the villains by the heroes but ending up losing their lives. The villain and the heroes try to establish their control of power and dominance within the system. Victims from Muslim community have also been treated with the sense of othering and labelled as criminals and terrorists. The victims are mostly females who have become victims owing their sexuality confirming to the study similar to Garrett (2023). Thus, the identification of the victims has been mostly seen as females who are portrayed as feeble and serve as collateral damage. The discourse could have added value to female characters showing strength, grit and rigour they possess as equal to male characters. The robust characteristics of the females with characters of substance are missing in the discourse. Instead, the stereotypical identification and functionalisation of the female characters have been outlined in the web series.

In the discourse, transgenders, gay and lesbians have been functionalized as insignificant and unimportant identities portrayed as victims. The transgenders, lesbians and gay have been most been represented as love interests of people who has ulterior motives to ruin and use them. Their entire identities are portrayed in safeguarding their sexual identity and protect themselves from social stigma and discrimination by the society. The study confirms through the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021) that visual representations in the discourse suggests the denotations of signs in images for transgenders, gay and lesbians being portrayed as victims.

The villains have been portrayed in the discourse through two types of identification and functionalisation. First, where the identification of the villains has been a result of oppression mainly due to caste, religion and socio-economic conditions. Second, the villains exist from within the country or other nation as terrorists who pose serious threats to the security of the country. The villains also have their identification from the representation through their places of belonging. Here, in the discourse, they have mostly been represented from places of North India like UP, Chittrakoot, Bundelkhand, Delhi and Kerala and they have been depicted as notorious criminals coming from those areas.

The creation of centers and peripheries has addressed to the research question: *Does the web series have any portrayal of ethnic groups through the discriminatory lens?*

The study has undertaken discrimination through the lens of crime, socio-economic status, caste, and ethnic group. The discrimination has been seen through heroes, victims and villains belonging to various ethnic groups. The study agrees to the creation of centers and peripheries and the othering of ethnic minorities based on

religion (Fearon, 2003), places of origin (Garner,2013), socio-economic status (Barlow et al., 1995)and caste (Moffatt,1997) which have been found distinctly in the study. The creations of center and peripheries have been approached through various elements of the representations of the fundamental trio in crime series- heroes, victims, and villains. This study confers the study by Van Dijk (1997), that discriminatory talks have produced the discriminatory creation of centers and peripheries, apart from individual identity has also been found in othering the nations with Muslim dominance especially Pakistan and Middle east countries as India acts as the center of attention where the periphery nations like Pakistan Middle East and other Muslim dominated countries target to establish hegemony over it. The powerful visuals representing the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the study has agreed to the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) which has denoted how the Muslim minorities are perceived through discriminatory lens in the discourse.

The crime in these web series have mostly been portrayed in the North Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, etc. The Muslim dominated nations like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Middle East etc have been portrayed with discrimination as the center for crime where terrorists are trained and sent to India for destruction following the Islam ideology of establishing a complete hegemonic Islamic state where these nations aim at destroying Indian territories.

The subversion of people belonging to upper socio-economic status, class and profession has been found to practise othering of the ethnic groups, other nationalities, and criminals. As put forward by Hall et al. (1978), people belonging to upper social economic level sees it as their responsibility to restore and maintain the morals and

values in the society. There has been discriminatory creation of centers and peripheries on the basis of location, social status, decision making and territorial dominance and perceptions as proposed by Langholm (1971). The othering of the lower socio-economic group in terms of pushing them to the further periphery as suspects, criminals and villains has led to reinforcement of discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices of the lower-class people in the discourse. The peripheries created have further led to the dominance of the upper-class people to establish their supremacy over the lower caste people. The discourse in the study has strengthened the stereotype discriminatory image of lower economic people being labelled as criminals confirming the study by Becker (1963) and easily indulging in crime to rise above the social ladder and break the barriers of class. This also instigates that lower class people's main motive is to avenge the discrimination against those who have wronged them due to their class. However, the discourse does not disclose any other motive apart from rising up in the society to prove their worth for the peripheral lower-class people to help them stop the biasness of these marginalised groups. For this, the discourse in the web series has only showcased economic factor as one of the major factors to indulge in crime and deviance.

Under the critical paradigm the language and texts suggest about the social changes in the social structure (Fairclough, 2005). The study has found that the discrimination in terms of caste has been created where the lower caste community have indulged in crime and deviance due to oppression and discrimination from the upper caste community. The creations of peripheries have evidently showcased the already existing social disparities, discrimination and despise which exists in the social caste system in the Indian context. The extreme measures taken to push the lower caste people further into the background has been explicitly shown in the discourse where

rape, murder, use of discriminatory languages and bullying has added to the stereotypical representation of upper caste people and their cruel, callous behaviour against the lower caste people in order to retain the centers of power and hegemony over the lower caste people. However, as suggested under critical realism paradigm by Fairclough (2005) regarding the changes in the social structure, the discourse also focuses on the upsurge of the lower caste people. They are seen to take up important roles in the social system in the form of politics or henchmen in order to combat the injustice suffered by their community, but their fate gets sealed as they become a pawn in the hands of the administration and upper caste people who use them for their own benefits as they emerge as potential threat to them.

The discrimination based on sexuality of genders, especially the transgenders, gay and lesbians have been portrayed with the discrimination social stigma, ostracization and disguising their sexuality in the discourse. The discourse, however does not discuss the importance of social acceptance of sexuality. These characters have merely served the function of love interest who become easy target as victims from the perpetrators of crime using them as means to achieve their hideous crime. The discourse however, should have explored the positive aspect of transgenders, with acceptance as a part of the normal social culture and along with their individuality and collectively receiving them with distinct social identity capable of serving meaningful purpose in the discourse.

The discourse in the web series has consistently related various strong religious identities and groups having varied opinions about superiority of one over the other. As confirmed by Bhaskar (1979) under the critical realism paradigm, the superiority has been an outcome of a person's logic to understand the meanings and explore the

texts. Therefore, religion has added key factor in discrimination. This has been evidently shown through discriminatory talks within the discourse. Confirming to Hall's (2020) concept of mental and conceptual representations of the world and the meanings generated out of it, in the Indian context, Hindu has portrayed as the center of nation. The discriminatory talks have represented people with Islamic beliefs to be the main perpetrators of crimes, corruptions, wrongdoings and creating instability within the nation. As Becker's (1963) labelling theory suggests, the discrimination of Muslim ethnic groups and nations offenders has been revealed in the study that exists within the language used in the discourse. On the other hand, the Muslim dominated nations have seen India, a Hindu nation, as a periphery, the cause of their failures and avenging on India for becoming a hinderance to achieve their ultimate motive of achieving a complete Islamic ideological territory around the world. The religion has played a major discrimination in the form of power and ideology in the discourse, as the religious beliefs and backgrounds have shaped the beginning and end of the entire representation of the heroes, victims and villains in the discourse. However, the discourse focuses more on the already existing and conflicting polarized religious identities of Hindus and Muslims in the Indian state. Rage has been identified as the major factor for revenge, destroying and terminating the existing identities of both Hindus and Muslims as they fight with each other in creating the centers and peripheries. The mention of other religious identities in the discourse has been almost negligible except few representations from other religions like Sartaaaj Singh and his father Dilbagh Singh and Himmat Singh. The discourse has largely portrayed and created the centers and peripheries of Hindus and Muslims in the Hindi web series as these communal representations possibly emphasizes and support the already existing divided religious ideologies within the Indian state. This narrative can also be

discriminatory representative of the view of the Indian state ideology to the world where the Muslim religion in India is regarded as a potential threat to the nation and Hindus are the sole heroes to save the nation, which challenges the secularism of the state as it consists of various religions existing within the nation apart from the center Hindus and peripheries as Muslims.

The power centers on professional levels have been exercised to create discrimination in groups. The distinct categorising of the group members as in group and out group as proposed by Becker (1963), makes them into an outcast in the same organization has been evident in the discourse. Hence, the discriminatory and prejudiced language, expressed through texts in the language practice as stated by Van Dijk (1997) along with visuals representations stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006) have shown lucid portrayal of centers and peripheries within the discourse. The professional othering was distinctively based on caste, religion, and socio-economic status. Religious othering and pushing the Muslim colleagues to the periphery has been apparent in the discourse. The Muslim police heroes often try to demonstrate their patriotism and their individuality by either sacrificing themselves in the hands of the terrorists or in the hands of their higher officials. They prove their loyalty when they relentlessly and ruthlessly kill people of their own community and religion to get recognition within their organisation. This creates stereotypical representations of a group belonging to Muslim ethnicity as they are portrayed as people who must incessantly show their loyalty and devotion to the nation who views them as offenders, thus asserting them as peripheries in their own nation.

Corruption as a practice within the discourse was evidently seen within the higher officials, bureaucrats, and politicians for which they constantly practiced the in group

and out group process of othering within the professional system. The police heroes on the lower professional status practiced patriotism and hence, were always pushed on the periphery as they tried to cleanse the system, thus creating centers of power within the organization. The professional discrimination of othering was also evident with female police heroes, as they were discredited for their competency. The female police heroes have been passed sexist remarks within the organization. Their male counterparts saw them through the lens of objectification making them to be on their guard and defend themselves through these practices proving their capability and regularly ignoring the sexist comments on them. This has pushed the female characters into a periphery as they have been portrayed through a stereotypical lens where females continuously struggle to fulfil the male expectations of possessing physical strength, characters, and charisma equal to that of their male colleagues.

The on portrayal of identity on Hindi web series has dealt with answering the research questions of the study: *Has the identity of any ethnic groups been stereotyped in the web series?*

The identity in Paatal Lok, Special Ops, The Family Man and Sacred Games has addressed the social significance of identity and crime. The shaping of individual and collective identities has been established as the basis of formation of identities both individually and collectively. There has been clear relationship between the shaping and formation of collective identities where words like us, ours and we have been the results of individual identity as individual's attempts to pursue to seek representations in the group members through common bonds and purpose each one shares.

The ethnic representation of heroes in the discourse consists mostly of non-Muslim origins like upper caste Hindus and Sikhs. However, this discourse as confirmed through Critical Realism paradigm that discusses about social changes in the social structure by Fairclough (2005) showcases representation of few Muslim police heroes who share equal patriotism and zeal towards safeguarding the nation and its people. Characters like *Imran Ansari*, *Farooq Ali*, *Imran Pasha*, *Zoya*, *Saloni*, and *Firdaus Macgray* have been used to balance the polarised representation of non-Muslim heroes as the ultimate guard from the villains. The villains have been portrayed through dominance and possessing more power as stated in the language practice of social cognition as stated by Van Dijk (1994) along with empowering visuals connoting power and dominance in the discourse as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006, 2021). The characterisation of police heroes in the discourse evokes a strong sense of patriotism as they are represented as common men who can achieve extraordinary feats in order to safeguard the interest of the nation.

The stereotyped representations villains have been found in the form of Muslim ethnic minority group through religious acts of violence. Concurrent to study by Welten and Abbas (2021) the study has found that the terrorists and terrorism have been evidently portrayed through both individual and collective identities where the villains have been categorised to belong from Muslim community who intent harm and destruction. As put forward by Hall (1997a), the representation of villains has diverse implications associated to the meanings can imply a variety of perspectives about how ethnic minorities should be represented. These minorities have therefore been presented with the idea of being compared, radical, or having opposing beliefs as those representations garner immediate attention across boundaries if they are presented in a raw and disapproving manner. However, there has been no stereotypical

representations of villains within the discourse, about other prominent ethnic religious groups like Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains existing in India that are posed as malicious, harmful, and detrimental to the country and other minorities.

The study has also found distinct caste distinction of lower and upper caste has been shown in a stereotypical manner, where the lower caste people have been represented as the conventional characters who get easily persuaded and influenced. Their main motive remains to rise above within the caste system as they try to create a place for themselves in the social ladder.

Addressing to the relationship between crime, identity research question: *Is there a relation between crime, identity and portrayal of ethnicity, sexuality and socio-economic class?*

The relationship between crime and identity has a direct relationship with ethnicity, sexuality, and socio-economic classes in the society. The relationship between crime and identity of villains, victims and heroes has been shaped through socio-economic status. The villains on the other hand have been characterised through two socio-economic categories, one from lower socio-economic background and the other as rich. The labelling of people belonging to lower socio-economic background are more susceptible towards committing crime and deviance, hence they are labelled as criminals and offenders as proposed by Becker (1963). As stated by Sathyamala (2019), this study also confirms that the identity of villains coming from lower socio-economic background have contextual representation which has been more as an outcome of oppression from the upper caste and as are result of economic and caste hegemony of the rich and the upper caste Hindus seeking revenge as their ultimate goal to achieve. Similarly, as specified in the study conducted by Ehrlich and Liu

(2002), this study too agrees that the villains belonging to affluent backgrounds have been represented as those who want to establish territorial hegemony in the state as they believe and envision the larger cause of their dominant ideologies in establishing a state completely dedicated and dominated by their religion, beliefs, and principles. The lower caste villains have been mostly been motivated through monetary values or either seeking revenge for the injustice done to them. However, the lower caste villains in the discourse could have used to create a statement by rising above atrocities through their acts of deviance instead of being victims of circumstances which led them to commit crime.

The study agrees to Althusser (1979) which states that identity of heroes have been seen and established as underachievers with low social position in the society in the beginning but finally succeeding through persistence, hard work, and perseverance as they uphold the responsibility to bring evil to end. However, the study reveals that while the heroes have been safeguarding the interests of the country, they struggle to maintain a balance between their family life and professional life. The heroes have mostly been stereotypically represented as characters who have low social skills, has low tolerance level, who are under-paid, but are characterised as extremely skilled under the given circumstances, Heroes are seen with a benevolent character as they protect their family members, victims and colleagues. In the discourse, however, there is a stereotypical reinforcement of the relationship of heroes and their family members as they struggle to make their ends meet. In agreement to Van Dijk's (1997) social cognition, the discourse reinforces that the heroes are sidelined initially as they are seen as incompetent, but ultimately climb above the professional discrimination as the showcase their patriotism and their competence with keen sense of responsibilities towards the nation. The representation of heroes as under-achievers however, could

have been avoided in the discourse along with the troubled family relationship shared by each hero in the discourse as they juggle to find balance between work and personal life. At certain level to obtain their individual and collective identity, they try to excel and prioritise their work to climb up the social and professional ladder, however at the other end they struggle with striking the healthy personal life and relationship leaving behind a neglected wife and children who have gone astray due their demanding professional career as police heroes.

The study finds that transgender, gay and lesbians are portrayed as victims of crime finding direct relations with crime and identity owing to sexuality. The struggle for their sense of belonging and acceptance by the mainstream society remains the central focus in the discourse. In addition to their victimization, underrepresentation of transgender, gay and lesbians has been visually portrayed though explicit semiotic choices in signs and codes in the discourse as suggested by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001,2006, 2021). Agreeing to the study by Monaghan (2017), victims have been portrayed as weak, socially stigmatized, and therefore becoming an easy target as victims of crime. They have been used as a sacrificial lamb by villains to achieve greater targets. They have always been inflicted with pain and sufferings in the discourse. However, the identities of transgenders, gay and lesbians as individual and collective identities could have been portrayed as a strong and distinct identity in the society, rather than being used as a theme of entertainment in the web series.

Bhaskar's (1975) Critical Realism paradigm confers that existence of a philosophy draws connection to reality. The study agrees to the paradigm as the representation of female in crime series has minimalistic meaning in content and are only visually placed. Agreeing to the study by Datta (2000) and Garrett (2023), the representation

of identities of female heroes have been professionally challenged where they must prove their loyalty and their capability with constant references to their male counterparts and their discrimination within the system. Thus, they become more susceptible as victims of professional discrimination thus agreeing to research question of having direct relationship with crime and sexuality. Owing to their gender and other females have been victims through their own people whom they trusted and thus have been victims of crime. However, this study reveals that as much as the web series has tried to bridge the gap of gender inequality, the individual and collective identity of female police heroes has been seen as auxiliary roles in comparison to male roles while portraying the social role of hero. Significantly adding to the identity of women in the web series majority of all the abuses are in with reference to the identity of women with words like *m*****, *ba****d*, *wh*****, *sis******, *your wh**** mother* while addressing both men and women in the discriminatory or derogatory manner in the discourse. This study has only made women stand out as visibly positioned, but is insignificant and sidelined in meaning of the discourse. The web should have had strong representations of women by creating central characters adding significant contributions to the discourse instead of being a path of least resistance.

6.1.1. Overall findings

This research has contributed to the study of representation of identities in web series in the Indian context. Crime and identity have been mostly been through the representation in television crime genre soap operas in India and abroad. This research has taken the study of identities of various role players in the web series as

the demand of genre has seen an unprecedented growth in the television and OTT platforms.

In broader terms this research has aimed to answer the ethnic portrayal through discriminatory lens, stereotypical representation of identities of ethnic groups, interrelationships between crime, identity and portrayal of ethnicity, sexuality and socio- economic class in the web series which has been discussed in the previous chapters.

The overall findings of the study have concluded that:

- There has been a distinct stereotyping of the Muslim ethnic minorities in India. The Muslims have been seen through discriminatory lens as represented through their identities, both collectively and individually owing to the religious beliefs and Islamic fundamentals. They have been labelled as criminals, claimed as anti-nationals and terrorists who keep hateful and detestable attitude towards India. The Hindus have inflicted violence on Muslims on the basis of Hindutva. They have primarily induced pain and sufferings on Muslims for safeguarding Hindu religion's sacredness and identity by self-proclaiming themselves as protector of religion.
- The Critical Realism paradigm (Bhaskar, 1975) has established that crime as interpreted through existing social construct has its direct relationship with criminal based on the coming from lower socio-economic status have more inclination towards crime as stated by Hall et al. (1978). However, as the study has also seen that crime also has relationship with criminals as victims of past experiences and oppression, as a consequence these crimes have been undertaken for taking vengeance. Similarly, criminals coming from well-to-do

and wealthy backgrounds have been seen to fuel their actions against a nation or community. The caste biasness and categories have also played a significant role in committing crime and violence among individuals and groups. The villains mostly have male portrayals, where there are few females who eventually turn victims because of their gender and circumstances. The transgenders and gay have been represented as criminals owing to their sexuality and hence committing crime to fit into main stream fearing discrimination and stigmatization.

- Terrorism as a crime has been seen through the representations of Muslims as terrorist mostly as a collective action taken by individuals who feel the sense of belonging as they self-categorise themselves to a group for fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as a community, showing unity and cohesion as an outcome of religious beliefs and fundamentalism.
- Corruption has been seen on political and professional hierarchy level, where few characters are seen to be practicing in order to gain economically or obtain power and position within the social hierarchy of the organizational structure.
- Religious violence has been found between Hindus and Muslims in India. The violence has also led to seeing the Muslim community as obstrucater of Hindu religion through tainting the sacredness of Hindu symbols like cow and temples in India.
- Caste based crimes have been found where the oppression of upper caste Hindus on lower caste Hindus. The prejudiced notions and discernment towards lower caste by upper caste have seen to be proliferated and spread through economic conditions, discrimination, equity and discernment towards,

therefore, providing a strong background from crime and revenge which has been strongly portrayed through the language through discriminatory and prejudiced talks as stated by Van Dijk (1997).

- The creation of center and peripheries had othering of the nations in terms of India and Pakistan conflicts and between Indians and Pakistanis. The Pakistan as the other who planned attacks damaging to India, where upon doing so Pakistan would establish their power and dominance over India. The other nations who were involved in destroying India are countries in the Middle East, who have been seen to be recruiting and harbouring terrorists like “*Mujahidin*” (Garner, 2013: p.427) for accomplishing their Jihadi fundamentalism. The aim of the other nation has been to free Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) from Indian point of view. whereas, Pakistan saw Kashmir as India Administered Jammu and Kashmir (IaJK) who have suppressed the Kashmiri Muslims of their rights and freedom. Hence, by training, brainwashing and making the terrorists to free Kashmir from the atrocities of India and the Indian Army being used as suppressive state machineries as stated by Hall (1985). Their beliefs are existential on the basis that the attacks are to safeguard Islamic religion, to create autonomous Muslim dominance in world and destroy India’s dominance. Another factor which led to othering was based on caste. The lower caste people trying to break away from the discrimination and suppression of the upper caste have made a distinct othering of lower caste people. The representation of upper caste Hindus as the pious and virtuous, having the self-proclaimed onus and duty to safeguard Hindu religion has been evident in the study. The lower caste people, hence trying to break away from supremacy

and control of upper caste have turned and adopted violence as the solution to take revenge against the suppression.

The othering of group members in terms of making them as an outgroup and ingroup. As outgroup their participation was excluded through strategic elimination from the group activities had led to creation of centers and peripheries. The professional othering within the group has created centers and peripheries of powers. The center powers are held by those holding better position or at higher rank in the official position and implementing their decisions on their periphery.

The Critical Realism paradigm has established the social structures co-exists with an individual or groups' beliefs and practices as stated by Bhaskar (1975, 1979). Under the Critical Realism paradigm, identity and crime in the Hindi crime genre web series has established that identity battles notably in the social construct of politics, gender, and class as the politics of power and domination strives to define the predominance of identity on a where the ingrained conceptions are challenged consequently leading to social change thereby drawing connections from the philosophy and reality.

Critical Discourse Analysis looked through the principles of Van Dijk (1984, 1994) has critically analysed the discourse where power, social changes, ideology and dominance has been the key elements in the formation of identity and creation of centers and peripheries as supported by the theoretical framework of Representation theory by Hall (1997a, 1997b) and Labelling Theory by Becker (1963).

The Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001,2006, 2021) has addressed the Representation theory by Hall (1997a, 1997b) and Becker's (1963) Labelling theory of crime and criminals forming a strong visual

representation of individual and collective identity of heroes, victims and villains and also adding to the creation of centers and peripheries.

The Indian web series across OTT platforms are gaining popularity with their global standard of production. As the penetration of internet in India is becoming aggressive, the free and subscription-based provides contents which are rich in stories, viewpoints and are exposed to various ethnic, religious and cultural groups. However, these web series have also created strong centers and peripheries in the portrayal of identities of urban and rural India. The web series in this study has reinforced the prevailing caste system, polarized religious ethnic groups, submissive women, and communal societal economic and sexual divisions within the study. In conclusion, given the profound reach and impact of the web series and OTT platforms, these web series should approach more diverse storytelling, devoid of discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices, and biases which are more inclusive and empowers representations of all diverse social individuals and groups existing in the Indian society.

6.1.2. Limitations of the study

Although the research has tried to the best of the ability to fulfil the objectives and research questions in relation to the statement of the problem and social significance of the study, there are limitations which have been observed by the researcher:

- Only four sample size of web series has been taken, where more samples could have been added to the study
- The audience perspective has not been taken into consideration. Adding active audience perspectives could have improved the research.

- India has been portrayed as an annihilator of Kashmiri people. However, the research has only been seen through the lens of Pakistani as the other nation attacking India.
- The representation of Indians and Indian army, especially Hindus as an oppressor of India on the Kashmiri Muslims has been seen as a limitation of the study.

6.1.3. Scope for further studies

Considering the significance of the current study, the scope for future study may include:

- There is a scope to study on the identity of criminal heroes as an important factor for the development of collective identity
- The representations of Hindus, only subjected to upper caste Hindus and not considering lower caste as Hindus while portraying Hinduism and performing religious duties.
- The social cognition of power and dominance, which leads to the formation of crime and identity, can be seen as the further scope of studies.
- The formation of national identity of police heroes while committing murder in the name of patriotism.
- As the representation of North East India is insignificant in the current study, the future scope could focus on the representations of ethnic minority and identity with reference to North East India.

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