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Influence of Soap Operas on Nepalese Women's Identity Formation: A Qualitative Study

Pragati Shah

Senior Project Proposal

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Hanover College

## Abstract

The purpose of this research project is to report on a qualitative research about the role of television soap operas as a resource employed by Nepalese women in identity work. Currently, Nepalese women live in a cultural context where traditional values often conflict with Western values regarding gender-appropriate behavior. The women identify themselves as traditional even while they attempt to integrate non-traditional beliefs. This research project examines stay-at-home mothers' representations of themselves, as they discuss female television characters. Self-narratives of women from Kathmandu ( $N = 20$ ) were obtained through open-ended, in-depth interviews about their favorite Bollywood soap operas. It was expected that as they discussed this widely-viewed cultural tool, they would incorporate characteristics of both heroines and villains to constitute their own selves, drawing upon values from both traditional and Western cultures. Analyses reveal that participants do, indeed, use soap opera characters as a resource for constituting a meaningful self in the face of shifting social identities. The participants were seen to draw texts from both traditional and Western values and seek to maintain a balance. It was observed that women turn towards the Soap Operas for guidance in formulating their own gender-appropriate perspective. This analysis demonstrates how some women are adapting gender roles in today's confusing, post-modern world.

## Introduction

A research project is proposed to examine how Indian Bollywood soap operas may be used by Nepalese women to understand themselves. Since these soap operas contain characters that Nepalese women can easily identify with, they may be used to represent parts of their identity to others in their narratives. In his research, Livingstone (1990) has acknowledged similar ideas while examining American TV soaps; he states that soap operas create an environment where viewers can identify with the characters. Indian soap operas watched in Nepal provide their viewers with a similar opportunity. Soap opera characters often deal with situations and issues that are part of everyday life for Nepalese women. These situations and issues are often parallel to shifting social and cultural norms of morality. Although, facing similar problems and issues, soap opera characters are different from Nepalese women. The soap characters are portrayed successful in being able to straddle self in midst of two conflicting cultures. In other words, they have done their part of identity work. They thus serve as guide as they have achieved a modern sense of self (a self that incorporates both conflicting cultures) that the Nepalese women have not as they are still immersed in the traditional way of viewing self. Hence, the soap operas prove to be a beneficial medium to understand and formulate one's own self for Nepalese women as they identify with and learn from soap opera characters.

Understanding one's own self is vital. In the context of this research, it is presumed that a modern sense of self allows one to speak of a meaningful life with which one would be satisfied. As a Nepalese woman who has come of age in the modern culture, I find that most Nepalese women seem puzzled about their self. This is partly because Nepalese women have lived most of their lives raising children, managing the household and fulfilling their responsibilities as a devoted wife, mother, caretaker, daughter-in-law and so forth. In other words, women had

always been encouraged to act and think in the traditional manner. Furthermore, the Nepalese culture has always been and still is a patriarchal society. In such circumstance, voice of a woman is spoken through the voice of a man. Hermans & Kempen (1993) in their book The Dialogical Self, analyze an epic story of Gilgamesh and state that a woman is present as an element in men's lives who must simultaneously remain absent as a full figure with her own being, experience and subjectivity (pg. 10). In Nepal's context, as a child, a woman speaks through her father, as an adult through her husband and when old, through son. As Hermans and Kempen (1993) point out, men are not talking to women but rather to his image, while the subordinated woman must struggle to discover who she actually may yet be (pg. 142). Like the women in the story of Gilgamesh, women in Nepal persevere to find their identity. Further, since Nepal is in the face of globalization, women find it much more arduous to discover their self-identity. Thus, as a traditional society entering to a modern era, woman struggle to explore their self in midst of cultural change along with the package of complicated version of self that comes from being a traditional woman of a patriarchal nation.

Globalization can gradually transform the individual due to a globally linked world system according to Sampson (1989). He believes that transformation from modern to postmodern era and globally linked social environment calls for the dramatic transformation in the person. In the past, women continued these cycles of responsibilities as they accepted it to be their sole purpose of life. Thus, they immersed themselves in this life-style and identified themselves with it.

In today's modern world, globalization is changing everything rapidly; technological inventions like cable television and the internet have made the world a smaller place, making individuals aware of the varied cultural experiences that exist around us. This process has

impacted the lives of billions of people across the globe, including those of Nepalese women. Thus, women now have the opportunity to see the multiple roles a woman can perform, contrary to women in the past who viewed traditional gender roles as their only option. Consequently, Nepalese culture has undergone some essential changes in its shift towards modernity, i.e., today there is more freedom in choosing one's partner for marriage as opposed to an arranged marriage.

A study conducted in nine nations by Glick et al (2006) revealed that traditional societies were associated with a preference for women that are conventional home-makers. In Nepal's context, this means that men look for a perfect housewife in their future spouse. However, with modernization eroding tradition values, a Nepalese woman no longer has to be the perfect housewife to be the ideal spouse. This change in the roles of women is also associated with increased flexibility in the division of labor. While, women were previously assigned to work only in the household domain, now women have the freedom to choose a career and not limit themselves only to household work.

As a result, this freedom has also contributed to changes in the perception of an "ideal" woman. While the ideal woman in the past used to be someone who is a perfect housewife, today the ideal woman is someone who holds a job and has the desire to be independent. All these shifts and changes have led to corresponding changes in women's identities, the dialogical self of women. McAdams (2000), Hermans & DiMaggio (2007), Wertsch (1991), and Bhatia & Ram (2004) define dialogical self as multiplicity of voices in the mind of an individual, corresponding with the minds of other people while expressing their identity through dialogue and this is when the self becomes multivoiced. A simple example of the dialogical self could be of an international student who comes from Vietnam to study in America. While the student is still

immersed with his cultural values, he is also influenced by the American culture. In this regard, he is the embodiment of two different cultures and voices; one voice representing his traditional culture and another is the American culture. He has thus incorporated values from each location.

A few years ago, women in Nepal had a clearer perception of their self-identity. It was simple and unanimously agreed upon by all. However, many things have changed now, including what it means to be an ideal Nepalese woman. With globalization exposing these women to multiple ways of being and providing multiple choices of life style and roles, self-discovery has become a much more demanding and frustrating process for them because the globalization has extended the dialogical voices of women. Women now think, “I am a mom, a wife, and a caretaker. I am all that, but I don’t know who I am”. In order to understand and formulate one’s self-identity, one needs to understand all of their roles and qualities.

According to Bhatia & Ram (2004) and Wertsch (1991), a way to unite the multiplicity of the voices is when the speaking subjects comes into contact and interanimates the voices of the other. Nepalese women have many utterances and voices in their minds and the formulation of self can only occur if the different utterances/ multivoices (Wertsch 1991), are understood through understanding the voices and unite them into a coherent voice. Interanimation of voices can be observed in the narratives of women while they are talking about their perception of an ideal woman. Women can process through the multiple voices by trying to understand each of those voices, making their own interpretation of it and finally making coherent voice.

This is why soap operas are useful and important to women. Just like the women viewers, the characters, especially the heroines, go through similar processes of finding their self. They are able to straddle between different voices (pressure to be traditional or modern). These soap opera heroines in spite of being an “ideal” housewife are shown as someone who is able to adopt

Western values. Consequently, they have formulated their sense of self/ identity. Thus, characters serve as an ideal role model who can guide the viewers to do likewise. Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to develop a deep understanding of how Nepalese women use soap operas to formulate their own self.

It should be taken into consideration however, that soap operas are not the only medium to achieve a self-identification. There are plenty of other resources available for the Nepalese women to use for these processes. Nevertheless, I chose to focus on soap operas because it is widespread and nationwide implicit medium and easily ignored resource. Millions of women watch these shows with devoted continuity making the soap operas one of the biggest industries. Soap operas have been studied in many other disciplines like sociology, anthropology and communication and the studies reveal that soaps have a very powerful usefulness as an identity tool. According to a study by Rogers et al (1999), a radio soap opera with an AIDS prevention message was aired in 1992 in a village in Tanzania. A follow-up study after two years showed that there were significant increases in condom use in that area versus the rest of the country. The people in the village where the show was aired increased the use of contraception like condoms, whereas the rest of the country did not. This interesting research shows the power of soap operas in influencing the lives of individual and community. This study demonstrates the appeal the soap operas can have on public and work as powerful intermediate mechanism.

Another study also revealed a result of similar nature. Feminist authors Cole, & Daniel (2005) in their study showed the participants a movie depicting a traditional and non-traditional woman. They found that children who were exposed to non-traditional women on TV expressed more non-traditional attitudes and opinions and those exposed to more traditional women on TV

gave more traditional responses (Cole et al, 2005). The study again demonstrates the power of soap operas and its direct effect on people.

Abu-Lughod (2005) in her anthropological book Dramas of Nationhood has also brought an insight into the powerful effects of mass media, especially the soap operas, in the lives of Egyptian people. The soap operas in Egypt play the role of an institution for the production of national culture in Egypt. As an institution the soap operas in Egypt have provided subtle scripts for people to enact new roles. It has taught people about morals, religion and how to “act” as ideal citizens of Egypt. In this sense, soap operas are acting as an agent of socialization (Signorelli & Bacue, 1999).

A human being cannot be studied without acknowledging the environment he lives in (Bhatia & Mascolo, 2002; Wertsch 1991; Hengl & Slunecko 2006). Wertsch (1991) in his Voices of the Mind claims that a mental action is situated in cultural, historical and institutional settings and these variables define the person. Therefore, it is necessary to look at these settings in order to truly study human beings. When an individual is studied in isolation, many variables are taken out of consideration, such as, culture, historical and institutional settings which are part of human beings. Hence, the study of human beings becomes more complete when they are studied in terms of their culture, historical background and the institutional settings because an individual does not live in isolation.

Studying human beings from a different context is a new approach in psychology. This is one of the main reasons why I have chosen to have a qualitative study in this research. Qualitative study is more helpful when studying a new area of research where much research has not been done and it tends to understand more complete view of the phenomena rather than trying to quantify and reduce the data. At the same time, it provides a deeper understanding of

the issue and thus is the most ideal way to study the lives of middle-aged women of a small town from a small country. The qualitative study also provides the knowledge that will affect our understanding of the human condition as the research interview explores human existence in much detail than the quantitative research. It gives access to subjective experiences and allows researchers to describe intimate aspects of people's life and their worlds which cannot be captured through quantitative data. Furthermore, in a qualitative study, the participants are purposively chosen because the researcher is trying to understand participants from the perspective of selected group members (Patten, 2005). Therefore, the benefit of having qualitative approach is that I can concentrate on a small of group of women and learn about their lives in much detail. Due to these reasons qualitative study was chosen for the research study which will help in answering the research of the study which is "how do Nepalese women use soap operas as a cultural tool for understanding who they are?" It is expected that soap operas indeed have a role in the formulation of Nepalese women's self.

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants ( $N = 20$ ) were adult females from the country of Nepal. The ages of participants ranged from 21 to 75 with the mean age being 48 years old. They were all stay-at-home mothers. All the participants actively watched several popular soap operas. These televised soap operas produced by the Bollywood film industry in India, had storylines which centered on the life of a female character who encounters many struggles yet is shown to be satisfied with her life. All of the participants were women whom the author was already acquainted with. Participant recruitment occurred through networks of family and friends. They were all from the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. Thus, the participants were purposely selected. It was done so because the

interest of the study is to study the lives of a particular group of women who are most influenced by the soap operas. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that these groups of women have never been interviewed before or asked for their opinion. Thus, women can get hesitant in speaking their minds for reasons such as saying the wrong things, fear of being commented and not being able to give answers and so forth. Thus, it was important that I had some prior connection with these women because if a stranger were to interview them, then they would get nervous and not be able to talk comfortably. As a member of the same community, the author has the exposure to the members of community who do not participate in discussion and prefer to stay in the background while people are stating their opinions.

*Material/ Equipment* : semi-structured interview was devised consisting of 23 content questions and 16 demographic questions in Nepalese (see Appendix 2 for translation of the interviews). Lengthy in-depth interviews about women's viewing habits and preferences for various soap operas, conducted in Nepalese with native speaker. Interviews were audio- tape recorded then transcribed in Nepalese which were then translated into English and edited by native English speakers.

Data was collected via in-depth interviews. Such interviews were chosen since they consist of open-ended questions. This allows for the opportunity to explore respondent's points of view and the respondents can also expand their responses as there are no limitations to what they can talk about. Further, a researcher can probe questions during the interview if the responses are not clear and as a result, a more thorough understanding of the responses can be achieved.

*Procedure – Data Collection*

More than half of the participants could not communicate in English; therefore, the interviews were conducted in the researcher's native language, Nepalese. The interview schedule contained five sections: demographics, viewing behavior, personal & social viewing context, application to real life and thoughts about their life (See Appendix 1). A brief pilot study was conducted before the actual interviews began. The pilot test led to some changes in the questions. For example, during the pilot test, it was found that the phrasings of some questions were unclear and required more description. Instead of asking "who is your favorite soap actress?" the question was modified into "from your favorite soap opera, these are the names of the soap actresses, and which one do you prefer the most?" The revisions made the questions clearer and much easier to understand by the participants. For example, before the revision of this question, the participants mentioned that they liked all the actresses. However, the revised version of the question compelled the participants to think about the characteristics of the soap actresses and decided which one they liked the most.

#### *Data management*

Therefore, after the interviews were transcribed, they were then translated into English which was later edited by the Native English speakers who were also studying psychology. In order to translate the interviews into English, portions of each of the 22 interviews were transcribed in Nepalese. Only the demographics section and five different questions were chosen for the translation and coding. This decision was made because of the time limitation and the nature of the study [unclear]. It was not necessary to code all the interviews because not all questions dealt with the interest of the research. It is important to acknowledge that questions were developed before the study was planned out. The survey needed to be conducted before the actual study began. Therefore, many questions dealt with viewing habits of soap operas. Since the quest of

this research is to study the preferences for soap opera characters, only five questions were translated in order to analyze them. The portions of the interviews that were to be transcribed were chosen on the basis of their contents. Only those responses were transcribed that would correspond with the research question of the study. The unit of analysis for the coding was the smallest meaningful comment or a *thought unit* in Gottman's (1997) terms. These are the smallest stretch of talk that stands alone as an idea, or meaningful thought. Thus, within a single P's response to any given question, various meaningful thoughts were coded. Some responses had more than 10 thought units to be coded and some responses had only one thought units.

In the process of analyzing participants' responses, a qualitative coding scheme was developed and continually refined (See Appendix 3). Such a method of analysis clarified how the data could best be made sense of to address the research question.

#### *Data Coding:*

This coding scheme was intended to capture those comments in which the participants displayed how they used the soap operas as cultural tools for identity formation: their own and that of other women. The three main themes were identified in the coded material were: participants' discussion of *family*, *identity* and *level of connectedness*. Within each theme, sub-categories were identified which generally indicated whether the Participant was discussing the larger category in a positive or negative way. For example, for the category of family, the sub-categories were: *devotion*, *less engaged* and *mixed*. In the context of this research, *devotion* is defined as P's describing and valuing deep love and commitment towards the family. *Less engaged* refers to those comments which described a lack of interest towards family or family matters. Finally, *mixed* consisted of comments in which Ps discussed both being devoted and less

engaged with family, at the same time. So the three sub-categories of the category Family are exemplified as follows:

**Devotion:** “She always puts the reputation of the family first and gives more priority to family than to herself” Salina, age 70 discussed her high regard for devotion on the questions about what distinguishes your favorite heroine from villain? Where as, Sworupa, age 26 said about being less engaged with family in response to the question would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?

**Less engaged:** “It is not fair that she should give up her own wants because the family does not approve of it” (Sworupa, 26). In response to the question, would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain? Sworupa said:

**Mixed:** “She should be family orientated, but the thought of family should not consume her life.” [Sworupa, 26]

Similar process was applied to rest of the categories such as *identity* and *level of connectedness* and each of these categories had three sub-categories (See Appendix 3). For the category of *identity*, there were three sub-categories and they are as follow:

**Same as traditional woman:** “She needs to have the ability to cope, understanding and religious” Samjhana, age 46 discussed her high regard for traditional women on the questions about what distinguishes your favorite heroine from villain? Where as, Deepa, age 42 said about being different from traditional woman in response to the question would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain? Her response is shown below.

**Different from traditional woman:** “A villain is very selfish and only thinks about herself. It is like, me first and others later” (Deepa, 42). In response to the question, would you like your

daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain? Rosina, age 42 gave a mixed response of being both traditional and non-traditional at the same time. The response she made is below.

**Mixed:** “She should not be that good to people and being too good is also not very nice. For example, if a mother-in-law turns out to be evil then that does not mean that she should still be good to her. She should still be good to some extent but she should not totally obey her as well”.

For the category of *level of connectedness*, there were three sub-categories and they are as follow:

**Independent:** “Sometimes she has to be self-interested in order to stand up for her self” Komal, age 51 discussed her high regard for independent women on the questions would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain? Where as, Salina, age 70 said supported for about being anti-independent in response to the question would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?

**Anti-Independent:** “Being too ambitious can be dangerous and threatening” (*Salina, 70*). On the other hand, in response to the question, would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain? Chandani, age 35 gave a mixed response of being both independent and dependent at the same time. Her response is below.

**Interanimation:** “She should have the qualities of both. If you are too good then people will take advantage and if you are bad then your in-laws may despise you. So having a bit of both is the best way to live a good life” (Chandani, age 35).

### *Interpretive Analysis*

Given the coding categories derived, three different versions of the "ideal woman's" identity emerged within this body of data. One I will call the traditional way of viewing ideal identity [vague] the other I've named the modern (Western) way of viewing ideal identity.

While the third was a mixture [define] of both, which I have labeled ideal identity. The traditional ideal supported being positively devoted to the family, accepting the traditional texts of women and becoming dependent on family for one's identity.

The interpretative analysis shows that an ideal traditional woman does her best for the family and does not have any competitive feelings towards anybody. She accepts the subservient role and identifies herself through her duties towards the members of her family. As a result, she is highly connected with her family circle. Some participants identified themselves as the advocates of the traditional systems and talked positively about it. However, not all participants agreed with this way and talked negatively about it.

Consequently, some women preferred the modern values over the traditional and talked positively about it. Modern (Western) values have a different perception of an ideal woman. It promotes individual goals, values self-sufficiency and competition with others. Following quote is from a participant who exemplifies this modern ideal.

A majority of the women agreed in the combination of both values. The ideal woman was observed as someone who straddles both traditional and modern (Western) values, rather than one of each. Thus, most women believed that an ideal woman successfully understands both the ideals but does not label oneself as either traditional or non-traditional. Instead, she tries to unify different ideals and make it consistent. Such women sought balance by limiting oneself in the family activity but not consuming in the family matter or escaping from it.

Although, majority believed in the integration as the correct path, some did resent such approach.

### Discussion

As expected, Nepalese women used the soap operas as a cultural tool to re-formulate their identity, to be more in sync with the modern world. Through the narrative analysis of their

description of an ideal woman, it was found that their definition of an ideal woman is changing from the traditional definition of an ideal woman. However, the change is not towards the modern or non-traditional ideal. Instead, women are defining the ideal woman using both the traditional and non-traditional (modern) ideals. Although this is surprising, the concept of uniting different thoughts to create a one coherent thought is not new. Wertsch (1991) in his book Voices of the Mind, talks about similar concept of unification of the voices. He claims that people always create their own voice by uniting different texts available to them. Thus, the identity of a person can be related with the environment around the person.

Hermans & Kempen (1993); Wertsch (1991) argue that self is never unitary but a multifaceted phenomenon. This suggests that self is not a single voice of a person. The voice contains many layers of utterances which come from multiple sources. Thus, when a person talks he represents the values and beliefs of the society/ culture he is associated with. Hermans (2002) explains that self is like a society of mind. This is because there is no essential difference between the positions a person takes as part of the self and the positions people take as members of a heterogeneous society. This suggests that individuals are always going to be influenced by the positions they hold in the society. Their positions may in turn, shape their identity. People are always exposed to multiple positions in a society. The positions that people can take increases as the sources of those roles and positions expand. One way of the expansion of these roles can be attributed to globalization. Through globalization people get exposed to the rest of the world and become a member of “one world”. As part of a member of “one world” people get to take several positions which contains layers of voices, ideals and texts.

Interpretative analysis show that majority of the women unite the ideals of being traditional yet modern. In order to examine this phenomenon it is important to acknowledge the

background of women. They come from a traditional society which is experiencing globalization. Thus, there is the pressure to become modern however, the traditions tell them to do otherwise. Therefore, it is understandable why women are not moving from being traditional to modern. The traditional aspect of their life pulls them to remain traditional. It is hard to stop following the traditional way of behaving and thinking. The framework of the society is build upon the old traditions. Thus, it is impossible to discard the old ways and adopt a completely new way living. Traditions such as, women leaving their parental house upon marriage or the tradition of living in a joint family is still encouraged. Sampson has stated that globalization changes people gradually (Sampson, 1989). Change is a gradual process and it takes a long time to be drastically different. Thus, women in Nepal are in the trend of change but the change is occurring gradually. Just like incorporating the values of traditional society, women are also in the process of incorporating the values of modern culture.

It should be noted that the expected results need not necessarily mean that all the Nepalese women are undergoing the same effect. This is because the participants are not the representative of all the Nepalese women. The study has only focused one geographical area of the country which happens to be the capital city of the country. Women in other parts of the country may not have same life-experiences as the women in the capital city. It should also be noted that the capital city is the “hot-spot” where there is more influence of modernity and globalization. The other cities and villages are not equally developed like the capital city.

Nevertheless, the study opens doors to many further analyses and observations. A study with similar data can be carried out to explore many other aspects in the narratives of women.

The study revealed a curious phenomenon in which many women seemed to reject the notion that they identify with the characters and the soap operas themselves. When asked if they

applied the shows to their lives, the participants denied doing so. However, the way they talk about the soaps and characters tells a different story. Therefore, further research could be carried out to investigate the tension between participants using the soaps to formulate this identity, yet not identifying with the soaps. They also rejected using the newer modern values but again their talk about the soap show that this is not the case. They in fact do use the modern values which were demonstrated in the above analysis by the way they talked about the characters and the soaps.

In addition, it was apparent that there was a shift in the agency during certain stretches of talk. When the participants were talking about an ideal woman or desired characteristics in a daughter, they would frequently end up talking about themselves. It seemed that when they would talk about fictional characters or daughters, they would tell about their life-stories through the support of other's voices. Future work will analyze these changes in agency and explore in depth what this can tell us about identity formation.

*Appendix 1 Semi- Structured Interview Protocol (only the questions that have been underlined will be transcribed and translated)*

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your marital status?
3. When did you get married?
4. Do you have any children?
5. If yes, then how many children do you have?
6. Do you have any form of employment?
7. If yes, what kind of employment do you have?
8. How many hours a week do you work?
9. What kind of work does your husband do?
10. Does your husband like to watch with you when you are watching the shows?

Viewing Behavior Questions:

11. What kind of movies do you like?
12. What else do you like to watch on television other than movies?
13. When did you start watching the shows?
14. How many shows do you watch weekly?
15. Are there any soaps that you feel that you cannot miss watching?
16. If you had to pick one show as your favorite, what would that show be?

Personal/ Social Viewing Context:

17. Do you ever discuss the shows with others?
18. How often do you think that you discuss the shows?
19. Who do you usually discuss the shows with?
20. Has there ever been a situation where you think that talking with people has been easier due to the soap operas?
21. How would you prefer to watch the shows? Would you prefer alone or with someone else?

Application to Real Life Questions:

22. What qualities do you like about the shows?
23. If you had money and opportunity to make your own show, what ingredients would you put in?
24. How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?
25. How closely the events resemble your real life?
26. How closely the shows altogether resemble your real life?
27. How closely the shows resemble the society your live in?
28. What makes someone a hero?

29. What makes someone a heroine?
30. What makes someone a villain?
31. Who is your favorite hero?
32. Who is your favorite heroine?
33. Who is your best female villain?
34. What distinguishes your favorite hero from the best villain?
35. What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the best villain?
36. Would you like your daughter to behave like heroine or the villain?

Life:

37. Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?
38. Why do you watch the shows?
39. What kind of qualities would you like to see in your daughter?

*Appendix 2 A Sample of Translation and Transcriptions of the Interviews*

## Participant # 1 (Shruti)

## Objective Questions:

1. What kind of movies do you like?  
Comedy and drama
2. What else do you like to watch on television other than movies?  
Indian Idol, Prayer shows and soaps.
3. When did you start watching the shows?  
15-20 years
4. How many shows do you watch weekly?  
5
5. Are there any soaps that you feel that you cannot miss watching?  
At least 3
6. If you had to pick one show as your favorite, then what would that show be?  
Kasauti Zindagi ki (Life's Dilemmas)

## Social influences:

7. Do you ever discuss about the shows with others?  
Yes, of course I discuss.
8. How often do you think that you discuss about the shows?  
Quite often.
9. Who do you usually discuss the shows with?  
With friends.
10. Has there even been a situation where you think that talking with people has been easier due to the soap operas?  
It is easier to strike the conversation with friends. (Lots of emphasis)
11. How would you prefer to watch the shows? Would you prefer alone or with someone else?  
Of course, it is always better when you have someone to watch with. I don't like to watch it alone. I prefer at least more than one person to watch the shows with. I like to discuss about the events that I am watching during the long breaks between the shows.

## Measure of reality:

12. What qualities do you like about the shows?  
Living in harmony with the family, not fighting with each other, there is lots of peace in the family, there is also love. I also like that they make me laugh so much. I love the shows when there are comic scenes. I am tired of watching shows about politics. That is what everyone talks about. It's everywhere. That is why I like these shows because it does not have politics in it. I think that is wonderful.

13. If you had money and opportunity to make your own show, what ingredients would you put in?

I would make a complete comedy. Not politics whatsoever. Something like that. The shows also need to reflect the components of reality. There are always some common things in life that everyone will face. There are so many of them and I would put those things in my show to make it a super hit. And oh, the shows MUST have beautiful scenes and songs in the shows. What can I do, well, I know I will never ever be able to travel and see places like you (the interviewer) have. But I can see those places on TV and listen to nice songs as well. I know that there a lot of people like me who will like that. That would make my show hit. What do you think? (Laughs)

14. How closely do you think the characters resemble you real life?

I don't think that there is any resemblance. It's totally filmy. They are in a man-made story and they are playing a role. That is not real. They probably have different lives in personal life. But, again they show what a good person is and what a bad person is. I agree with that. I think that their portrayal of the characters is real nevertheless and exactly how it is like in the real life.

15. How closely the events resemble your real life?

Yeah, sure they show things that happen in real life, even sometimes in my own life. That is why I think the events resemble the life.

16. How closely the shows altogether resemble your real life?

I mean again, sometimes I feel that the events are similar. They show things that I would also go through. I think everyone does. They show on TV same things

17. How closely the shows resemble the society your live in?

Yeah I feel they resemble. I mean things they will me matching in everyday life. It does resemble in that sense.

18. What makes someone a hero?

(laughs), wise, very sensitive, very handsome isn't it? Good looking (Laughs) and all the other good things. They should be very nice and have all the good things of a real guy.

19. What makes someone a heroine?

(emphasis) ummm...heroine should be good-looking, nice body, if she is pretty I like to watch, if she is not good-looking then I don't like to watch. Apart from body, she should also have nice heart. She should be able to have nice and accurate acting according to her role. I like Prerana (favorite heroine) a lot. She should also have sweet voice, like a bird singing. Prerana has all the things. Nice body, long hair, and oh she looks so active. She is not afraid of her husband. She is so active and independent. She is also very pretty to look at. I feel that she is like that even in her own personal life. I think that she is not afraid of anything. She has a commanding voice too. She worked but at the same time will do anything for family. She even married her own bad boss for her family.

20. What makes someone a villain?

I mean again she has bad and evil heart, her heart is dark, very rude and rancorous, does not do things that other ask of her, very stubborn, I don't like villain because they have no respect for elders, and they have very bad temper and they take revnge in a bad manner.

21. Who is your favorite hero?

Well, Anurag (actor) is nice, and I like him. Bajaj was my favorite but what to do he died, but I hope he comes back. I really hope that.

22. Who are you favorite heroine?

Prerana, dulhan, tulsi

23. Who is your best villain?

I don't like villian. (laughs) who would like a villain? But if she has played her part well, then I will like her. For example, Komolika. I guess you cansay that Komolika is my favorite villain if that makes sense.

24. What distinguishes your favorite hero from the best villain?

No answer

25. What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the best villain?

I think that the heroine is also nice in real life. Well, have characteristics, the villains. Whereas, heroines do things in a planned way so that it does not harm anyone in the process, like her family. But villain doesn't care about it. Villains do things to fraud people. But I like it when heroines win, because truth should win, isn't it?

26. Would you like your daughter to behave like heroine or the villain?

(Laughs)...of course I would want my daughter to have the good qualities of a heroine. All the characteristics of heroine.

Life:

27. Do you think that you apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?

Well, from the TV it is can be seen that it is not good to have hot temper; one should always do things in a planned mannerism. I can see these things from TV.

28. Why do you watch the shows?

Time-pass, fun, when I watch serials my complete concentration goes to serials and nothing else. My brain becomes light while watching the shows.

29. What kind of qualities would you like to see in your daughter?

I want my daughter to very very smart and I would not want my daughter be taken advantage of, but instead if worse comes then I would her to be able to take advantage of bad people. I would want my daughter to be very fierce, unafraid, has an aastitvwa of her own. She should have all the good qualities. She should be successful, independent and not like me who depends on her husband even for pocket money.

*Appendix 3 Coding Manual of the Interviews***Coding manual****I. Family**

- a) Devotion: *deep love and commitment towards the family*
- b) Lack of engagement: *lack of interest towards the family or family matters*
- b) Mixed: *discussion of devotion and less engaged at the same time*

**II. Identity**

- a) Same as traditional woman: *following traditional texts of women*
- b) Different from traditional woman: *not parallel to the traditional texts of women*
- c) Mixed: *discussion of traditional and non-traditional at the same time*

**III. Level of connectedness**

- a) Independent: *seeking for individual goals and desires*
- b) Anti- Independent: *not seeking for individual goals and desires*
- c) Interanimation: *discussion of being independent and anti-independent at the same time*

*Appendix 4 Questions that were analyzed*

1. What qualities do you like about the shows?
2. How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?
3. What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?
4. Would you like your daughter to have characteristics of the heroine or a villain?
5. Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?

*Appendix 5 Transcribed and translated interviews used for the study*Participant 1 *Shruti***Demographics**

Age	42
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	Living in harmony with the family, not fighting with each other, there is lots of peace in the family, there is also love
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	They show what a good person is and what a bad person is. I agree with that. I think that their portrayal of the characters is real nevertheless and exactly how it is like in real life
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Whereas, heroines do things in a planned way so that it does not harm anyone in the process like her family  Villains do things to de- fraud people
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	I would want her to possess the qualities of a heroine
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	it can be seen that it is not good to have a hot temper; one should always do things in a planned manner

Participant 2 *Kalpana*

**Demographics**

Age	40
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	The shows have a good message. I can apply the things that I see on these shows on my own life. There is a connection both content and emotion wise and I can relate with it.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Not really, all bad and good. Glamorous life does not happen. They show things on extremes because everyone is all good or all bad. I think real people are not like that. People can be good yet possess some bad things as well
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Villain is a gold-digger
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like heroine she has to be family loving because family is everything  She has to be career-oriented.  She also should not be all sacrificing
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	For example, in the last show of Dulhan (Bride: one of the shows), they showed how the actress had to choose between her husband's wishes and her own wishes. It was so intense that I cried badly

**Demographics**

Age	51
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like the presentation of the shows. The things, stories that they show are so forceful to me heart that I become stunned. The things that have happened in their life and could happen in their life are shown in such a manner that sometime I think that could be my life
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Komolika (a lady villain) was also married twice, that too with the brothers from same mother.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	They are individualistic- only thinking about themselves. They only think about how they can be better than rest of them. They think about how they can win everyone and be on top of everyone. They don't have respect for family. They are so selfish and always selfish
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	She needs to have little bit of both. Sometimes she has to be self-interested in order to stand up for her self
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	No not really. That's TV and this is real life.

Participant 4 *Rosina***Demographics**

Age	42
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	There are a lot of comic scenes that I really enjoy. What I also like about the shows is that there is a sense of reality. I think that many of those events are almost real, which I believe that it could happen to me too.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	I honestly think that they are so real. I think that's how things are. I think that in a person's real life those things do happen. However, of course there are some differences. What they show in TV is of course fake and man-made. So real people won't be just like the characters in the TV. Nevertheless, the scenes and events that they play in make them real. Of course there are times when I think that it is too much. For example, when the characters have plastic surgery and they have a different face after the surgery. That is of course make-belief and doesn't happen in real life.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	They are well behaved. They also need to have a good heart and discipline. Heroine always does good things to all people. On the other hand, when the villain speaks you can sense arrogance, and also talks directly (straight-forward) and rudely.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	She should not be that good to people and being too good is also not very nice. For example, if a mother-in-law turns out to be evil then that does not mean that she should still be good to her. She should still be good to some extent but she should not totally obey her as well.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	The actress overcomes that trouble in a disciplined way so we can learn those kinds of values from her.

Participant 5 *Sabina*

**Demographics**

Age	42
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	If someone bad gives trouble to someone nice but later on when that nice person when takes revenge on that bad person for their deeds, then I really enjoy that and that's what I like the most about these shows.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Yes I do think they do. They show things that happen in our own society in the form of a story in their shows and give them a new outlook on those social events and actions of people. So, that is how things become real and resemble the real life.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	The heroine adopts the way of the truth and honesty. She is not scared to adopt the way of honesty and she eventually wins the battle against the evil.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Heroine has created her own "identity" She does her best for the family. She has earned a respect you see. I would very much want that for my daughter
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	Stories do resemble my life. They show the disputes between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law and you tell me which household in our society does not have arguments with the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law? So if you look into my own life story you will see these same events occurring.

Participant 6 *Salina*

### Demographics

Age	70
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	4

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like these shows because their stories involve social matters that are interesting. I also like it because they show stories about women's lives which cannot be found in other shows.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	the shows portray family problems
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	She always puts the reputation of the family first and basically gives more priority to the family than to herself  The actress is never selfish, well maybe selfish sometimes but not to the extent of the villain. Villains are too selfish and they always like to think about themselves.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	My daughter should learn not to be dependent on people, people can take advantage of her. She also should also accept the things as they are and make the best of the things and qualities that she has. Being too ambitious can be dangerous and threatening.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	No I don't think I apply them. They over exaggerate the reality and situation. But again sometimes I feel that may be it is all true and happening in other people's lives. Even though they might exaggerate the current scenario, the core of the matters are nonetheless, quite real and happening in real life. So I think that basically the things are true and real and but it's just that they add unnecessary stuff and make it overly dramatic.

Participant 7 *Seema*

### Demographics

Age	57
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	4

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	They show things that I don't know about and when they show things like that I can learn from that and I feel nice about that.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	More than resembling my life, the role of the characters seems so real. They show things in such a manner that no matter if it's a village or a city the storyline of the serials are based on events that are real and can be applied to people everywhere. So when I watch them, even though I know that it is not real I feel that it is real. What I am saying is that the roles of the characters are in sync with the storyline which makes the character itself real. That is why I think that the characters are real and resemble the characters of the people in our society. So in that sense it also resembles my real life.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine is the idealization of what a true woman should be and the villain is not. Villains are selfish and they want to do things for themselves. They don't care about the reaction of their action that may affect the family or the society.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	They show that she is a very idealistic woman and set an example in our society regarding what a woman should be like. I would want her to be very idealistic and be famed for her good virtues and ideals. Along with the respect for her family the heroines also are able to create their own identity and ideals and set an example for the rest of the people.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	The positive things that they do I feel that we can also adopt in our lives. I think that if we do that things can be done better or handled better. So I do pick up some things that can be useful and apply them in my life.

Participant 8 *Sweta*

**Demographics**

Age	62
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	More than quality of the show, I like the fact that they have love stories and I love to watch anything that has something to do the romance and all that. They also have suspense and I like suspense too. They have tragedy too and I like stories that have tragic stories but have nice ending in the end. I think that due to these aspects of the shows I like them
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	I think that they have these shows just for entertainment. I don't think that the men in these shows can be resembled in real life. They show dedicated husbands and all that. I think that is exaggerated. However, I think that how they portray the lives of the women are true and so it could be resembled in my life too. The family they live in, and the society they interact in I think are similar to ours. So that makes the characters of more someone like who lives in our society.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine is good human and the villain is not.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Of course heroine
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	By watching these shows in the TV I can see events that I can recognize and the way deal they with those events, I say oh! Maybe I should do something like. I think that I learn to deal with some social events.

Participant 9 *Akriti*

**Demographics**

Age	47
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like the suspense. I can watch these shows while I am doing housework too. It is also a great way to pass my time. After kids are in school I don't know what to do with my time and then by watching the shows I don't get bored.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Not at all but sometimes the events do resemble.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Also, the villain is planning conspiracies and on the other hand the heroine is always doing something good for the people and she is selfless.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	I would like my daughter to behave like heroine who had qualities like not being afraid to take the right path or speak her mind but also does think about bad about people especially her family. At same time does not allow oneself to get dominated or being taken the advantage of as well.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	Well, some events relating with daughter-in-law and mother-in-law can be applied but I don't see any other things that can be applied.

Participant 10 *Chandani*

### Demographics

Age	35
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	Things like these can also happen in our society, I feel that. People can play conspiracy in many things that I may not be aware of. I learn these things from the shows. I get the knowledge of the strangest that happen in the society. I see people play games in acute things and I am bewildered by what people can do to get things in their way. I enjoy watching all these things so that is why like the shows. It makes me feel that real life is also like that, sometimes people agree and sometimes they disagree.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	I don't think they resemble that much but overall I think that we can definitely learn from them. That is because their nature and our nature they are some what similar.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	The heroine has of course the good and desirable character and the villain does not
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	She should have the qualities of both of them. If you are too good then you are doomed to taken advantage of and if you are bad then your in-laws may despise you. But if you have bit if both then it is the best way to live a good life.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	Well in the shows if they have the scene of mother in law and the daughter in law then I think that people can learn from them to deal with the matters more nicely.

Participant 11 *Poonam*

**Demographics**

Age	36
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I don't watch the shows because of the quality but because that it is good way pass my time. I also get to know about the new style, new saree and new make-up style.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	No I don't think that they resemble the reality. Few women do try to act like heroines and be like them but I don't think that they actually can.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	The heroine is also very nice to her husband and the whole family. She also does not out-run the husband I don't like women who try to become over-smart and try to be know-it-all, she needs family after all. Likes to meddle in other's business, try to become super smart, selfish, does bad things and so on.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Heroine of course. Respecting the elders, knows her duties, does her own work and does not meddle in other's business.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	NO

Participant 12 *Devika*

### Demographics

Age	42
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I watch it to pass my time. It does not mean that I am addicted to it but they add in all the suspense and I want to know what happens next in these shows.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	No it does not resemble.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine has a nice family relationship in the family and villain does not.  Villain pulls other people's legs and always watches out for things that's only good for her and does not have any regard whatsoever for other people's feelings
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Heroine has a nice family relationship in the family and villain does not.  Villain pulls other people's legs and always watches out for things that's only good for her and does not have any regard whatsoever for other people's feelings
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	Not really. They exaggerate the reality. If they did not then I guess I could apply. But there are definitely good things to learn from these shows if you do take out the exaggeration. Like how to behave in a family and how to be virtuous etc.

Participant 13 *Samjhana*

**Demographics**

Age	46
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

**Codes**

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	It's not about quality but just time pass. It's more easier to pass my time by watching these shows because they are always on in the TV and much easier to catch up even though you miss few episodes. I keep on changing the channels if there are no soaps but if there is one I just focus on that one. I also understand what is happening because I have watching them since a long time.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Not really but sometimes yes.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Ability to cope, understanding, religious.  Villain is very manipulative
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Little bit of both. Qualities of heroine such as her presence, identity, respect, honor, ability to get along with all family members and I would like qualities of villains such as being able to stand up for what is good for you and not letting oneself to get manipulated.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	NO

Participant 14 *Kiran*

**Demographics**

Age	45
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	<p>First of all, I like to check out the fashion trend. The types of make-up, jewelry, saree and so forth. I like to see women achieve their goals.</p> <p>When I see women successful I feel really happy. They show what its like to be a woman and I really appreciate that. That is why I hate the shows where they show sad old sappy story, where the woman gets tortured. I like shows where women are really successful, fulfilling their dreams and goals. I never miss shows that have the above mentioned qualities. I like women who are successful and has earned respect from her own work and not of her husband or something like that. When other people torture the heroine, some shows portray her as super virtuous and says yes to everything. I hate those shows.</p> <p>However, that does not mean at all that she should behave all selfish. More like Purna than Tulsi because all that Tulsi thinks about is her family and household matters. Purna handles both her household and work at the same time and she does it very well. It's like she does not have other things to occupy her mind. A woman should know things and just become a dull woman and spend all the time at home doing nothing.</p> <p>She has to be a housewife and take care of the family and kids but at the time when she has her identity, I like the shows. Purna is not only a housewife but has her identity and lives respectfully in the society. She does not need men to complete her.</p>

2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	No not really. I feel they are very unrealistic.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Understandable, loving, giving priority to the family and so forth
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Well mannered like heroine, educated, if she has these things then she can stand on her own feet and does not have to depend on the husband.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	No not really. A person gets married like twice or thrice. After seeing something like that I don't think it's that realistic

Participant 15 *Deepa*

#### Demographics

Age	42
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like comedy and romantic scenes about the shows
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	Not much. What they show is imaginary and my life is real.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	My favorite heroine is Tulsi and I like her because she is very loving towards her family members. She understands them and is a devoted mother. A villain is very selfish and only thinks about herself. It is like "me first and others later"
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like Heroine because heroine is an ideal woman and it is nice to have her qualities than a villain who is disliked by everyone
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	No not really. I don't think my life is like the one that they show in the shows.

Participant 16 *Rita*

### Demographics

Age	45
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like twisted love stories that they show. I like how men and women cannot be together just because of parental pressures.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	They resemble a lot. They show people who are ideal and the reasons why they are ideal are also the same in our society.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine is a good person in a sense that she is all about doing good to the family. She prioritizes her family in front of everything.  Villain is all about coning people to get what she wants.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like heroine but I think it is best to have a bit of villain. Some qualities of villain such as being able to voice for her own desires.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	I think we can learn to solve some problems by watching the shows but I do not see other things to apply.

Participant 17 *Sworupa*

### Demographics

Age	26
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Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	Love stories, easy to pass my time, also a topic to gossip over.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	I don't think that they resemble my life directly. That is bollywood and this is real world. So, I don't think that they personally imply in my own life. But there are times which I think involves something that is also present in my own life.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine is very gentle person. She is devoted to her family and works really hard to keep it together. The villain on the other hand, does not care about family even if it is falling apart. The first thing a villain does is ask her husband to live separately from the big family. That's the difference between the villain and heroine.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like Heroine because everyone despises the villain and that's not good. She should be family orientated but the thought of family should not consume her life. It is not fair that she should give up her own wants because the family does not approve of it. That is because she needs to be educated and independent. I don't want her to be dependent on anyone for any type security. She has to be well-rounded person. This may sometimes come in the way of the family. In such a scenario, she should be able to say :this is my life and I'll do what I want. However, it does not mean that she should do whatever comes in her mind. Like a heroine, she should know her duties and responsibilities and be independent as well.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	I think that we all can apply the shows to some degrees in our lives. The social matters that they cover are very similar to ours. So sometimes I think we can learn from them and use those ways in our lives.

Participant 18 *Shilpa*

### Demographics

Age	35
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	I like comedy, romance, and climaxes.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	They don't resemble. They show stories about people who have so many troubles one after another and I don't think that's how life is like. Also, they make big deal out of small and minor things. I think that these stories and people are fake and don't exist in real life.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Well, villain is very selfish and thinks ill of other people. She does what she pleases. But let me make this clear. This is all not a very bad thing in my perspective. Sometimes you can't give up things just because people do not approve of it. Sometimes, being too close and devoted towards family and its family members can be bad. It is nice to maintain some distance. That way you can be yourself and look after the family too
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like a heroine of course. Having a well-paid job. Does not have to ask husband for money to buy things she likes. You know sometimes, when you are a house-wife, and ask for more money with your husband, they ask you for details about where they spent the money. I would not want her to spend her life like that, living in a mercy of your husband. She should go get education and get a job.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	Well, sometimes yes. The stories that they have in shows are in some ways based on our life stories but there is a lot of exaggeration. So, in that no it does not apply to my life.

Participant 19 *Munu*

### Demographics

Age	45
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	2

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	They are an easy way to pass my time. It is also very addicting. It is addicting because they have suspense and you have to watch another episode to satisfy that restlessness.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	They resemble to some extent. Sometimes the heroines have similar experiences like mine. But the thing is that it is all exaggerated.
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	Heroine respects family. Villain does not. Heroine is an ideal woman because does everything for family and does not ask anything in return. She does her responsibilities and fulfills them completely. Villain is always thinking about herself even though it may harm people in her life. I mean she does love her children and does best for them as well. Does things in order to give her children a better life but she at the time teaches her children to be selfish just like her. However, the heroine does not do that and teaches values, self-discipline as well.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like heroine. This is because I want her to be very idealistic. Everyone loves heroine. No one despises them other than the villain of course. My daughter should know her duties as a wife, mother and so on. She however, should not place herself above these priorities like villains do.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	I watch it completely for the sake of entertainment value. There are no other reasons to it. My life is not as exciting as those heroes, heroines and villains.

### Demographics

Age	54
Marital Status	M
No. of Children	3

### Codes

Question	Quotes
1 What qualities do you like about the shows?	Drama, suspense, good fighting against evil. It teaches lessons to people about being a good human being. Costs come with it but rewards also come with it.
2 How closely do you think the characters resemble your real life?	I think that my daughter-in-law resembles some of the actresses in the shows. But I don't consider myself the typical mother-in-law like that of the shows. So not in my life but many in other's life. Who knows what is going on in other's lives?
3 What distinguishes your favorite heroine from the villain?	My favorite is Tulsi and villain I really despise is Anita. Tulsi is an ideal woman because she spent her life for the goodness of her family. Anita always wanted to win in everything. She had the guts to ask for property from her dad. It was nice of Tulsi to give her the money but Anita really does not know boundary. If a woman does not know her boundary then gets doomes. I knew something was going on when Anita asked for money. She opened her own business and challenged her own brother. She destroyed his business by doing evil tricks like pulling his customer to her side. But Tulsi always respected her because she was a family after all. That's how great Tulsi and how disgusting Anita is.
4 Would you like your daughter to behave like the heroine or the villain?	Like a heroine. May be like Tulsi. She contributed her life to the well-being of her family and she knows her boundary. A virtuous woman knows her boundary and stays within that. When she crosses that boundary then she gets doomed. She should be like a villain. Someone like her tries to achieve everything and in the end she ends up being alone. You cannot run away from your family. It is everything. If you loose it then you loose everything in life.
5 Do you think that you can apply the shows to	Like I said earlier, it does not apply to my life but maybe it does in other's life.

your everyday life? If yes, in what ways?	
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*Appendix 6 Coding of Family***Devotion:** *deep love and commitment towards the family*

1. Living in harmony with the family, not fighting with each other, there is lots of peace in the family, there is also love
2. Whereas, heroines do things in a planned way so that it does not harm anyone in the process like her family
3. Like heroine she has to be family loving because family is everything
4. She does her best for the family
5. She always puts the reputation of the family first and basically gives more priority to the family than to herself
6. Heroine has a nice family relationship in the family and villain does not.
7. Heroine is patient, gentle and loves her family
8. Understandable, loving, giving priority to the family and so forth
9. I like her because she is very loving towards her family members. She understands them and is a devoted mother.
10. Heroine is a good person in a sense that she is all about doing good to the family. She prioritizes her family in front of everything.
11. The heroine is also very nice to her husband and the whole family
12. She is devoted to her family and works really hard to keep it together
13. She contributed her life to the well-being of her family and she knows her boundary
14. Tulsi is an ideal woman because she spent her life for the goodness of her family.
15. You cannot run away from your family. It is everything. If you lose it then you lose everything in life.

**Lack of engagement:** *lack of interest towards the family or family matters*

1. They don't have respect for family
2. Villain does not have a good family relationship
3. She likes to be on top of other family members
4. She does whatever she wants to without consulting the family members; it's like she does not care about them
5. It is not fair that she should give up her own wants because the family does not approve of it.
6. She is all about getting what she wants
7. watches out for things that's only good for her and does not have any regard whatsoever for other people's feelings
8. The villain on the other hand, does not care about family even if it is falling apart. The first thing a villain does is ask her husband to live separately from the big family.
9. Villain is always thinking about herself even though it may harm people in her life

**Mixed:** *discussion of devotion and less engaged at the same time*

1. She should not be that good to people and being too good is also not very nice. For example, if a mother-in-law turns out to be evil then that does not mean that she should still be good to her. She should still be good to some extent but she should not totally obey her as well.
2. However, that does not mean at all that she should behave all selfish. More like Purna than Tulsi because all that Tulsi thinks about is her family and household matters. Purna handles both her household and work at the same time and she does it very well
3. She has to be a housewife and take care of the family and kids but at the time when she has her identity, I like the shows. Purna is not only a housewife but has her identity and lives respectfully in the society
4. She should be family orientated but the thought of family should not consume her life
5. Like a heroine, she should know her duties and responsibilities and be independent as well
6. Sometimes, being too close and devoted towards family and its family members can be bad. It is nice to maintain some distance
7. Along with the respect for her family the heroines also are able to create their own identity and ideals and set an example for the rest of the people

*Appendix 7 Coding of Identity***Same as traditional woman:** *following traditional texts of women*

1. They are well behaved. They also need to have a good heart and discipline. Heroine always does good things to all people
2. The heroine adopts the way of the truth and honesty. She is not scared to adopt the way of honesty and she eventually wins the battle against the evil.
3. Heroine is the idealization of what a true woman should be and the villain is not
4. They show that she is a very idealistic woman and set an example in our society regarding what a woman should be like. I would want her to be very idealistic and be famed for her good virtues and ideals. Along with the respect for her family the heroines also are able to create their own identity and ideals and set an example for the rest of the people
5. heroine is always doing something good for the people and she is selfless
6. The heroine is also very nice to her husband and the whole family.
7. She also does not out-run the husband
8. Respecting the elders, knows her duties, does her own work and does not meddle in other's business
9. Because heroine is patient, gentle and loves her family
10. Ability to cope, understanding, religious.
11. Heroine is very gentle person. She is devoted to her family and works really hard to keep it together
12. Heroine is an ideal woman because does everything for family and does not ask anything in return. She does her responsibilities and fulfills them completely.
13. Tulsi is an ideal woman because she spent her life for the goodness of her family
14. She had the guts to ask for property from her dad. It was nice of Tulsi to give her the money but Anita really does not know boundary. If a woman does not know her boundary then gets doomed. I knew something was going on when Anita asked for money. She opened her own business and challenged her own brother. She destroyed his business by doing evil tricks like pulling his customer to her side. But Tulsi always respected her because she was a family after all. That's how great Tulsi and how disgusting Anita is.
15. A virtuous woman knows her boundary and stays within that
16. My daughter should know her duties as a wife, mother and so on. She however, should not place herself above these priorities like villains do

**Different from traditional woman:** *not parallel to the traditional texts of women*

1. She has to be career-oriented.
2. She also should not be all sacrificing
3. Komolika (a lady villain) was married twice, that too with the brothers from same mother
4. Villain pulls other people's legs and always watches out for things that's only good for her and does not have any regard whatsoever for other people's feelings

5. Villain is very manipulative
6. A villain is very selfish and only thinks about herself. It is like “me first and others later
7. Villain is all about coning people to get what she wants
8. Well, villain is very selfish and thinks ill of other people. She does what she pleases
9. Villain is always thinking about herself even though it may harm people in her life
10. She destroyed his business by doing evil tricks like pulling his customer to her side.
11. She should go get education and get a job

**Mixed:** *discussion of traditional and non-traditional at the same time*

1. Sometimes she has to be self-interested in order to stand up for her self
2. Qualities of heroine such as her presence, identity, respect, honor, ability to get along with all family members and I would like qualities of villains such as being able to stand up for what is good for you and not letting oneself to get manipulated
3. When other people torture the heroine, some shows portray her as super virtuous and says yes to everything. I hate those shows
4. She has to be a housewife and take care of the family and kids but at the time when she has her identity, I like those kinds of shows
5. I think it is best to have a bit of villain. Some qualities of villain such as being able to voice for her own desires.
6. I don't want her to be dependent on anyone for any type security.
7. She has to be well-rounded person
8. Like a heroine, she should know her duties and responsibilities and be independent as well.
9. She does what she pleases. But let me make this clear. This is all not a very bad thing in my perspective. Sometimes you can't give up things just because people do not approve of it.
10. Having a well-paid job. Does not have to ask husband for money to buy things she likes.
11. My daughter should know her duties as a wife, mother and so on. She however, should not place herself above these priorities like villains do.
12. She should not be that good to people and being too good is also not very nice. For example, if a mother-in-law turns out to be evil then that does not mean that she should still be good to her. She should still be good to some extent but she should not totally obey her as well

*Appendix 8 Coding of level of connectedness***Independent:** *seeking for individual goals and desires*

1. Sometimes she has to be self-interested in order to stand up for her self
2. My daughter should learn not to be dependent on people, people can take advantage of her
3. I would like her to be great woman and not dependent upon husband
4. I would like qualities of villains such as being able to stand up for what is good for you and not letting oneself to get manipulated.
5. When I see women successful I feel really happy
6. I like women who are successful and has earned respect from her own work and not of her husband or something like that
7. A woman should know things and just become a dull woman and spend all the time at home doing nothing
8. She does not need men to complete her
9. Well mannered like heroine, educated, if she has these things then she can stand on her own feet and does not have to depend on the husband
10. I don't want her to be dependent on anyone for any type security. She has to be well-rounded person.
11. She needs to be educated and independent.

**Anti-independence:** *not seeking for individual goals and desires*

1. They only think about how they can be better than rest
2. Being too ambitious can be dangerous and threatening
3. I don't like women who try to become over-smart and try to be know-it-all, she needs family after all.
4. A virtuous woman knows her boundary and stays within that. When she crosses that boundary then she gets doomed.
5. Someone like her tries to achieve everything and in the end she ends up being alone. You cannot run away from your family. It is everything. If you loose it then you loose everything in life.

**Interanimation:** *discussion of being independent and anti-independent at the same time*

1. I would like my daughter to behave like heroine who had qualities like not being afraid to take the right path or speak her mind but also does think about bad about people especially her family. At same time does not allow oneself to get dominated or being taken the advantage of as well.
2. She should have the qualities of both of them. If you are too good then you are doomed to taken advantage of and if you are bad then your in-laws may despise you. But if you have bit if both then it is the best way to live a good life.

3. However, that does not mean at all that she should behave all selfish. More like Prerna than Tulsi because all that Tulsi thinks about is her family and household matters. Prerna handles both her household and work at the same time and she does it very well.
4. Some qualities of villain such as being able to voice for her own desires.
5. She should be family orientated but the thought of family should not consume her life.
6. She should be able to say: this is my life and I'll do what I want. However, it does not mean that she should do whatever comes in her mind.
7. She should know her duties and responsibilities and be independent as well.
8. Sometimes, being too close and devoted towards family and its family members can be bad. It is nice to maintain some distance. That way you can be yourself and look after the family too

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