

Manufacturing Consents In Dissolving Marriages: A Qualitative Content Analysis On Pakistani Urdu TV Dramas

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Abstract

The depiction of imprudent behaviour of people in our media, especially in television dramas is common nowadays. Stories based on marital affairs and physical abuse are popular content in a majority of the Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. These dramas have gained high ratings and have become a part of daily discussions in many homes in our society. Fantasized lives, illicit independency, and unwise behaviour depicted in Visual Television Contents can change its audience's perception of the world completely. People start doubting their relationships with their significant others on a subconscious level. This depiction also sets precedent for distrust in the minds of children as well. In this paper, researchers argue that repeated television exposure increases favourable attitudes to separation between married couples. Through a qualitative content analysis, 29 male and female characters are studied from three popular Pakistani Urdu dramas telecast during 2019-2020 to explore the factors behind the clashes of the married couples portrayed in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. The study also analyses the tragedies in domestic stories of dramas that represent the vulnerability of the married couple's relationship.

Keywords: Pakistani Drama, Women Representation, Urdu TV Drama.

تلخیص

پاکستانی ٹیلی ویژن ڈراموں میں لوگوں کے غیر مہذب رویوں کی عکاسی کا رجحان بڑھتا جا رہا ہے۔ ازدواجی امور اور جسمانی استحصال پر مبنی کہانیاں پاکستانی اردو ٹی وی ڈراموں میں عام دکھائی جاتی ہیں۔ عوامی مقبولیت حاصل کرنے والے یہ ڈرامے، ہمارے معاشرے میں روزانہ مرہ گفتگو کا حصہ بن چکے ہیں۔ خیالی زندگی، بے جا خود انحصاری، اور ٹیلی ویژن مشمولات کی طرف سے پیش کردہ غیر دانشمندانہ سلوک، دنیا کے بارے میں اپنے ناظرین کے خیال کو پوری طرح بدل سکتا ہے۔ لوگ لا شعوری طور پر باہمی تعلقات کو مشکوک نظر سے دیکھنا شروع کر دیتے ہیں۔ ڈراموں کی یہ عکاسی بچوں کے ذہنوں میں بھی عدم اعتماد پیدا کرتی ہے۔ محققین نے ۲۰۲۰-۲۰۱۹ کے دوران تین مشہور پاکستانی اردو ڈراموں کے ۲۹ مرد اور خواتین کرداروں کا مطالعہ کیا ہے۔ انہوں نے مشمولات کے تجزیے کے ذریعے اس تحقیق میں یہ بتایا ہے کہ پاکستانی اردو ٹی وی ڈراموں میں دکھائے جانے والے جوڑوں کے مابین تنازعات کے پیچھے بڑی وجوہات اور عوامل کیا ہیں۔ یہ تحقیق، ڈراموں کی گھریلو کہانیوں میں

ہونے والے ان سانحات کا بھی تجزیہ کرتی ہے جو ازدواجی رشتوں کی کمزوری کی نمائندگی کرتے ہیں۔ اس مقالے میں محققین نے استدلال کیا ہے کہ ٹیلی ویژن ڈراموں کی وسیع نمائش شادی شدہ جوڑوں کے مابین علیحدگی کے سازگار رویوں میں اضافے کا باعث بنتی ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: پاکستانی ڈرامہ، خواتین کی نمائندگی، اردو ٹی وی ڈرامہ

Introduction

TV dramas have a significant impact on the daily lives of people. It has become an integral part of influencing people's actions. Television drama series are good sources of amusement, motivation, and enthusiasm. People watch the dramas for several reasons such as, they are simply fascinated by the perceived truth depicted, or they choose to watch the drama since it emotionally moves them. Women are usually the target audience and so they are the ones who are inspired (Lehmann, 2006). In summary, television shows cause more harm than good. Because children develop desensitized to violence and prefer to emulate what they see on television, television shows may lead to aggressive and violent conduct. Not only that, but television shows may have an influence on our subconscious (Martin, 2018).

Television media is known as an image of the virtual environment and it is one of the channels that shapes our lives. The young generation is primarily influenced by the media because they are emotionally developing. Teens and young children tend to imitate certain celebrities who are presented on TV (Muzna, 2012). In other words, the ideals and expectations of the current generation are not the product of our culture, but rather the media, unlike previous eras.

Fantasized lives, illicit independence, and unwise behaviour depicted on television contents can alter their audience's perception of the world completely. The small marital affairs highlighted in the daily soaps can have a negative impact on people's mind as they might intimate the risky behaviour that they see on television, such as hatred emerging between couples due to adversarial influence delineated by TV (Wang, 2015).

Numerous countries have developed contents to promote good bearing in mind the influence of the media. The situation in Pakistan, however, is the opposite. Today, the theme and material of Pakistani dramas have caused our firm hierarchical social patterns more harm than good. In the name of contemporary entertainment, we are subjected to all sorts of nonsensical contents in these dramas, from pregnancy to contraception, premarital relations with unconstitutional children, thus encountering all kinds of negative factors present in our community (Wali, 2014).

The public can easily be overwhelmed by the media in our culture. It can also be assumed that the media can lead to the propagation of divorce. In particular, we know that the television series perpetuates divorce and reinforces its adoption. The overriding message in numerous documents is that there has been a decline in the stigma associated with divorce with its increased rates (Kamaruddin, 2005). This pattern is more evident than ever in the young people, who are typically less traditional when it comes to the institution of marriage (Cunningham & Thornton, 2006). Television is an audio-visual medium with enormous potential to affect its spectators to the greatest extent possible. Its technique of persuasion sets it apart from the mainstream press. Furthermore, it has a higher entertainment value. As a result, it is not a priority for individuals in terms of information or education. According to the history of television in Pakistan, it was first launched as an art form (Naveed, 2011).

Observers have formulated the cultivation theory to counter television dramas' high-view results. Television has been certified for dramatic changes in people's lives by being fed false knowledge through dramas. It also hinders thinking which is another one of the dangerous consequences. People watch dramas and they assume that reality is being depicted. The people who watch TV dramas regularly in India and Pakistan were more likely to approve of this notion in an elaborate manner (Olenick, 2000).

Moreover, it has also been observed that teenagers develop new and different beliefs about romance after watching television dramas based on abusive relationships. It further affects their attachment styles and parasocial interactions because they already have set beliefs about romance, love, and relationships that are not ideal and in contrast with reality. Most teenagers and even adults start avoiding their other half just because they see something negative in the drama serials aired on Television. Pakistani Urdu dramas are full of many such examples and stories where a female is shown to be under the guidance of a male figure who can do whatever he wants with her, but she cannot raise her voice for her rights because of his respect. In these operas, respect is viewed as an indication of love, and as a result, people anticipate such behaviour from ladies in real life. Male figures also develop this belief that being rude and not showing love is also a part of love, and a relationship can only be saved when a female will be kept under control, this shows how much negativity Pakistani dramas are spreading in society which is eventually establishing new stereotypes for the upcoming generations (Aziz & Saadia, 2021).

Another alarming effect of Pakistani dramas on youth and the overall country is that, many romantic scenes are being shown in these dramas, leaving an adverse impact on the viewers' minds. Pakistan is an Islamic country, and showing romantic and indecent scenes on a public platform, on TV channels that people of almost all ages view, can disturb and damage the traditions and values of a religious society. By watching such scenes, people start to engage themselves in the same acts as these affect their

psychological behaviour, and it is possible that soon this will become a part of Pakistani culture. Even though Pakistan is different from the West, showcasing such dramas that are against the ethics and values of the country will indulge youth in inappropriate actions, which will soon become uncontrollable (Küngerü, 2021).

The extramarital affairs that are shown in Urdu dramas are other negative side of Pakistani media. In almost every drama serial, whenever a quarrel arises between a couple, an outsider appears who acts as a catalyst in ruining the relationship, thus giving our society a lesson that a protagonist can ruin relationships and that married people can have extramarital affairs (Sheharyar, 2021). The portrayal of women in Pakistani dramas is the factor that is contributing towards creating contradictions in people's minds because, in some dramas, physical abuse is seen as a normal thing, and women are kept indoors, while in others, women are given independence. Some dramas depict a woman as someone beautiful, having particular facial features, while some dramas show that women do not need to wear makeup. Thus, our society sees women as someone who can be brutalized and humiliated by men and who cannot raise her voice for her rights, even if she belongs to a high-class society. The topics like adultery are also shown in Urdu dramas, and throughout the drama stereotypical blaming of women is showcased (Tabassum & Amin, 2021).

For this study, the following research questions have been designed:

- What factors are the biggest contributors of conflicts among the characters of Pakistani Urdu dramas?
- How do tragedies in the domestic stories of dramas represent the vulnerability of the married couple's relationship?

Review of Literature

According to a number research studies television media has a measurable and intense effect on the outlooks, faith and the behaviours of its viewers as they perceive a lot from what they consume daily through the media (Chaffee, 1986; Ward, 2003). Television contents leave a deep influence on its audience and the stories outlined by the TV drama series can alter the viewer's perception of the world. The viewers then try to execute these in their real life situations that can completely change the patterns of their lives. Watching television is considered as a non-resistive activity and almost every person watching TV daily has made it as the most important device out of all the modern technologies. Every house in our society has at least one television as it is considered as the cheapest source for entertainment through the contents like TV shows, news, dramas and films (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986).

TV is a very common source to inculcate ideas, expectations and fantasies of marriage in our society. The idealized lives with happy endings are shown on television that can provoke unrealistic desires in people for marriage. However, in reality, everything about

marriage comes out to be different, which disappoints a many people and affects their interpersonal relations (Gerbnert-et al., 1986).

The younger generation seeks independence for themselves by finding ways to meet and interact with people beyond their families. The three primary socialization tools for youth are: schools, their families and media. Television is giving modern people an idea that complex human issues can be solved very easily and simply, or if it does not resolve without any complications then the relationship is not likely worthy of redemption(Kelly & Donohew, 1999).

Turkish TV dramas contribute to crafting the country's brand image and thereby influence viewers' travel-related intentions. A survey of 400 Arab viewers revealed that exposure to Turkish TV dramas results in increased intentions to visit and shop in Turkey as well as to purchase products made in Turkey (Ertz, 2020).

A lot of research studies (Sheharyar, 2021; Tabassum & Amin, 2021; Wang, 2015) demonstrate that television has a great effect on its viewer's knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of surrounding relationships. (Jorg. 2017) While attempting to interface family TV content straightforwardly to recognitions about real-life families, grade younger students were examined through surveys and observations. The data compared the information to complete investigation with family TV Content for the previous three years. An adequate relationship was uncovered about family substance and discernments about real family links. This relationship shows that genuine desires might be influenced by broadcast family depictions (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes, 1981).

A research by Kunkel, Biely, Eyal, Cope-Farrar, Donnerstein & Fandrich, (2003) state that behaviours as well as faiths regarding relationship problems for instance activities like extramarital sexual contacts were mostly associated with such media effect. A similar study has shown that youngsters who watched more television were more influenced by the real-life bias of relationship behaviours with the ones they see on television. The behaviour includes, giving birth to children without having to marry and the use of sexual activities, especially to attain strength in a connection. The studies discovered it is very normal for a person to have similar convictions of his own sexual encounters when contrasted with those portrayed on TV. This suggests that there is a connection between the impact of the media substance and sexual fulfilment.

Today's media (Zeb, Khan, & Ajmal, 2021)are showing an increasing degree of sexual content in almost every television series and films. The sexual substance on TV happens as a suggestion instead of a genuine depiction of the image of characters who are being portrayed in sexual activities. This implies sexual content has become an essential part of almost 80% of television content which encourages the freedom to youngsters to do the same in real life, without any hesitation, investigation of the prime time drama series, it has been seen sexual activities displayed on television were not being stopped rather such kinds of contents were

encouraged by mostly young people. Most of these implied sexual activities are shown between unmarried couples that are taking the youth towards a whole new perception of the world. This does not prefer marrying the ones you love, but instead these kinds of contents are actually encouraging young people to get involved in illegal activities. Such activities also affect the couple's relationship by separating them sooner than they expected (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991; Ward, 2002). Interpersonal relationships are frequently being portrayed in the modern fictional family's television contents as well. These soaps, mostly portrayed the close relationships which deeply influenced the people (Greenberg, 1982). Daily family soaps have become a rich source of close relationships today (Porto, 2002).

Television content analyses also focus on gender role portrayals as the studies have discovered that television indicates men and women as totally opposite to each other. The male characters are often represented as the most intelligent, and ascendant ones. While females frequently behave as subordinates to the male leadership, often being pictured as submissive, romantic and emotional (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). This can be one possible cause of gender roles in children's television shows. Television continues to be one of the most influential and commonly used media by children, considering the broad variety of media available today (Ride out, 2015; Feierabend et al., 2017). People tend to agree with and approve the functions of people on TV, in any event, when we know that we do not relate to them in real life (Signorielli, 1990). The fathers depicted in the present network broadcasts are commonly dumbfounded, pointless, and not nurturing (Bate & Bowker 1997).

Individuals are given these models to follow, and they may think that it's hard to keep up sound associations with peers. These portrayals to some degree bring down the confidence of individuals who admire the ideal body types as they watch them. There have been a few changes in these patterns, where females are depicted as experts and men as sustaining. However, evidence points out that early evening TV presents males in places of the super force than females (Lauzen & Deiss, 2009; Signorielli 1999). Socio-cultural Perspective is a theory used in fields such as psychology that is used to explain the awareness of people's situations and how their attitudes are directly influenced by their climate, social and cultural variables. Shibley-Hyde and Durik (2000) described a theoretical socio-cultural viewpoint on sexual disparities between men and women. There are four main factors in the theory: 1) Power: men have more force than the ladies on numerous levels, (for example, institutional and relational levels). 2) Women's education: As education offers a woman access to more powerful jobs, it gives a woman power. A female's fearlessness develops when she has had proper schooling being presented with details about sexual orientation, for example, women's liberation where she becomes more acquainted with her privileges. According to this theory, women with the highest level of education have the same power as men. Then again, females with no training have no force when contrasted with men. 3) Least powerful groups: Groups with less force like females give more consideration and adjust their practices more to the ones stronger (men) than the converse. 4) Gender roles: Shape the activities of individuals.

The components of the multifaceted socio-cultural hypothesis remain to demonstrate that only in a TV sitcom are the dumbfounded, clumsy ideas about relationships.

Modern television dramas are rendering a concept of women being independent and caring likewise their husbands are likely to have more marital conflicts. As the two genders then cannot maintain and keep a balance between their social and personal lives, where the woman might not be able to fulfil all her responsibilities according to assigned gender roles like household etc. (Work Life, 2020). The kind of men that are depicted on TV are nothing similar to the men, in reality. It appears that the TV relationships, family jobs, and genuine marriage and family are absolutely inverse. Ward, Gorvine, and Cytron-Walker (2002) discovered that identity was a significant element with respect to the impact of media on the view point of relationships. In this examination, scientists noticed no immediate impact of sexuality on TV; they have noticed that men were probably going to report a more serious level of sexual fulfilment as compared to females. Females were almost certain when contrasted with men to stare at the TV and were bound to have moderate mentalities with respect to marriage and connections compared to men.

Youngsters are huge consumers of TV and other media sources (Roberts, 2000) and are presented with bogus ideas about personal connections (Harris & Scott, 2002). It appears that numerous teenagers do not have a strong comprehension of what a marriage actually is and how a solid one is maintained, and study found that the media adversely influences the behaviour of men. In single parent households, where there may be no predominant good example for young men. The men we see on TV have an impact on this scenario. A study called for an expansion in the significant portrayal of the images of men who are appropriate in relational correspondence and who could sustain a progressive relationship with women. In addition, the study indicated for portrayal of an ideal monogamous wedding environment (Hatch, 2001).

TV in general depicts men who confine or conceal their feelings from women, which is something contrary to what they would do in a sound conjugal relationship. Similarly, examinations have additionally indicated that men will in general limit correspondence and keep down their feelings simply like the personas they watch on Television. This will in general describe young boys and men that they ought to go after the cruder mental guard, for example, savagery, substance misuse and not look for proficient mental assistance (Good & Wood, 1995; Good, Dillon, & Sherrod, 2000). One examination inspected reality dating TV shows found that male watchers (when contrasted with male light watchers) were bound to have cliché perspectives about dating like, dating is a game and females are sexual just items (Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, & Smith, 2007). All the research above shows that the relationships depicted by television gives the wrong image of romantic relations between unmarried couples, whereas marriage is a healthy relationship. Fictional divorce portrayed by television has actually contributed to real-life divorce decisions taken by several people. Even during the time when divorce was taken

as the most defamed thing, people were actively following the marital ups and downs of the celebrities in their practical lives. Television provides more content about the young adult relationships due to which couples think that they will experience no conflicts at the start of their relationship, thinking that these relationships are easy to maintain as portrayed in the television stories (Johnson & Holmes, 2009).

Distorted processing of social knowledge could then increase the potential for conflict and inadequate conflict management during interactions with romantic partners (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Modern society may have taken away the stigma associated with divorce, but has failed to prevent it with an attitude in the favour of marriage (Bayme, 1994). Television media present an idealized view of marriage, which provokes unrealistic expectations in people regarding marriages. However, once they are married and their expectations fail, and that is when they realise that the fictional relationships portrayed by TV stories are not true to real life. There is evidence of a strong and constructive correlation between these perceptions and marital intentions. In terms of both the cultivation theory, the usage, and the pleasure perspective of media power (Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Government laws and the media should be used as a tool in solidifying marriages. Lowered expectations regarding marital arrangements and the expanding degree of the number of divorces contribute to the overwhelming attacks against the institution of marriage (Bayme, 1994). An American Jewish Committee report conducted in 1983, disclosed an issue that how marital difficulties were portrayed in amusing situations on daily TV soaps. This report saw that conjugal clashes were ridiculously being settled in a short time, coming about to the idea that connections were anything but difficult to keep up (Kovsky, 1983). The intimation of these sorts of ideas can greatly affect susceptible watchers. At the point when watchers start to contrast their own uncertain relationship clashes and those of anecdotal characters, they may call their own issues as inconsistent. Many researchers have used theories to determine the results and the effects of divorce. Exchange theory, for example, depicts the notion that positive views of divorce correlate with a forbidden sense of commitment and marriage enriching practices (Amato & Rogers, 1999). While, Cognitive dissonance theory, predicts that a person in an unhappy marriage will find ways to manipulate the agreement of marriage and even adopt a strong perception of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1999).

Gender and age also play vital roles in the way society thinks of the institution of divorce. Men tend to see divorce more realistically than women. Children from homes where a divorce has occurred are more likely to see the father as responsible for the family's breakup (Lepak, 1985). Moreover, children who come from a divorced household are more likely to be more tolerant of divorce than those whose parents remained married (Jennings, Salts, & Smith, 2008). Men tend to see divorce more realistically than women. Gender and age play vital roles in the way society thinks of the institution of divorce.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the Cultivation theory of mass communication. This theory is correlated to how media content affects people's minds, their attitudes and behaviours. Theory of cultivation is a framework used as sociological explanations of communication. It implies that those frequently exposed to the media for a long time are more likely to see the social reality of the environment portrayed by the media they view, influencing their patterns of behaviour (Deuze, 2021). The theory suggests that, as TV is a collective form of communication and has pathos oriented concepts. Watching will lead people to adopt on to the values and beliefs that are not realistic (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). While intense TV viewers usually rated society more brutal than moderate viewers, information for moderate viewers has shown a more destructive environment in some cases in which they did watch a violent act (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999).

Therefore, there are the two sections of cultivation: the first order and the second order effects. First order effects relate to the important relationship among extreme seeing and stereotypes of society, for example, the inability to believe that divorce is regarded as ordinary and unavoidable by everyone (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; Gerbner, et al., 1986). The practice of cultivation is often believed to be a realization of views as they are frequently portrayed on screen, of personal requirements and evaluations of the truthfulness of society rather than just an approximation (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986). The people, who are typically categorized as severe-screen viewers, have a huge attitude towards hateful behaviour, as opposed to those marked as low- or moderate audiences, through the cultivation theory hence the more television individuals watch, the more likely they are to maintain a perspective of reality and they start doubting their relationships with their significant others on a subconscious level. This depiction also sets precedent for distrust in the minds of children as well. In this paper, researchers argue that repeated television exposure increases favourable attitudes to separation between married couples.

Methodology

This study aims to establish if there exists an association between intense media and divorce beliefs. This study assumes that Pakistani dramas reinforce the anti-feminist perspective of male dominance and sex discrimination through the depiction of ironically negative roles. There arise some research questions:

- What are the factors in the Urdu TV Dramas that contribute to the reasons behind the conflicts among its characters?
- How do tragedies in the domestic stories of dramas represent the vulnerability of the married couple's relationship?

- What are the details of the selected TV Dramas that include the attributes of main characters i.e., the couple, the negative characters, and the other conflict-causing mechanisms?

Hsieh & Shannon (2005) and Patton (2002) define qualitative content analysis as a research approach that attempts to discover fundamental consistencies and meanings through the systematic classification process of coding and detecting themes or patterns. The data analysis was carried out in phases. Through a qualitative content analysis, the researchers have studied 16 female and 13 male characters from three of the current popular Pakistani Urdu dramas telecasted between 2019-2020. All of the drama that has been selected for the research has seven and above ratings on IMDB. 20 episodes of each of the dramas were screened thoroughly. Male and female characters were chosen according to the following criteria:

- a) Any leading character that appeared on the screen playing the largest role in the piece. The leading actor in this study is referred to a person who typically plays larger roles or an actor who has a respected body of work.
- b) Any other characters referring to the same leading characters.
- c) Any character whose name appeared in the finishing? / (ending) credits of the drama serial.

Through the above criteria, a total 29 characters with significant roles were selected that appeared in the 23 episodes of each of the dramas. On analysing the characteristics and personalities of the above- mentioned characters from each drama serial many similarities were discovered. The common factors have been identified as those that directly or indirectly affect married lives of the couples in the drama series.

Analysis

Content analysis is a method which might be applied with either qualitative or quantitative data, and it can be utilised in an inductive or deductive manner. Although qualitative content analysis is widely utilised in clinical placement, minimal information on the analysis process has been published, and many research books simply give a brief characterization of this approach. Inductive content analysis is performed when there has been no previous research on the phenomena or when they are fragmented. If the overall goal was to test a previous hypothesis in a different context or to compare components at extended distances, a deductive method might be beneficial. The goal of utilising content analysis was to create a model that would characterise the phenomena conceptually. Both interpretivist analytical procedures are divided into three stages: preparation, organisation, and reporting. In both techniques, the preparatory step is comparable. Inductive content analysis derives the concepts from the facts. When the deductive content analysis is applied, the framework of the analysis is operationalized based on prior information.

Rivalry

One of the main factors that causes conflicts between a married couple is the villain or the rival of the storyline. One of the main characters in a drama usually is portrayed as the rival who tries to separate the couple. For example, in the drama serial *Nand*, Gohar is depicted as the rival where she is successful in breaking her brother Saqib and his wife Raabi's marriage with her constant efforts.

Negligence

The idiocy or innocence of the hero or heroine in the past often causes serious troubles for couples in the future. This is one of the main reasons for separations between the couples in Pakistani dramas. As observed in the drama serial *Jalan*, Misha had always ignored all the signs and indications of her husband cheating on her with her own sister. This small negligence took her towards the end of her marriage.

Defeated/ Unsuccessful Character

The characters are often misinterpreted by the others, and this is also one of the reasons for conflicts. This misunderstanding often leads the other characters to jealousy or into taking the wrong steps. In the drama *Meray paas tum ho*, Mehwish thought that Hania (who was the unsuccessful heroine being the second lead role) had an affair with Danish which led Mehwish towards hate, jealousy and wrongdoing.

Affluence/ Luxuriance

This one is the most common and dominant factor that usually appeals characters towards wrongdoing. In the drama series, some characters are always drawn to the luxurious lifestyles of others. A person who is drawn towards the dreams of a rich and luxurious life usually leaves other relationships for its sake. For example, Mehwish in the drama *Meray paas tum ho*.

Envy

This is the green-eyed monster that desires to have everything that others have. Envy causes insecurities among people. For instance, Gohar (sister-in-law) in the drama *Nand* is portrayed as an envious person who wanted everything (money, jewellery, luxury life) that her brother's wife had and in order to take everything from them, she destroyed their marital lives.

Unrealistic Standards

Keeping the wrong expectations, too much trust, or over-confidence shown by the hero/heroine in his/her partner, is also a reason as to why couples end their relationships. In the drama *Mery pas tum ho*, Danish thinks that even if he is not rich and is not able to fulfil a

lot of his wife's wishes, she will always respect and love him the same way. Keeping such expectations from a wrong person (his wife) disappoints and collapses at the end.

Materialism

This is an element that completely destroys a relationship. This is one of the main factors that causes friction between people in dramas as well as in real lives. Mostly heroines or other female characters are portrayed as materialistic in the dramas. For example, in the dramas *Mery pas tum ho* and *Jalan*, Mehwish and Nisha are depicted as materialistic where they leave behind all their loved ones and break ties just for the sake of worldly objects.

Lack of Compromise

There is a lack of compromises made by the couples. In a good and devoted relationship, compromises mean making a deliberate decision to embrace each other exactly for who they are. In the drama *Nand*, Gohar loved her husband, Jehangir until he was rich, but as soon as his financial status declined, she started fighting and arguing with him over little things, and finally got separated at the end. All of this was because she could not compromise over the luxurious life that he provided before.

Liberalism

This factor tries to highlight the 'modern and professional women' concept in most TV dramas. The idea of a modern woman always being wrong does not only affect drama couples but also real life couples. In the drama *Mery pas tum ho*, Mehwish's friend Anoushay is shown to be a very modern, rich and liberal woman who has already taken a separation from her husband and then manipulates Mehwish by criticising her husband (Danish) for not being rich. This is one of the reasons why Mehwish is upset with her husband most of the time for not providing her with the same luxurious lifestyle that her friend has.

Misleading/ misguidance

The negative characters are repeatedly seen to be misleading the main and other characters in the story. The ones misled tend to make wrong decisions which becomes the very reason for their divorce. In the drama *Jalan*, Nisha has misled both Asfandyar and Meenu by telling/saying things to each in order to break their marriage and the couple is also seen to be deeply affected by her lies.

Superior Complex

Disregarding your partner is one of the habits, which is a precursor of imminent divorce. Considering your wife/husband as inferior is also a reason for couples splitting up in the dramas. In the drama *Nand*, Gohar, after the downfall of her husband's financial status, starts to say hurtful things to him, and belittles him by comparing his financial situation with her brothers, who are very rich. She has a superiority complex over her husband which then leads to their separation.

Secrets

Lack of trust between couples is one of the dominant factors causing clashes. When the secrets that have been kept from their partner emerge, problems start to arise. In the drama serial *Mery pas tum ho*, Mehwish hides the secret visits of Shehwar at their home in the absence of her husband Danish. She enjoyed Shehwar's flirty and poetically talks while knowing Danish would never encourage this. The number of secret meetings and flirting kept increasing between the two, and when Danish came across the secrets, he divorced Mehwish on her demand.

Findings and Discussion

In almost every drama serial, conflict is the main reason behind the separation of a married couple. The characters and their roles are highlighted in this section that play a part in the conflicts. Some dialogues have also been added in this study to support the subject. Since the dialogues were in Urdu, they have been translated into English. Some of the main factors include wrongdoer, negligence, affluence, and secrets that are responsible for the couple's breakup. In all of the three dramas, (*Nand*, *Jalan*, and *Mery pas tum ho*) women are shown as the culprit. These wrongdoers are indicative of hatred in many aspects: they are vicious, overconfident, proud, aggressive, powerful, paranoid, smart and manipulative. Mehwish in the drama serial *Mery pas tum ho* is the lead female character with a negative role. It's evident after two or three episodes that the gorgeous Mehwish is materialistic dreaming of diamond necklaces— way beyond her husband's income. She begins to fantasize by seeing her fancy friend Anoushay and then meets a rich and handsome man, Shehwar. His wealth attracts her and finally she decides to get divorce from her husband and tries to spend her life with Shehwar.

In the drama serial *Nand*, 'Gohar' is always doing wrong things to her own family members. The concept of the drama is actually the battle between Gohar and Rabi (her sister-in-law) where Rabi is shown as the innocent character, meanwhile, Gohar is shown as vindictive, planning her new agendas against Rabi to pull her down. With Gohar's continuous efforts, Rabi and Saqib finally separate. Similarly, considering other scenes where Gohar wrongly accuses Rabi of many things just to take over everything she has. This is how viewers have characterized Gohar as the evil character in this drama serial.

The factor of ‘Negligence’ is common in most of the situations leading towards divorce in all three drama serials. This is recurring in situations where one of the partner’s neglects or ignores the other’s mistakes. This is where they lose their partner by letting them get away with their wrongdoings. In the drama serial *Mery pas tum ho*, Danish constantly agrees with everything that Mehwish says or wants, and this is where she starts getting unconstrained. Similarly, there are many examples in the other episodes where Danish ignores the mistakes made by her wife and this is where Mehwish starts to take advantage. In the drama serial *Jalan*, Misha (wife of Asfandyar) was noted as the one ignoring small signs and indications that could ruin her married life in the future. She did not notice the reasons why her sister kept visiting her so frequently and why she started becoming frank with her Husband (Asfandyar) so soon. If she had kept a check on her sister and husband from the start, then she might have stopped her husband from meeting with her own sister. She ignored all the wrong signs by thinking that her sister comes visiting her so often out of love, when in reality, the reason was the exact opposite. In episode 5, Nisha successfully plays her family and fiancé to break up with her. Her mother, being worried, calls Meenu and asks her to come over or take Nisha with her for an outing so that she relaxes a bit. On hearing this, Meenu says: “Do not worry mother, I will bring Nisha along with me, when she stays here for some days, she will be fine”. Meenu not knowing that Nisha was playing and doing this on purpose allowed her to stay with her. While Nisha pretended to be innocent, wanting to stay as long as she could at Meenu’s house to manipulate her husband towards herself.

This is one of the main factors we all tend to see in most of the dramatic stories. People running after luxurious life destroys every relationship. In the drama serial *Nand*, Gohar is depicted as the character who lived a life full of luxuries with her husband but after the downfall of her husband. She starts misbehaving with her husband and mother-in-law and lets them down by comparing their financial conditions with her rich brother. In the second scene of episode 10 of drama serial *Jalan*, Gohar while having lunch at a restaurant with her friend says: “The comfort that I have at my brother’s house, I have never found it at Jehangir’s house. I was told to turn on the AC carefully and had to eat whatever was cooked. I had to face so many restrictions. I can’t survive over there!”

Her friend: “So what have you thought about it?”

Gohar complained: “That man is of no use, I don’t want to live there, I want this to end completely”.

Friend: “If you have planned this then why did you have your brother married? You could have delayed it for a few years”

Gohar: “Yes! I made a huge mistake”.

In the drama *Mery pas tum ho*, Mehwish is shown to be a girl who falls in love with an average boy who loves her very much, but is not rich enough to provide her with all the luxuries she wanted. One day while helping her rich friend with her shopping, Mehwish falls for a very pretty diamond necklace which she later shows to Danish by taking him

outside the shop where the necklace is displayed. Danish who was struggling financially trying to make ends meet with a very limited salary, was not able to buy the necklace for his wife. In the first episode, Mehwish's friend Anoushay comes to visit her to tell her about her brother's upcoming marriage. She feels pity for Danish that on a month's end, he would not be able to buy his wife 3 dresses for the event. In another scene, Mehwish tells her friend: "I am only able to save 1000 or 2000 from Danish's monthly salary and I do not know for how long I will be able to do that. If Roomi (mehwish and danish's son) starts school soon then I'll be left with nothing".

Mehwish knew that Danish would never adopt corruption like his other colleagues in order to get rich as his late father advised him to work honestly. He would never want to upset the dead soul of his father by doing any wrong deeds. Whereas, Mehwish always desired for a luxury life and fantasized about her rich friend's life who spent caring free for shopping and eating in very expensive restaurants.

The person who was unsuccessful in getting his loved one in the drama while also being the reason of misunderstandings between the drama's lead couples. In the drama 'Nand', Jehangir is shown to be that unsuccessful character who ended up being the reason of divorce between Raabi and Saqib. Jehangir was always trying to save his relationship with his wife (Gauhar) for the sake of his son and his own mental peace but never got a good response from his wife.

As being depicted as the defeated one, Jehangir is also shown to be one of the reasons behind the lead couple's separation. Dragged by his own wife into an unpleasant situation, he unintentionally becomes her weakest victim. In the first scene of episode 16 in drama *Jalan*, Jehangir slaps his wife over her false accusations. Gauhar being furious at this, puts a knife on her wrist and emotionally blackmails her brother to divorce his wife, saying Raabi is the reason for everything wrong." Saqib, you give her a divorce right now or else I will commit suicide." says Gauhar repeatedly and loudly. Like Jehangir, Ahmer is the defeated character in the drama serial 'Jalan', as Nisha (her fiancé) leaves her for materialistic gain.

The negative character, who wants to have everything that others have and cannot bear anybody around them to be happier or richer than them. In the drama serial 'Jalan', Nisha is portrayed as jealous of her own sister as she marries a rich and successful businessman. From the beginning of the drama, Nisha was a greedy person who wanted every good thing that her sister had. From using her dress to take away the rich man's proposal Meenu had got, Nisha wanted to have the very best just for herself. In the same episode, Nisha gets engaged to her cousin Ahmer but even after being engaged, she did not want her elder sister to have a richer suitor than hers'. She frequently starts comparing her fiancé's financial status with Meenu's fiancé. In her run of jealousy and selfishness, she later hurts her fiancé and her sister as well. She is constantly worrying about her sister

who is about to marry a rich man, because her fiancé might never be able to provide the same luxurious life that Meenu will be living very soon.

In the drama serial *Nand*, Gohar (the nand) is seen to be this envious person, who wants to have everything that her sister-in-law has. Busy plotting against Raabi, she hated having to see the luxuries and a loving husband that Raabi had. When Rabbi gets pregnant, her husband Saqib starts taking extra care of his wife. On becoming aware of this news, Gauhar gets more jealous of Rabbi. In episode 14, Gauhar starts to plan for Raabi's miscarriage. In the second scene of this episode, Gohar thinks about her brother Saqib scolding her son Umar for hitting Raabi with a football. Being jealous she thinks "Raabi's child can never take Umar's place and I will not let that happen". Ultimately, her plan is successful and Rabbi, unfortunately, goes through a miscarriage.

The unrealistic standards that have been set by our society are the reason for some of the basic factors that cause conflicts between a couple. Talking about the predetermined standards, expectations have a huge role in breaking hearts. This is when a person begins to expect from his/her partner, but those expectations are not fulfilled. Delusions begin and couples start to grow apart from each other. In the drama serial 'Mery pas tum ho', Danish expects a lot of things from his wife Mehwish. Danish is shown to be a middle-class man who gets an average salary from a government institution, and he naturally expects his wife to support him in these conditions. However, his wife is depicted greedy as she always tries to convince him to take bribes which he would not take.

The drama shows that even though Mehwish was upset with his husband for returning the big amount that he had gotten as a bribe from his office. Danish still expected her to understand his situation, but he did not know that Mehwish would develop feelings for a rich man and instead of understanding the honesty of her husband, she would leave him for money. Where most of the people are only after materialistic gain. This is also a very common reason for separation of a couple. If a partner, in particular a husband, cannot afford to pay for his wife/partner, according to their partner's expectations, they leave or betray them.

In the 4th scene of episode 6 of drama *Mery pas tum ho*, Danish tells Mehwish that he did not like the way Shehwar gazed at her. In the previous episode, Shehwar invites Danish and Mehwish to a dinner at his home, where on returning, he gives them all presents and gifts Mehwish an expensive necklace. While talking about the night, Danish says: "Today I feel that I am unworthy and that I could not provide you everything". Here, Danish expects her wife to leave behind materialistic gain and accept that fact that they both are enough to complete each other but Mehwish being greedy wants more than that which she clearly expressed in her words as well.

Marriage is a relationship built on the basis of compromise, love and support. Compromise from both sides is very important in order for a stable marriage. In drama

serial *Nand*, the 10th scene of episode 7 clearly shows that Gauhar cannot compromise anything to save her marriage. Not even trying to understand that her mother-in-law has nowhere to go except for her son's home. Even though she is so nice to Gauhar, she cannot make a compromise. This is where she spoils her relationship with her husband. A Liberal character is a person who is blunt or bold or maybe over-confident. Sometimes, boldness is good, but most of the time when a person becomes over-confident, one can spoil their relationships, and this is the reason why discussing liberalism as a factor is important in causing couples to be apart. In the drama serial *Mery pas tum ho*, Mehwish's best friend who visits her often, who is a rich girl and has enough to spend on extra expenditures. She is a liberal girl, and this is what inspires her friend Mehwish. Her friend had everything she ever wanted. For example, in the second scene of episode 2, while shopping with Mehwish, Anoushay buys very expensive dresses and Mehwish taking her desire just sits down.

In another scene, while Anoushay is looking for an expensive jewellery set in a shop, she looks at Mehwish and asks: "It's so beautiful, right?" Mehwish nods. "Pack this", she says to the salesman. Meanwhile, Mehwish is looking at her favourite necklace. After thinking about something, she calls Anoushay to the side and says: "Shall I ask you something? Can you give me 80 thousand rupees as a loan? I will return it to you in eight months, meaning ten thousand monthly". Mehwish knew that her husband might not even be able to pay the monthly instalment of ten thousand rupees and uses her son's education savings. Still, she bought the necklace being inspired by the expensive shopping of her friend and that she could not stop herself despite knowing all the facts. This is how a liberal friend like Anoushay stopped Mehwish from doing her household responsibilities and then charmed her with her luxuries.

One of the main factors that causes conflicts and misunderstandings between couples. A mislead given by the wrong person can impact a couple's marriage life. The secret behind a successful marriage is love and respect for the partner. If one thinks of oneself as better than the other partner, then this kind of marriage can never be stable. In the drama serial *Nand*, Gauhar is depicted as an arrogant woman who, after the downfall of her husband's financial status, starts to belittle him and never misses a chance to insult him in any way especially in monetary terms by signifying her brothers' wealth. In the third scene of episode 3, Jehangir and his mother worryingly discuss Gauhar's latest scandal in which she insulted her husband too. His mother says: "She humiliated you so much, and nobody had ever thought about it.", Jehangir sadly: You know mother, it's her habit. Says mother angrily: "You should not have gotten involved." Jehangir then explains the reason. In the above scene, both mother and son are worried about Gauhar's behaviour as she insults her husband, Jehangir, in public and then later she would leave him because she had a superior complex over her husband who was not very rich like her brothers.

When hidden things open up, they can cause serious troubles. This factor depicts a situation where one person is involved in wrong-doing or hiding an extra marital affair from his/her partner. This factor can be seen in all three of the dramas but in the drama serial *Mery pas tum ho*, Mehwish hides a lot about Shehwar from her husband Danish. At first, Danish believed her but when the reality had come in front of him then their relationship could not work and Mehwish asked her husband for a divorce, and he later fulfilled her demand.

In data analysis, the researchers have extensively studied every single aspect that reveals the negative side of Urdu TV drama series in our society. A few recommendations and discussion is as follows. The drama serials above discussed are highly rated and they might have been made to show one side of our society. We cannot ignore the fact that people in our community love such genres that are based on a storyline of two love birds getting married and then being separated or divorced due to certain factors involved in their lives. At the same time, we need to realize that these dramas are only encouraging the negative influence on us. They are creating an impact that two people cannot live happily after marriage or showing marriage as a tough game that one needs to play cleverly. However, the reality is different.

On the other hand, most of these dramas cannot be seen within a family environment as they emphasize very harsh things like couples getting a divorce in a spur of the moment. Moreover, the extramarital affairs like the one Mehwish and Shehwar had in *Mery pas tum ho* and 'Nisha' and 'Asfandyar' in drama *Jalan* are so bold that nobody will advise you to watch these dramas with your family. After considering all the negative impact these dramas have on our society, one would suggest that TV dramas like *Suno Chanda*, *Ehad e wafa* and *Bulbulay* should be watched. Dramas like these will immediately lighten up one's mood and they can also be watched with families as well. Instead of watching dramas with depressing stories and ruining your day by thinking about the negative or sad things it is better to watch comedy and family dramas as they always end on a positive note.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the fantasized lives portrayed by the Urdu TV drama serials creates an image on the minds of audience. They start to believe that this is the right way to live, and people start to follow what they see on television thus implementing it in their own lives. The drama serials nowadays seem to focus on the ill-advised behaviour of characters which leads them to their destruction. Especially emphasizing the extramarital affairs and divorce between the couples which is considered as modern and is encouraged by these TV dramas.

All these negative factors are completely changing people's perception of the real world since they have a bad influence through the media. So, putting negatives into practice in their lives can cause enormous problems. As we see on television, the middleclass

women seek a wealthy man to support them to succeed, and we can see many similar examples in the real world. Similarly, the modern divorce perception shown by these television dramas are affecting many peoples' lives as it has become a trend for young couples to dismiss minor problems and get separated from each other.

Conclusively, as our research shows that TV dramas with similar scenarios are impacting peoples' lives in a very negative way. We are aware of the concept of unmarried couples living together as well as married couples getting divorced becoming very common in our society. In order to change these newly adapted perceptions from our society, we need to stop encouraging such TV dramas. This is because it can be viewed from the elite class to the lower class, but if we start implementing what we view, then we will never be able to get rid of these misguided methods from peoples' minds which is clearly ruining their lives. Most importantly, we need to realize that there is a clear difference between real life and the delusional lives depicted by the media. Moreover, our Pakistani Urdu dramas are widely being watched by Pakistani Diaspora all round the world (Abbas, 2018). By addressing these divisive characteristics, we damage the reputation of our own culture.

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