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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Depiction of Social Class, Religion and Education through TV  
Drama: A Sociological Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

Present research paper is based on the sociological analysis of *Hum TV* dram *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* with reference to its effects on social class, religion and education of community. Case study under qualitative research design was followed and data was collected through in-depth interviews of participants and the data obtained has been thematically analyzed for the evaluation of results. This play supports Karl Marx's class-differentiation theory and depicts that the elite class still forms the norms and values of the society. The drama attempted to show that the cast system has no division in Islam and Islam has given equal rights to all casts. It identified the people who go to shrines and they go to any extent to fulfill their wishes blindly following the actions asked by the clerics there. The play endorses that under the guise of religion illegal work is being validated. Results were showed that the misuse of religion is common and much of the importance has been given to education through this drama and major problem those with lower economic status face in getting education and societal advantages. Results of the study would add more in existing knowledge of social media for the ethical development and moral values of the society.

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**Introduction**

*Hum TV* channel is a commercial broadcast television network owned by *Hum Entertainment Television*. *Hum Television* one of the famous channels in the country in terms of viewership. *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* (translation: *She keeps on calling Beloved*) is a Pakistani drama serial aired on *Hum TV* in 2018. The drama's story gained much acclaim for presenting hidden social issues such as awareness about mentally retarded persons, wrong insights of society on castes and social status, misunderstanding of Islam and religious practices. It is directed by Kashif Nisar and penned by Faiza Iftikhar having actors like Iqra Aziz, Imran Ashraf and Syed Jibran.

The story revolves around an attractive and optimistic teenager, Noori. Dissatisfied with her way of living as a waste collector, she moves to the city with aims of earning a respectable living. In this journey, she meets Sahir a materialistic young man whom she falls for and wishes to marry. During her mission to persuade him she finds that he had been arrested for shoplifting from the place he works in. Anxiously, she tries to arrange money for Sahir's ransom and asks her factory owner's wife for help who refuses her bluntly. Moreover, the factory owner she works for tries to harass her and even tries to persuade her with money while the factory owner's wife was out of town for a wedding. Noori as a woman of strong character and moral values leaves the house and steals the factory owner wife's jewelry for ransom. Sahir gets out while she gets arrested for stealing. Nonetheless, she finds her way out by blackmailing the factory owner of disclosing his deeds. Sahir a man full of deceit rejects her and she now without a job, money or place goes back to her village. On returning, she comes to know that her father made a deal with Shokha a smuggler by marrying her off to him.

Disturbed, she goes to Amma Jannate's (her mentor) house to ask for advice, who suggested Noori to get married to someone else so she agrees quickly. Trusting Amma Jannate she gets married but later knows that her now husband is no other but Bhola a mentally challenged person who owns a mansion and some agricultural land. At first, she gets intimidated TV's drama *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* on different economical classes of society.

### **Literature Review**

This portion of study discusses the relationship of TV dramas with society and influence of Indian culture mainly in dresses and traditional marriages. It also covers studies on the role of TV dramas in the promotion of education and women issues etc. Majeed (2005) argues that Pakistani female viewers are accepting the *Star Plus* culture. Likewise writers of Pakistani dramas are also adopting the diction of *Star Plus* authors by showing Indian culture. It was the view of many respondents that *Star Plus* dramas are damaging the indigenous culture.

A comparative study of *PTV* and *Geo TV* in promoting Pakistani culture recognizes that Pakistan television effectively represents indigenous culture which is depicted through its dramas, cooking and cultural shows and resultantly the viewership and credibility of *PTV* has increased manifold. The study also finds that though, *Geo TV* has a large viewership mainly because of its news and current affairs shows. However, the *Geo TV* through its dramas is creating an artificial image of Pakistani culture by promoting the Indian culture (Tariq, 2005).

A study on the impact of television on Pakistani youth identifies that due to the television programs the views of youth about various aspects of life like the parental care, women freedom and co-education etc. have been westernized to great extent. Due to the expansion of cable television networks now viewers enjoy much freedom in their choice of TV channels (Ismail, 2004). Another study on the role of *PTV* dramas in educating masses specifically about women problems castigates that

now PTV dramas have failed to educate people because the themes of PTV dramas have lost diversity and the plots and stories of dramas are mostly common. Due to this factor the viewership of PTV has gone down as compared to cable TV networks (Butt, 2000). Saleem (1994) in her case study on cultural imperialism and the impact of dish antenna on Pakistani society establishes that most of the people like to watch programs of other TV channels through dish antenna and they have become its consistent viewers. Following theories have also been found quite helpful for this study.

### **Cultivation Analysis**

In the 1970s and 1980s the Cultivation analysis, a theory introduced by George Gerbner raised macro-level questions about the role of media in the society. The point of focus was that television is a “message system” that “cultivates” and produces an outlook which is mostly vague but is considered simply because audience believe it to be the reality and base their judgments about everyday worlds on that reality. “We live in terms of the stories we tell - stories about what things exist, stories about how things work, and stories about what to do - and television tells them all through news, drama, and advertising to almost everybody most of the time” (Gerbner et al., 1980).

### **Uses-And-Gratifications Research and Effects**

Windahl (1981) suggested what he termed as ‘uses and effects’ model that viewed the product of the use of media content as ‘cons effects.’ In a similar manner, Rosengren (1989) wrote, “Studies have shown that a variety of audience gratifications (again, both sought and obtained) are related to a wide spectrum of media effects, including knowledge, dependency, attitudes, perceptions of social reality, agenda-setting, discussion, and various political effects variables.” Uses and gratifications distinguish the greater potential for initiative, choice, and activity of audience.

On the basis of above mentioned review of literature, following statements have been summarized.

- Foreign cultural values influence the people’s religious and socio-cultural thinking.
- Satellite channels social behavior, food architect, fashion and language were affecting due to satellite channels.

### **Material and Methods**

#### **Research Design, Sample, and Sampling strategy**

Exploratory research design was followed under Qualitative research to explore the effects of Hum TV drama and its effects on social aspects of community

life. Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection through in-depth semi structured interviews for getting detailed insight of the impact of TV drama. Sample was consisted of (N=15) BS, MSc and MPhil students from the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies of the University of the Punjab, Lahore was homogeneous in nature.

### **Construction of Interview Guide and Procedure**

Self-Constructed Interview Guide was used to collect data consisted on questions based on the effects of TV dramas measuring major aspects of society i.e. women empowerment, gender discrimination, professional respect, ethical consideration of society, effects of different economical classes. The total number of questions in interview guide was 15. The interview guide questions were asked in Urdu language as it was more convenient to answer. Major problem faced by the researchers was that many respondents were quite hesitant and reluctant to talk about the role of religion so researcher explained the purpose of the research and to ensure them that this information would be used only to analyze the *Hum TV's* drama in the context of social class, religion and education. Participants demographic information was conducted using personal information sheet and consent form was got signed prior of interview ensuring their information should kept confidential. Participant's responses were analyzed carefully to form themes and sub themes.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Major themes and subthemes were generated using participants responses for the questions of interview. Three major themes were found (Social Class, Education, and Religion) with regards of the effects of TV dramas on these aspects of society. The researchers gave importance to ethical considerations while conducting interviews. The official staff of ISCS played the role of gatekeepers because they were well familiar with the respondents and research sites. Participant's response to research questionnaires was reported below on the base of that themes were generated.

#### **Participant 1**

The play has very prominently reflected the problems of the downtrodden community where the affluent society at large is not willing to accept their status at par with them.

#### **Participant 2**

It was appreciating that a janitor's daughter who is passionate to study and want to attain an honorable status in the society was focused and given a central place in the serial which is quite rare in real life in our society.

The distribution of social class is a bitter reality in almost all the developing countries and so is the case of the Pakistani society where the entire society is divided in three main segments namely the upper, middle and the lower class. The cast system has been one of the major themes of *Hum TV's* drama serial *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*.

### **Participant 3**

Yes, the class distinction is shown in this serial, however good moral values have also been depicted specifically through the character of *Bhola's* mother who was affluent lady but a righteous one.

### **Participant 4**

The distribution of social class has been very vividly depicted in this drama serial through its main characters which includes the character of Noori which represent the lower middle class, *Bhola's* mother – a landlord lady, *Sahir* an employ on a small grocery shop performed the role of villain, *Bhola* a mentally disabled man and *Bhola's* uncle. All these characters beautifully represented the socio-economic and psychological issues of the society through the love, hate, jealousy, and forgiveness sentiments.

Karl Marx was one of the first social scientists to focus mainly on social class. His emphasis on social class was that the wealthy would then control all elements of society - including the livelihoods of the lower, working class. The lower, working class would work for hourly wages on the land or in the factories.

### **Participant 5**

Karl Marx's theory of class differentiation still exists, he talked about social class and we saw class difference everywhere in Pakistan. That's why the *Hum TV* highlighted the subject of class conflict in its drama serial *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*.

### **Participant 6**

While discussing the characters of *Hum TV's* drama emphasizes, this play has very effectively touched the issues of class and status and tried to realize the people that we have lag far behind from the developed world due to this aspect of society and it's mainly because of our ignorance, economic deprivations etc, so the people should realize this fact and become a useful citizen.

### **Participant 7**

Yes, unfortunately class system exists in our society because it is beneficial for the elite class and most of the norms values are formed by them and this was also depicted in this play.

### **Participant 8**

Elites of the society have made such norms and values which suits them whereas poor merely follow them. The members of our parliament belong to the elite class; they represent the affluent families and in fact are millionaires and this play reflected the miseries of lower status people who are living below the poverty line. There was a mix response on this question some respondents believed that TV dramas greatly influence our behaviors and thinking and are a rapid and drastic source of behavioral change.

### **Participant 9**

The way in which the sufferings of the lead character of this play "*Noori*" belonging to a low cast community was depicted; definitely this is going to make a difference.

### **Participant 10**

No! I don't think so because people watch these kinds of dramas more often and after that they have overlooked everything because they take them as fiction just for fun or entertainment. Take an example of our maids who belong to lower caste communities and we continue to treating them in the same manner as we have been doing in the past.

### **Participant 11**

*Noori* got tempted to gain wealth and status because she belongs to low caste. All human beings are equal in Islam and *Noori's* mother in law also said that she brought *Noori* because of her good character completely excluding the facts that she was from lower background.

### **Participant 12**

Its reality that there is no caste system in Islam but we saw in this drama that a whip-lifter is humiliated by other Muslims. In Indian subcontinent Islam came through saints and they play their important role in spreading Islam. After their death people went on their shrines and pray for the fulfillment of desires. Now days there are too many "*Darbar*" (shrines) where wrong things happened like *Bhaints* (gave their child to them).

### **Participant 13**

Yes they identified those people who sacrificed their offspring. It's a normal concept in people of subcontinent if their child is abnormal they think that it's their misfortune.

**Participant 14**

This drama identified the people who go to shrines and go to any extent to fulfill their wishes blindly following the actions asked by the clerics there. This phenomenon is exactly what happens in our society, people of our society don't bother to do wrong things for their *manats*.

The illiterate opportunists, beggars and narcotics carry on illegal work misusing religion to justify their own wrong doings.

**Participant 15**

There are many *mullahs* who are promoting wrong things in the name of Allah almighty.

Sometimes people misunderstood *Ahadees* and *Ayaats* and change their meanings. The name of religion is also being used to exploit people and to gather money.

The religion has always been a tool in the hand of *mullahs* who have used it for their earning by befooling the ignorant and sometimes innocent people.

**Discussion**

The discussion on the basis of data collected through in-depth interviews to conduct the sociological analysis of *Hum TV's* drama serial *RanjhaRanjhaKardi* with regard to social class, religion and education is as follows.

**Theme 1****Social Class**

Media is considered the reflection of the society and TV drama serials explicitly address such social issues which are becoming a new trend in the society or even older traditions that reflect the orthodox mindset. TV plays touch almost each and every aspect of the society be its gender issues, women empowerment, child abuse or child labor, work harassment or class distinction. While conducting in-depth interviews on the sociological aspects of *Hum TV's* drama serial *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* the participants were convinced that the play is reflecting the social issues in an effective manner. Economical class difference in our society is the major issue as people experience lack of respect, services depiction of their rights due to lower social economical class.

## **Theme 2**

### **Religion**

Regards to the responses of participant's human beings have equal rights to live, to communicate, to work for better future and to raise their standards of living providing that there are no such things in Islam as class differences. This drama attempted to show that the class system is the product of local cultural setups prevailing in different regions. Religious practices and faith in Allah got stronger due to this drama as were reported by most of the participants that religious practices always got rewarded and characters of the drama that showed reluctant towards Religion faced difficulties at the end. Moreover, people's belief of there is someone controlling their mystery and actions beyond their present and future planning

## **Theme 3**

### **Education**

The sociological analysis of Hum TV's drama serial *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* with regard to education has revealed that the drama under study has given a lot of importance to brought awareness information and education among girls and boys to teach them about the equality in the society. Education is not only important to raise socioeconomic status but also to behave in mannered way in a society. In underdeveloped countries like Pakistan there is immense need to working roles for women along with men to add more in economy of the country. This drama reflects the true picture of difficulties due to lack of education showed by the poverty and living conditions of main characters of the drama. Due to lack of education characters was not able to find the way of their problems.

## **Conclusions**

The sociological analysis of a TV drama serial *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* with regard to social class, religion and education concludes that *Hum TV's* drama has very prominently reflected the problems of the downtrodden community where the affluent at large is not willing to accept their status at par with them. The class distinction is shown in this serial, however good moral values have also been depicted. This play supports Karl Marx's class-differentiation theory. It has very effectively touched the issues of class and status and tried to realize the people that we have lag far behind from the developed world due to this aspect of society and it's mainly because of our ignorance, economic deprivations, so the people should realize this fact and become a useful citizen. The play depicts that the elite class still forms the norms and values of the society. Watching this drama influences the people with lower background which turn will make a difference. People watch these kinds of dramas more often and after which they overlooked everything because they take them as fiction merely for fun or entertainment. This drama



attempted to show that Islam gives equal rights to all with diminishing the ideas of cast system.

The play has been quite successful in identifying that those who need for the completion of their desires go through extent to make them happen. This drama identified the people who go to shrines and go through extents to fulfill their wishes blindly following the actions asked by the clerics there. The play endorses that under the guise of religion illegal work is being justified. The illiterate and opportunists under the guise of religion carry on illegal work also such as narcotics and beggary but misuse religion to justify their wrong doings. There are many *mullahs* who are promoting abomination under the guise of Islam. The name of religion is also being used to exploit people and to gather money missing their ignorance.

Such kinds of dramas do play a positive role in society. Dramas are the reflections of the behaviors, events, happenings and relationships in real life of people conceived by writers and visualized by directors so they do play a positive role in society. Much of the importance has been given to education through this drama. It has given a lot of importance to spread awareness among masses and to persuade lower class about getting education to be reputable in the society. The problem of not accepting the people from lower economic conditions is persistent in our educational institutes. The play has been successful in portraying that education leads to good character. Television Dramas are a strong tool of mass awareness as this box has become a family member and it cultivates a lot of positive habits in its viewers who can apply those in their lives and can benefit themselves and also promotes patriotism of Television Dramas can be very effective in resolving the society in all segments whether the elite, middle or lower are brought same terms.

### Suggestions

- Correlation research should be follow between TV dramas and social aspects (education, interpersonal communication, religion and economy) through quantitative research to explore correlation effects between these phenomenons.
- Present research title should be study in future as case study engaging professional (producers, writers and director) of TV dramas to find their motives behind such type of dramas and their expected effects on the society.

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