Portrayal of Women by Star Plus Soap Operas: A Feministic Perspective (January-June, 2010)

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Abstract
Media is an important tool for change. Being inexpensive and easy to access, cable television has spread rapidly in Pakistan. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the portrayal of women (feministic perspective) by Star Plus soap operas. The researchers have used content analysis technique to study the portrayal of women (feministic perspective) in order to find out the patterns of values and ideologies presented by Star Plus soaps regarding women empowerment. The researchers analyzed eight Star Plus soap operas being telecast during prime time from 1st January to 30th June, 2010. The findings obtained through content analysis of Star Plus soap operas suggest that the Star Plus soap operas are mainly focusing on promoting the ideology of radical feminism in the portrayal of its female characters. This study also revealed that in most of the soap operas matriarchal culture or rule of women prevails as female characters are portrayed as assertive and decision making authority. The overall findings suggest that Star Plus soaps are mainly focusing on presenting women in powerful and decent roles.

Keywords: Star Plus; Soap Operas; Liberal Feminism; Socialist Feminism; Radical Feminism; Emancipation

I. Introduction
Women are one of the most oppressed segments of humanity in the developing as well as developed world. Discussions on the rights of women are considered as threat to man’s position in society. Women are oppressed not only at economic, social and political grounds but this oppression exists at moral level as well. Women are often portrayed as morally corrupt, rarely pious and mostly involved in tempting others. The denial of social justice, respect, dignity and honour to women is a global phenomenon. The remedies suggested by the secular societies such as equality of sexes, equal opportunities in employment and right to divorce have not led to substantial gains for women (Ahmed, 1991).

a. Feminism and Related Concepts
Wood (1999) defines feminism as an active commitment to equality or respect of life. In 1800, women were not allowed to caste vote. Women were neither permitted to
get university education nor could they own a property. Empowerment literally means to make someone powerful, to facilitate the weak to gain strength, to make someone capable of confronting oppression and injustice and to fight against violence, and exploitation. The term emancipation can be explained as liberation from both natural and man made miseries. In mid eighties India reoriented its developmental agenda to link the idea of empowerment with development (Kumar & Verghese, 2005, p. 55-59).

b. Wave of Change in Twentieth Century

In 20th century things started changing in Christianity. Churches were lacking power. Religion started getting separated from politics. The feminist movement started from the period of 1960s. This period saw a great change in the status of woman. Women rights came forefront. Feminism is the movement for women’s equality and liberation. It had great impact on society. Initially it fought for social, legal, political and economical rights of women. First wave feminism focused basically on attaining full citizenship and legal equity. According to it, women should be given equal rights and opportunities that are enjoyed by male citizens of society. This wave was at its peak between 1880 and the 1920s (Shaughnessy & Stadler, 1999, p.331-333).

c. Feminist Perspectives on the Media

Feminism can be classified into three major ideological currents such as liberal feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism. Liberal feminist were of the view that women should be given liberty and equality with same intensity as given to men. Legislation should be made to give more rights to women. Liberal feminists pointed out that females are not portrayed as wise and sagacious characters. They were shown as beautiful and delicate but lacking intelligence and the ability to take decision. Liberal feminist were critical regarding such portrayal of women. Liberal feminist also gave the concept of super women. The main focus of discourse of radical feminist was the oppression of women due to patriarchal system. According to radical feminists it is the instinct of males to suppress women or dominate them. They also criticized media because according to them media was promoting patriarchal social system. The socialist feminist did not exclusively focus on gender for the rights of women. Socialist feminists were of the view that female should have the right to decide about the family. They also focused on ethnicity, age, sexual preference and physical ability (Curran & Gurevitch, 1996, p.33-37).

d. Status of Women in Indian Scenario

The historical study of Indian women shows that women have faced rise and fall in their status. During Vedic era women enjoyed high status. Woman was never considered as inferior to man. She had the rights to own the property of her father and her husband. After Vedic period the status of woman was deteriorated. According to Hindu law giver Manu, woman is subject to man. This decline in status of woman is evident in their customs related to marriage, property and role in family system (Rosemeyer, 2000, p. 118-119).

An Indian woman is divided into different groups on the basis of class, caste, urban, rural, education, occupation, and linguistic basis but marginalization is common factor among all such groups. Delhi which is considered to be the place where better off educated people reside, the sex ratio is constantly declining here. Even educated people of Delhi take medical aid to abort female fetus. In India, women’s reproductive health is
given least importance. Women health problems are considered as a result of some black magic. Woman’s effort in accomplishing household task is not accounted. The comparison between working hours of men and women shows that both in market and non market activities women work for longer hours than men. In the sector of agriculture their work is less paid. In educational field they also don’t enjoy equal status as men do. The percentage of women in parliament and legislature have never exceed from 9%. Moreover the prevailing customs traditions and religious beliefs also work against Indian women. The subordination of women has become the part of men and women’s consciousness and it is continuously reinforced by religious and cultural values and educational system. In short, women are considered and treated lower to men socially politically, religiously and economically. It can be said that Indian women have to face more hindrances and obstacles in the realization of their basic rights than the women in any other part of the world (Kumar and Varghese, 2005, p. 3-11).

II. Rationale of the study

It is evident that in ancient times the status of women in Hinduism was not less than just a subject or slave When a Hindu died, his wife either committed or was forced to commit Sati on his funeral pyre or retired into a life of social damnation, religious contemplation and perennial solitude.

Indian women rank high in terms of the number of prostitutes in the world, girl children neglected, abused or often sold purely for economic reasons, as victims of AIDS and women living below the poverty line are forced to do the physical labor even when they are pregnant or sick. Indian women are also facing a number of other problems such as dowry, inheritance, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, rape and harassment. The situation is gradually changing in India. Indian media is playing vital role in reflecting the positive changes related to the status of Indian women. Struggles have been made by government of India and civil society to approve the status of women living in India. Mass media is considered to be a powerful agent of producing, perpetuating and destroying different types of images or stereotypes of women. Visual media such as T.V is considered to be more powerful and effective in this context as compared to newspapers and magazines. Awareness and information about the issue ensure that women exploitation can be checked and eradicated. Women must be informed through media how they can fight against oppression legally in a peaceful manner.

According to Wikipedia Star Plus is Indian’s number 1 cable channel for six year. Star Plus is India’s most watched Hindi language based general entertainment T.V channel. The channel is a part of the Star T.V networks bouquet of channels. Star Plus programming primarily consists of family dramas which mainly present female protagonist and mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships in joint families; usually the story of Star Plus soap operas revolves around the achievements and suffering of some prominent female character.

III. Significance of the study

Media is considered to be an important tool for change. Women need to ensure that media reflects images that develop positive and constructive role of women in
society in order to change the damaging stereotypes. Keeping this in view the current study will analyze the patterns, values and ideologies which Star Plus soap operas are focusing in presenting their female characters.

IV. Objectives of research

Media does not only portray the dominant social values but its role in educating or guiding the people regarding various social issues and problems is not hidden. The ideology portrayed by media, penetrates into the society and gradually becomes the part of it and eventually people start practicing the ideology.

While focusing on the problems faced by women in our society and the role played by Star Plus soap operas in identifying social inequities faced by women and reflecting the positive changes related to the status of the research study will mainly focus on the following aspect.

i. It will try to analyze the kind of feminist ideology (Liberal feminism, Socialist feminism and Radical feminism) being focused by Star Plus soap operas in presenting their female characters.

ii. It will try to analyze the female characters portrayed by Star Plus soap operas whether women are portrayed in traditional role or as a sexual object.

iii. It will evaluate whether female characters are portrayed as capable of making decisions or just contrary to it.

V. Delimitations

Due to time constraints the researchers will only analyze the main decision making authority whether male or female in each Star Plus soap opera selected for study. The researchers will not analyze all male characters in this context.

Star Plus soap operas used for analysis will be taken from the Prime Time 7pm to 10pm for the Time Period 1 Jan to 30th June 2010. So total time employed to study Star Plus soap operas for six months will be;

Days x time
129 x 3hrs = 387hrs

The current study will not analyze the impact of Indian culture, fashion, values on the people of our society as they are not the requirement of current study. The research will study the female character of Star Plus soap operas in the light of Radical Feminism, Liberal Feminism and Socialist Feminism Ideology.

VI. Literature review

Steeves (1987) argues that U.S main stream media research is mainly based on or characterized by liberal feminism. Liberal feminism mainly discusses the issue of white, heterosexual, and upper class women. It doesn’t address the problems of rest of the women. The research conclude that socialist feminist provide detailed framework to address the devaluation of women in communication but more empirical and theoretical work is required to be done in this context.

Cirksena and Cuklanz (1992) seek to examine five feminist frame works for communication studies liberal feminism (reason and emotion), socialist feminism (public
and private), radical feminism (nature and culture), psychoanalytic feminism (subject and object) and cultural feminism (mind and body). Moreover in their study they also look at feminist critiques of communication research methods.

Larson (1996) investigates the role of soap operas in representing the role played by a single mother. The researcher compares the perception of soap opera viewers and non viewers. 163 junior and senior high school students were selected as subjects. Findings suggest that the image portrayed by soap operas have greater impact on the adolescent viewers. Davies (1997) examines the relationship between the men who viewed sexually explicit videos in a non experimental setting and their attitude towards feminism and rape. The main purpose of the research was to evaluate whether men who viewed more sexually explicit movies displayed more negative attitude towards feminism. The findings suggest that sexually explicit videos do not generate the calloused attitude. Such an attitude is deeply embedded in our society.

John (1998) discusses some alternate routes to address feminism in India as western concept of feminism is not appropriate in Indian context. The divergences in the conceptual legacies of western and Indian feminism are also discussed. Mills, (as cited in Wood, 1999, p. 302) explains that some media analysts are having firm belief that if more women achieve the jobs at executive level, there would be great possibility or chances for positive portrayal of women. Sephlow (as cited in Wood, 1999, p. 302) finds that in prime time television more women are featured in a main character and they are portrayed in a manner that they set an example of success, strength and competence. Kumar and Varghese (2005) state that Indian media represents docile image of women. She is presented submissive and easily manageable. They are of the view that mass media should begin the process of women empowerment in modern world. For this women should participate in the production of various programmes. The more women participate in decision making the more they’ll be able to smash the old stereotypes images of women.

Kaul and Sahni (2010) analyzed the portrayal of women in TV serials and the impact of these serials on the viewers of Jammu. The researchers selected the interview method to collect the data. Their findings suggest that very little variety of realism was found in the projection of women by Indian media. The qualitative analysis revealed that many women respondents were agreed that serials had great impact on their thought. Respondents also admitted that fact that they gained confidence and learnt the way to organize their homes.

**VII. Research question**

1. What kind of feminist ideology is promoted by Star Plus soap operas?

**VIII. Hypotheses**

**H1:** The female characters of Star Plus soap operas will be portrayed as more capable of making decisions than the male characters.

**H2:** The female characters of Star Plus soap operas will be portrayed more in stereotyped gender roles as compared to sexual object.
IX. Method

The study analyses the portrayal of women (feministic Perspective) by Star Plus soap operas. By considering the need, nature and objectives of this research project, following research method and techniques will be used.

a. Research design

The particular study chooses content analysis as a research design to discover the patterns of values and ideology presented by Star Plus soap operas in the portrayal of its women characters.

b. Content analysis

In this study content analysis technique will be used to discover the patterns of values, beliefs and ideology related to women empowerment presented by Star Plus soap operas in the portrayal of its women character. Kerlinger (as cited in Wimmer and Dominick, 2003, p.141) defines content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in an objective, systematic and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

This research technique will allow the researcher to translate the media images into categories of content that can be tabulated and examined. Furthermore if the content is carefully examined and categories are clear, the analysis is an effective and accurate research tool.

When using content analysis, researchers must also be careful not to allow any biases to influence their determination of content. This analysis will remain systematic and objective, following proper procedures and giving each item an equal examination and categorization.

c. Population

Entire population of Star Plus soap operas are considered as the population of study where as a sample of 8 soap operas being shown from 1st Jan to 30th June 2010 during Prime Time 7am to 10am will be selected for study. The names of soap operas selected for analysis are;

i. Sabki Ladili Bebo
ii. Sajan Ghar Jana Hai
iii. Baa, Bahu or Baby
iv. Behenein
v. Bidai
vi. Tere Liye
vii. Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
viii. Mann Ki Awaz Pratigiya

d. Unit of analysis

All female characters portrayed in the selected soap operas for analysis will be the unit of analysis.
e. Content Categories

Keeping in view the need of this study following content categories are constructed1.

i. Main Decision Making Authority
ii. Role
iii. Working women/housewife
iv. If working then getting equal salary and opportunities to that of men
v. Character demanding equal educational, political and social rights
vi. Character demanding pay for household tasks
vii. Female character being helped by male members of family in managing household tasks and nurturing kids
viii. Became the victim of violence directly or indirectly
ix. If yes! Then took any legal action to punish the guilty or to stop the violence.

X. Results

This research study attempts to analyze the portrayal of women (Feministic perspective) by Star Plus soap operas and its impact on the viewers of Multan. In this connection 78 female characters of eight Star Plus soaps operas being telecast during Prime Time 1st January to 30th June 2010 were analyzed.

After collecting all the data, the researchers have presented it in the form of table and graphs. First section consists of graph and table representing the data obtained from content analysis of Star Plus soap opera.

In the same chapter formulated hypothesis are also presented in form of tables and graphs. Moreover z-test is used for testing the hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Soap Operas</th>
<th>Main Decision Making Authority</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female character</td>
<td>Male character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabki Ladli Bebo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajan Ghar Jana Hai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baa, Bahu or Baby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behenein</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tere Liye</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeh Rishta kya Kehlata Hai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann Ki Awaz Pratigiya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 1 illustrates that 75% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as main decision making authority whereas 25% male characters were shown as having main decision making authority.

1. Coding instructions for categories are with the authors.
The data in Table 2 reveals that 3.84% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as sexual object whereas 82.05% female characters were portrayed in stereotyped gender roles whereas 14.10% female characters were portrayed in both roles as sexual object as well as in stereotyped gender roles. It also reveals that 28.20% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as submissive whereas 71.79% female characters were portrayed as assertive.

The data in Table 3 reveals that 24.35% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as working women whereas 75.64% female characters were portrayed as housewives. It also reveals that 21.79% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as housewives.
portrayed as satisfied with the opportunities and rights provided to them at work place whereas 2.56 % female characters were portrayed in a manner that they were not getting equal salary and opportunities. Moreover 75.64 % female characters were house wives so they fall under the category of not applicable.

The data in Table 4 reveals that 3.84% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal educational rights as that of male members in family whereas 96.15 % female characters did not demand for educational rights. It also reveals that 2.56% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal political rights whereas 97.43 % female characters did not demand for equal political rights. Furthermore the data also shows that 50.25% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal social rights whereas 39.74 % female characters did not demand for equal social rights.

The data in Table 5 reveals that 1.28% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal educational rights as that of male members in family whereas 98.71 % female characters did not demand for educational rights. It also reveals that 12.82% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal political rights whereas 87.17 % female characters did not demand for equal political rights. Furthermore the data also shows that 68% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding equal social rights whereas 32 % female characters did not demand for equal social rights.

Table 4 Character Demanding Equal Educational, Political and Social Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Soap Operas</th>
<th>Character Demanding Equal Educational Rights</th>
<th>Character Demanding Equal Political Rights</th>
<th>Demanding Equal Social Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baa,Bahu or Baby</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behenein</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann Ki Awaz Pratigya</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabki Ladli Bebo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajan Ghar Jana Hai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tere Liye</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeh Rishta kya Kehlata hai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Female Characters Managing Household Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Soap Operas</th>
<th>Getting or Demanding Pay for Household Task</th>
<th>Female Characters Being Helped by Male Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baa,Bahu or Baby</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behenein</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann Ki Awaz Pratigya</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabki Ladli Bebo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajan Ghar Jana Hai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tere Liye</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeh Rishta kya Kehlata hai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>98.71</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>87.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 5 reveals that 1.28% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as demanding pay for household tasks whereas 98.71% female characters were portrayed in a manner that they did not demand pay for household tasks.

The data also reveals that 12.82% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed as being helped by male members of family in managing household tasks whereas 87.17% female characters were portrayed in a manner as they were not helped by male members of family in managing household tasks.

### Table 6 Victim of violence and legal action against violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Soap Operas</th>
<th>Became the Victim of Violence</th>
<th>Took Any Legal Action To Punish The Guilty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baa,Bahu or Baby</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behenein</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann Ki Awaz Pratigya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabki Ladli Bebo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajan Ghar Jana Hai</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tere Liye</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeh Rishta kya Kehlata</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>76.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 6 reveals that 23.06% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed in a manner that they became the victim of violence whereas 76.92% female characters did not become the victim of violence. The data in this table also reveals that 14.10% female characters in Star Plus soap operas were portrayed in a manner that they took legal action to punish the guilty whereas 11.53% female characters became the victim of violence but they did not take any legal action to punish the guilty. Moreover, 74.39% female characters did not become the victim of violence so they fall under the category of not applicable.

### XI. Discussion and Conclusion

This research study is conducted by the researchers to analyze the portrayal of women by Star Plus soap operas in (Feministic perspective).

Keeping in view the objectives of research the researchers selected sample of 8 soap operas being telecast during Prime Time 1st January to 30th June 2010. Researchers analyzed all the female characters portrayed by Star Plus soap operas in feministic perspective. While studying the category ‘Main Decision Making Authority’, it was analyzed that whether male character or female character holds the authority to take key decisions regarding household matters. Moreover, total 78 female characters were studied in the light of various categories constructed for the analysis.

The study also contains research questions related to the objectives of study. The researchers got the answers of the question after data collection through content analysis.
Research Question: What kind of feministic ideology is promoted by Star Plus soap operas?

Star plus soap operas are mainly focusing on Radical feminism ideology in portrayal of their female characters. The data obtained from character analysis of Star Plus soap operas reveals that in most of the soap operas female characters were shown as influential, authoritative and they hold the main power of decision making regarding family matters. A large numbers of female characters were portrayed in stereotyped gender roles. A few female characters were portrayed as sexual objects. Women were mostly shown as assertive, bold and confident and most of them were shown as decision making authority. They were portrayed as influential, taking bold steps to bring out their family from adversity.

Very few female characters were shown as the victims of violence but most of the female characters who became the victim of violence (physical assault or sexual harassment) took legal action to expose or punish the guilty. All the above mentioned facts are related to radical feminism discourse. In the light of the above discussion, it can be inferred that Star Plus soaps are focusing on promoting the ideology of Radical feminism in the portrayal of their female characters.

The female character analysis in the light of socialist feminism discourse shows that most of the female characters were shown as house wives. Very few female characters were portrayed as working women and among these most of them were portrayed as working in some organization; they seemed satisfied with the opportunities and salary provided to them at workplace. Only one female character was shown as demanding pay for household tasks. So in the light of above discussion it can be inferred that Star Plus soap operas were not focusing on the ideology of socialist feminism in the portrayal of its female characters.

The character analysis of Star Plus soap operas in the light of liberal feminism discourse reveals that most of the characters were shown demanding or getting equal social rights however very few characters were shown as demanding equal educational and political rights. This shows that Star Plus soaps were focusing more on equal social rights than political and educational rights.

From this it can be deduced that Star Plus soap operas are not focusing on the ideology of liberal feminism in the portrayal of its female characters. In these Star Plus soap operas women are mainly portrayed in decent and powerful roles. They are shown as assertive, confident and decision making authority. The women who were shown as the victim of violence were also shown as taking legal action to punish the culprits. The portrayal of women in the above described manner is the reflection of Radical Feminism discourse.

It can thus be said that Star Plus soap operas are focusing more on the ideology of radical feminism as compared to liberal or socialist feminism.
a. Testing of Hypotheses

This research study is conducted on the basis of two hypotheses;

**Hypothesis H₁** suggests that the female characters of Star Plus soap operas will be portrayed as more capable of making decisions than the male characters.

The obtained result supported the research hypothesis as in 6(75 % of 8 soap operas) female characters are portrayed as main decision making authority whereas in 2(25% of 8 soap operas) male character are portrayed as main decision making authority. The researcher has not used any statistical tool for testing H₁, as the sample size is less than 30. So the researchers can not apply z-test. T-test also cannot be applied as for t-test variance is required and there is no variation in data. So the hypothesis is proved percentage wise. (See Table 1)

The result shows that Star Plus soap operas are focusing more in presenting women in powerful and decent roles. They are presented wise and capable of decision making. In most of soap operas matriarchal culture or rule of women prevails. This shows that the main objective of Star Plus behind such portrayal is to discourage the gender discrimination and social inequalities.

**Hypothesis H₂** suggests that the female characters of Star Plus soap operas will be portrayed more in stereotyped gender roles as compared to sexual object.

By applying Z test analysis

\[ H₀: \text{Character portrayed in stereotyped gender role } \leq \text{ sexual object} \]

\[ H₁: \text{Character portrayed in stereotyped gender role } > \text{ sexual object} \]

\[ \alpha = 0.05 \]

**Sample Evidence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character portrayed as</th>
<th>stereotyped gender role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sexual object</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stereotyped gender role</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Prop.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ z = \frac{(\hat{P}_1 - \hat{P}_2) - (P_1 - P_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{\hat{P}_1 * \hat{Q}_1}{n_1} + \frac{\hat{P}_2 * \hat{Q}_2}{n_2}}} \]

\[ z \text{-score} = 7.94759 \]

\[ p \text{-value} = 9.99 \times 10^{-16} \]

The obtained results supported the research hypothesis as the calculated p-value does not exceed 0.05. So in the light of above results research hypothesis H₂ is supported and null hypothesis is rejected. The result show that female characters in Star Plus soap
operas are mostly portrayed in stereotyped gender roles as mother, wife, sister and daughter in law and they are treated with dignity and respect (See Table .2).

The findings suggest that Star Plus soap operas are focusing more in presenting women in decent roles due to the fact that portrayal of women as sexual object devalues their constructive role in society. The overall findings suggest that Star Plus soap operas are focusing on projecting the ideology of Radical Feminism in the portrayal of their female characters. Moreover they are also focusing in portraying female characters in dignified manner such as mother, wife, sister and daughter in law. Women are also presented in powerful roles as women rule prevails in most of Star Plus soap operas.

The findings suggest that Star Plus soap operas were mainly projecting the ideology of Radical feminism by presenting women as powerful, assertive, decision making authority and in stereotyped gender roles. They are presented as wise and capable of decision making. Most of the soap operas are projecting matriarchal culture by portraying women as assertive, authoritative and decision making authority.

References


