

Islamic Family Values Depicted in Urdu Drama before and during Cable Era

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Abstract *This study aims to describe the content analysis of televised Urdu dramas before and after the advent of the cable. This research focuses that how relationships between the married couple are depicted in televised Urdu drama serials. The Islamic objective of marriage is examined in this study. This study divided the Urdu drama serials into two broad eras, pre cable and post cable eras, it is observed that in pre cable dramas serials, relationship between the married couple was more positive and loving and more in accord with Islamic objective of marriage. On the other hand, in post cable era, the relationship between husband and wife presented in televised Urdu drama serials found to be more negative, deviating from the Islamic objective of marriage. Extramarital relations are on the increase side in post cable era; these relations were absent pre cable Urdu drama serials.*

Key Words: Infidel Spouses, Extramarital Relations, Married Couple

Introduction

Islam is considered to be the religion which obliges on the sanctity of the family and family values. Family is like cradle where all other societal building blocks are situated. If the family system decline it mean there is chance and threat to the social system. Therefore Islam, from the beginning stresses on the union of spousal together, just to guard the family and society. For this reason, legally Islam permits the right of divorce to husband but along with this permission, divorce is said to be the most detestable thing in Islam (Asaf, 1974). By deeply examining the Islamic marriage system, it is concluded that following objective of marriage seems to be apparent, guard against unchastity, harmony and tranquility of spirit, adore and respect, extension of human race and spiritual upbringing of kids under the benefaction of husband (Nasir, 1990). Maulana Mowdoudi, further confined these objective, and concluded that two objective of marriage are most important (Yasir Arafat). According to Mowdoudi the chief rationale of Islamic law regarding marriage is to protect the chastity of the spouses. Maulana Mowdoudi further ruled out that second biggest purpose of wedding is love and warmth between the spouses. Now in the light of these objectives of marriage, Urdu drama will be examined, whether Urdu drama is guarding these Islamic objectives of marriage or is portraying any different picture of the spousal relations.

Contemporary date shows that divorce rate in Islamic countries is on the increasing side. Divorce rate in Pakistan is also on the increasing rapidly, according to data, 13,299 *Khula* cases were reported in the Punjab in 2012, which later rose to 14,243 in 2013, and in 2014, they went up to 16,942. In 2016,

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they have increased to 18,901. These are the only *Khula* cases which were registered in the court. *Khula* means that these are only those cases where wife demanded the separation from the husband, on the other hand, divorce rate which are normally not registered are more than that.

Now the question is why the separation rate is increasing between the spouses in Pakistan. Social scientist does believe that one of the common reasons for the divorce is, young adult enters into the marriage with unrealistic expectation in the marital life. When these unrealistic expectations are not met then it produces dissonance in their life and result in divorce or separation. Now another important point is that from where these unrealistic expectations are generated, from where the youngster does learn these unrealistic expectations about marriage. It is believed and labeled that media do produce these unrealistic expectations in the mind of the youngster. Most of the bloggers and print media writer have opinion that Drama and films do play important role in producing false expectation about the marriage. Youngsters have no idea about marriage life, but they do learn about the marital life from films and dramas. Most researchers do believe that media and especially television has vital role in increasing divorce rate. So, it is highly needed to investigate that what kind of message is being disseminated by the televised media of Pakistan.

Over the last twenty years, television has become the important part of our society, especially after the flourish growth of cable television network. In fact, no other communication medium got such popularity as television got; it might be labeled as the comprehensive machine, disseminating images and serves as the real agent of our accepted culture (Signorielli, 1982). In Pakistan, on average, common people spent two hours daily in front of television (Parveen, 2010). One of the main superiorities of television over the other medium is that most people tune the television non-selectively. Whereas on the other hand newspaper, films, magazines are firstly selected then people read or watch them.

Among television viewers, 68 percent of the Pakistani females watch entertainment television, while 47 percent Pakistani male watch entertainment television in Pakistan. It might be concluded that television provide most common, regular and colorful learning environment (Signorielli, 1982). Urdu television drama is considered to be the one of the significant sources of entertainment, especially for those women who are not working and stay at home. When word entertainment is used in the context of Pakistani viewers, it is obvious that it means Urdu Drama. Most of the Pakistani private entertainment television channels are only broadcasting drama serials, so entertainment in the context of Pakistani television viewers mean drama serials.

Results show that women, who are above 18 years of age, mostly watch television drama. It is highly recommended that television content like family, marriage, marital relation should be observed. In developed nation, researchers are focusing on television content, family and marriage since the earliest days (Smythe, 1954). Studies of the past indicate that, home and family are significant and leading program themes of drama serials and soap opera. It is evident that youngster do learn the marital expectation mostly from their family and television (García, Chung, & Biltereyst). Most of the studies in the past did focus on gender problem in Urdu drama but no conclusive findings were made about the depiction of relationship among the marital spouses. Demo and Ganong (1994) in their study found that one of the most important factors for divorce is that, individual enter into the marriage with idealistic beliefs about marriage. Those who enter in the marriage with high expectation, feel dissatisfaction when their expectation unmet. Researcher working on marriage and family have accord that unrealistic beliefs is one of the most real factor in separation but they are not clear from where these beliefs are originated (Perse, Pavitt, & Burggraf, 1990). Marital expectation is mostly originated by interpersonal experience, but number of studies indicated that mass media also contribute in shaping the marital expectation of young individuals. Jones and Nelson (1996) depicted that when the youngster do not have any role model of marriage they do rely on the television for making their perception about marriage (Jones & Nelson, 1997).

So, it is highly needed to investigate that how marital relations are being depicted by the current Urdu drama's serials. In studying about marital life depiction on the television, research scholar has highlighted

the two main themes. One group of scholar do believe that media is showing highly Imaginate and romanticized picture about the marital relation (Shapiro & Kroeger, 1991). Whereas other scholar does believe that media is depicting the negative image of marriage. It appears that a blend message is being disseminated by media about the marriage (Haferkamp, 1999).

Johan Holmes study indicates that, wedding being again and again illustrated in a non-romantic and less than attractive way. This research work might also endow with some insight into the result of prior research that persons who normally watch romance media approve dysfunctional relationship beliefs (Johnson & Holmes, 2009).

Signorelli as well observed a diminutive, constructive and momentous relation among TV watching and future marital interrelated behavior. A quantitative search conducted by Signorelli (1991), she scrutinized the depiction of marriages on prime-time content and found a capability to encourage only positive descriptions of marriages.

Segrin and Nabi (2002) work in concurrence with the modify theory that the cultivation of spectator beliefs and expectations is the effect of genre specific instead of general media content, persons who repeatedly watched content that focused on affairs and marriage, such as romantic comedy tele-novel and soap operas, held unrealistic expectations of marriage. Not only was romantic content and drama found to be related to elevated expectations. Collectively these finding suggest that television is sending a mixed message about marriage (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Just like international studies it is highly needed to observe how Urdu drama is portraying the relation of husband and wife. Most of the Pakistani newspaper and journalist do criticize Urdu drama for destroying the marital relation and growing dysfunctional beliefs about marriage. Express tribune writes, problem is that modern Urdu plays are illustrating such material that is in divergence with our custom and family norms (Yasar Arafat, Sial, & Zafar, 2020). On the name of entertainment, Urdu tele-novels are occupied with each sort of poor-quality content.

Disagreement between the marital couple seems to be the chief mode in contemporary Urdu drama serials. Marital couples are shown to locate their love exterior the married relation. These quarrels between husband and wife appears in such natural way it seems, that both should be separated and should find their real love outside the marriage. Marital couples are shown as opponent to other partner and their protagonist is revealed exterior the marriage relation (ur Rehman, Arafat, Sial, & Shah, 2019).

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of current paper is to find how relationship of husbands and wives are depicted in televised Urdu drama serials. What change has occurred (if any) in the depiction of marital relation after the advent of cable television network in Pakistan.

Methodology

This study is based on content analysis of televised Urdu dramas before and after the advent of cable TV network in Pakistan. The population for this study is the Televised Urdu dramas before and after the advent of cable TV network in Pakistan.

On broader sense the sample is divided into two broad categories; first half is taken from 1964 to 2000, which is known as pre cable era and second half starts from 2001 to 2016 which is post cable era. Then further we divided these two eras into decades, to find more in-depth analyses. Twenty-two drama serials were selected from each era. Five episodes from each serial were selected to examine the relationship between the marital couple. In this way total 220 episode were analyzed, 110 episodes from the pre-cable era and 110 from post cable era. Now another important point is that how a drama serial is selected in the sample for analyze. For post cable era it was done on the basis of Lux Award. Two drama serials from each year were selected who got number one and number two position in particular year. Real problem was

how to select the drama serials from the pre cable era, especially first two decades there was no PTV award, so these dramas are selected on the base of popularity, which was taken from the different website.

Coding

In this study single scene was selected as unit of selection. Those scenes were selected, where husband and wife shown together. Positive attitude between the husband and wife is measured on the basis of the following categories, Sweet talk or Sitting in good mood, going to parties (Hoteling and ceremony), Missing partner, Defending Partner, Caring Nursing and Support to Partner, Exchanging Gift, Importance of Partner Opinion, Planning about Children Feature.

Negative attitude included, Neglecting the Spouse, Inappropriate Behavior, Jealousy, Preferring Other Opinion over Spouse, Blaming Each Other Over Children Brought Up, Cheating With Spouse, Divorce or Separation, Second Marriage, Talks or Call with Ex-Lover, Violence.

Hypothesis

H1: Television family members appeared to be more supportive and loving in pre cable Urdu drama than the post-cable Urdu dramas.

H2: More infidel spouses are presented in post-cable Urdu drama than the pre cable dramas

Theoretical Framework

This theory inquires to elucidate the following: Why, in the face of invariable criticism, does the content of this state's mass media maintain to evolve in the direction of what appears too many to be increasing triviality, declining levels of taste, and ever-lowering moral standards? For more than a century and a half, this trend has been deploring by a long record of valued critics-by preachers from the platform, lecturer at the plinth, and politicians on the political proposal. It has furthermore been chastised by a host of citizen's groups concerned about rising crime, looser sexual norms, and more widespread use of dirty talking, the corrosion of family morals, and the interests of children. They have talked in opposition to what they perceive as a "vast wasteland" of kitsch-trivial newspaper story, offensive popular music, tedious content of broadcasts, tired movie plots, and the use of swear words, offensive advertising, and ghastly sites on the Internet. They are profoundly distressed by the use of the technological sensation of contemporary communication for what they judge to be superficial, worthless, and even destructive purposes. Yet, in spite of these protests-bitter at times the print, film, recording, broadcast, and computer media, critics maintain, are slowly but constantly pushing on and on to lower cultural tastes, behavioral norms, and moral standards.

Analysis

H1: Our first Hypothesis of the study was to see how family relationship especially spousal relations are being presented in the current Urdu dramas. Does the advent of cable television network is making any effect on the depiction of the relation of husband and wife?

Analyses depicts that total 543 scenes were recorded among the spouses. Total 45 drama serials were examined, and 5 episodes of each drama serials was taken as sample to record the spouse relationships. Among these 543 scenes 329 scenes were remarked as scenes of positive behavior among the spouses. On the other hand, 212 scenes were remarked as depicting negative behavior among the spouses. Positive scenes were 60.8 percent and negative scenes were 39.2 percent.

	Frequency	Percentage
Positive Behavior	329	60.6
Negative Behavior	212	39.0
Total	541	99.6

Now another important thing was that to know the depiction of spouse relationship before and after the arrival of cable television network in Pakistan. The result show that in pre cable era (1967-2000) period, 269 scenes were examined between spouses, among these 269 scenes 185 showed a loving or positive behavior among the spouses. Total percentage of the positive relations among the spouses before 2000 era recorded as 69 percent. On the hand post 2000 era which is post cable era in the country shows that among 272 scenes among the spouses 144 were recorded as positive relationship behavior among the spouses. Total percentage in this era was 52 percent, which show that there is reduction in the positive behavior in post cable drama serials.

Pre-cable and Post-cable Spousal Relationship

	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior	Total
Pre-cable era	185	84	269
Post-cable era	144	128	272
Total	329	212	541

Above table shows positive relations among husband and wife, the most prominent positive relation which was depicted on the Urdu drama serials was sweet talk or sitting in good mood. Out of 329 positive scenes, 158 scenes were remarked as sweet talk between spouses or sitting in good mood. Second positive themes which showed positive relationship was going together in parties or hoteling or in ceremonies. The third positive relationship among spouses was planning about the future of children and talking about the future of children. Among the negative behavior leading theme was neglecting the spouses or inappropriate behavior among the spouses. Out of 212 negative behavior scenes 72 scenes showed inappropriate behavior among the spouses and 50 scenes showed the neglecting the spouses. Overall result depicts that Islamic objective of marriage was found more in pre-cable era and these values decreasing with the advent of cable television network.

Another important analysis of this study was to measure the relationship decade wise. The era of 1964 to 1970 demonstrate 69 percent scenes were showing positive relationship among the spouses in the Urdu drama serials. The decade of 1971 to 1980 showed 66 percent of the positive relationship among the spouses. The era of 1981 to 1990 showed 90 percent positive relationship among the spouses. Similarly, Urdu drama from 1991 to 2000 shows 63 percent of positive relationship among the spouses. In pre 2000 era all the four-decade showed more than 60 percent of positive relationship among the spouses in Urdu drama serials.

After the advent of cable television network, first time period of four years, from 2001 to 2004 showed 88 percent of positive relationship among the spouses. The situation totally changes in the next four years, only 24 percent positive relationship scenes were recorded in the era of 2005 to 2008. More negative scenes were remarked in this era. In next four years, from 2009 to 2012 showed big improvement when 55 percent scenes were recorded as positive among the spouses. Last decade of 2013 to 2015 also showed 51 percent of positive relationship scenes in Urdu dramas.

Decade wise	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior	Total
1964-1970	9	4	13
1971-1980	72	37	109
1981-1990	36	4	40
1991-2000	67	39	106
2001-2004	24	3	27
2005-2008	9	28	37
2009-2012	63	50	113

2013-2016	49	47	96
Total	329	212	541

H2: More infidel spouses are presented in post cable Urdu drama than the pre cable dramas. The primary objective of marriage is chastity, but this objective is decreasing in Urdu drama serials with the advent of cable television network. In the negative behavior infidelity or extramarital relations were mostly found in post 2000 era. In the period from 1967 to 2000 only two scenes of cheating were recorded by the married person and in post cable era seven scenes of cheating were recorded among the spouses. Similarly, 19 scenes were recorded in post cable era in which one of the married spouses is talking with his/her ex-lover, but in pre 2000 period not a single scene was recorded of talking with ex-lover. In post 2000 period 6 scenes of divorce were recorded and no case of divorce was recorded in pre 2000 era. So overall result shows that more infidel spouses were found in post cable era, whereas pre-cable era does not such infidelity case. One thing is remarkable that normally story of pre-Urdu drama serials ends with the marriage of two loving person, but in post cable era story starts with the marriage and end with divorce or second marriage.

Discussion and Conclusion

Above analyses do predict that Islamic objective of marriages were more lively in pre-cable era, where mostly marital spouses were presented in love and respect full union, the absence of extramarital relation in pre-cable era, confirms the Islamic objective of marriage "chastity". On the other side more extramarital relation in the post-cable era do depicts that objective of chastity was not guarded in post-cable era. It might be concluded that Urdu drama is deviating from the Islamic objective of marriage in post-cable era. It is evident that contemporary Urdu drama is presenting the marital relation in more negatively, compare to the past. Quarrel between husband and wife seems to be the leading trend in the contemporary drama serials. The second objective of marriage, love and affection, is also being violated in the post-cable Urdu drama serials. The negative behavior depicted in the television do generate faith in the youngster mind that, joy and happy life is not within the marriage, but it is outside the marriage. The increase number of extramarital relations could might produce false conscious in the mind of youngster that marriage would not bring the happiness in the life, and for happy life they always need to seek a person outside the marriage. So, it appears evident that media is propagating, which is not in accord with Islamic family values, where more stress is given on keeping and maintaining the marriage life and family values. Television produces should have clear idea about the Islamic family value system. Just entertaining and catching the attention of the viewers, should not be ultimate purpose of drama produces, they should be very careful in sending their message to the masses.

The speedy growth of entertainment channels has produced the race of rating. Every channel wants to get the attention of the viewers, so producers are not concern what message is being disseminated. In fact, they are more concern of getting the highest rating in the country. Studies reveals that youngster have no idea about marriage, it's the television which guide them how the marriage will be. So, it is highly encourage able if Urdu drama focus more on reality and do not present the distorted relations among the spouses. Cultivation theory already suggest the mean world syndrome put the viewers to think that this world is mean and heavy TV viewers are not ready to have believe on any person. Similarly, distorted depiction of spousal relations, will guide that youngster that no husband or wife is truth worthy. Similarly, more negative behaviors will guide them that there is no love inside the marriage, and they might try to find the love outside the marriage. This will ultimately destroy their family and family values. More cases of divorce in the prime-time media will guide the youngster that divorce is no more a myth, it's the routine matter. In the past dramas there were less divorces and more stress were on the family union and reunite the family, but contemporary Urdu drama serials showing more divorce and extramarital relations.

It looks quite prominent that drama serials before the advent of cable television network focused more on societal macro level issues. Since the arrival of cable television network the Urdu drama producer

focused to get the maximum rating (Butt, 2014). This marathon of rating forced the producer to produce such kind of issues and problems which are not the problems of common men. Most of the post cable era stories of Urdu drama serials are focusing on the family quarrel or domestic issues. Old drama serials “waris” and “Andhara Ujala” are two examples of the old drams which were based on the societal issues. Characters presented in these drams were so lively that people could feel around them. Choudry hashmat of waris drama serials and direct hawaldar of Andhaira Ujala are the two best examples. People still in contemporary time could easily find such character in the police stations very easily. On the other hand, post-cable drams serials are showing that every brother in law is unfaithful, two sisters are striving to marry same person. Ex-lover is like a superman which can rescue the married lady from every problem. Every husband is neglecting his wife. Divorce is not the problem; happy life starts after the second marriage. Divorce or second marriage appears to be so normal; talking with ex-lovers appears to be the need of the time in these dramas.

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