GLOBAL RESEARCH ANALYSIS

GLOBAL RESEARCH ANALYSIS

ISSN No 2277 - 8160

listed & Indexed with
International ISSN Directory, Paris



Multi-Subject Journal

Volume : 1 | Issue : 3 | August 2012 | ₹ 250/-

ISSN No 2277 - 8160

GLOBAL RESEARCH ANALYSIS

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INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
1	Antipyretic Activity Of Tagetes Patula	K.Shakila, D.Sukumar, G.Madhubala	Chemistry	1-2
2	Benefits Derived From Warehouse Management System By Small Manufacturing Firms	Dr. Vipul Chalotra, Prof Neetu Andotra	Commerce	3-4
3	Women Welfare Through Prime Minister Rozghar Yojana At Coimbatore District	Swapna Kurian	Commerce	5-7
4	Sources Of College Funds In Assam-An Overview	Dr. Niranjan Kakati	Commerce	8-9
5	Mgnarega- For Socio-Economic Transformation Of Rural Society In J&K	TARSEM LAL	Commerce	10-11
6	Performance Appraisal And Career Growth	Dr. J.K. Sehgal	Commerce	12-13
7	Corporate Governance Practices - Emerging Trends	Dr. V.Rajendran	Commerce	14-16
8	A Text Mining Framework: Promises And Challenges	Prof.Sangeeta Mahesh Borde, Prof.Bareen Kayyum Shaikh	Computer Science	17-19
9	Effects Of Infant Mortalty Rates On Fertility	Mrs. Nazia Ansari, Mrs. Aqsa Khatri	Economics	20-21
10	Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives In India	Dr. Shradha H. Budhedeo, Parinda Doshi	Economics	22-25
11	Economics Of Corruption	Prof. Dr. K.J. Thankachan	Economics	26-27
12	A Study On Attitude Of High School Students Towards Physics Lessons And Physical Experiments	Dr. Kotreshwaraswamy A. Surapuramath	Education	28-30
13	Utilization Of Science Laboratories At High Schools	Dr. Praveena K. B.	Education	31-33
14	Mutidimensional Techniques For Mathematical Operations	M.Kavitha , Dr.AR. Saravanakumar	Education	34-36
15	Scientific Approach of Communication Theory	Dr. Mujibul Hasan Siddiqui	Education	37-38
16	Design And Implementation Of Ethernet Controller On Fpga	Jesika Benani	Engineering	39-41
17	Development of Control Algorithm to Reduce Harmonic in Boost Converter	Mitulkumar R. Dave, Prof. K.C. Dave	Engineering	42-43
18	Development Of Control Algorithm To Reduce Harmonics In Buck Converter	Vipul C. Rajyaguru, Keerti S.Vashishtha, K. C. Dave	Engineering	44-46
19	Gandhian Principles And Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups	Dr. Chetankumar N. Trivedi	English	47-48
20	Kathal- its medicinal uses	Dr. Sneh Harshendra Sharma	Environment	49-50
21	Extemporize Employee Engagement: Challenges.	Dr.Pooja Arora	Management	51-53
22	Conceptual Study To Understand The E-Governance Prestige Values Associated With Nagar Nigam	Dr.Murlidhar Panga , Mr.Arpit Neema	Management	54-56
23	Impact Of Globalization On Environment	Ankita Soni	Management	57-58
24	A Study On Strategic Cost Management Of Tanishq	Mr. Suresh A.S, Mr. Bharath R	Management	59-61

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
25	Impact Of Soap Operas Among The Housewives And Working Woman Of Silchar Town	Dr Partha Sarkar	Mass Communication	62-64
26	A Tool For Sex Identification	Dr. Renuka B. Adgaonkar, Dr. M. P. Ambali	Medical Science	65-67
27	Ideal characters in Sanskrit literature	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	68
28	Progresive life in vaidik life	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	69
29	Familisation or family in Vaidik Literature	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	70
30	Morden Moral Of Modern Environment In Nature's Description Of Vishnupuran	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	71-72
31	India's Small Holder Dairying In Liberalized Era	Dr Ashish.K.Makwana	Science	73-74
32	Common Man And The Uncommon Law : An Overview	Dr. Shereen Sadiq	Social Science	75-77
33	Perspectives Of Counselling	Dr, R.DhakshinaMurthy	Social Sciences	78-80
34	Sri Sri And His Literary Works: Some Social Reflections	Dr. M. Sreedevi Xavier	Social Sciences	81-83

Volume : 1 | Issue : 3 | Aug 2012 • ISSN No 2277 - 8160

Research Paper | Mass Communication

Impact Of Soap Operas Among The Housewives And Working Woman Of Silchar Town

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ABSTRACT

The study entitled "Impact of Soap Operas among the housewives and Workingwoman of Silchar Town" is analytically aimed to explore the importance of impact of Soap Operas among the housewives and workingwoman of Silchar town. This particular study tried to find out how a Soap opera has an impact on the values, attitudes, and aspirations of people over here in Silchar, and whether it really has any impact on them. The status, contributing factors which concentrates upon impact of Soap operas and media exposure level of the people, opinion of the respondents in preferring which brands are the specific objectives which has been investigated in the study. As required by its nature, objective and design the study is based on survey research and secondary data. This study reveals that how a Soap opera has an impact on their decision making process. However this study is an important one because the various influences of advertisements on people have studies extensively in a number of other countries. The study is in no way comprehensive or complete. Thus, the study has an attempt to find out the impact of Soap operas and its impact on the values, attitudes and aspirations on the housewives and workingwoman of Silchar. All the sources providing data on the impact of Soap operas have been tapped comprehensively to analyze the impact of Soap operas in Silchar town.

INTRODUCTION

Television is becoming a dominant feature of our everyday life. The age of television has been quite exciting in the beginning. The excitement was so much that many people started thinking aloud about the characteristics of the media and the impact that it have on the society. Television has considerable power to shape opinion and belief, change habits of life, mould behavior more or less according to the will of those who could control the media.

Television came into India in the year 1959. At that time there was only one national channel Doordarshan, which was owned by the government. At that time few people owned television sets. But by the late 1980's more and more people started to own television sets.

The general assumption is that television is the most powerful medium and exposure assures impact. It has a great impact on the people of all ages including the housewives and the working woman. Television has changed the style of talking, gestures, body language, dress we wear etc. Television exposes the glamour of modern life.

In the year 1992 the government liberated its market and many foreign based channels came to India, such as Star TV which gave Indians a fresh breath of life, MTV, BBC, Prime channels etc.

History of TV serials or Soap Operas

A Soap opera is a dramatic serial broadcast mainly intended to entertain. The name was originally coined in the United States Radio serials of the 1930's, which were sponsored, in large part, by Procter and Gamble, the soap corporation whose advertisements were primarily aimed at the female audience especially housewives and working woman. Subsequently the term 'Soap Opera' came to be associated with a melodramatic style of drama serials. However, soap operas had not appeared on Indian National Television until 1984, even though soap opera type family centered drama dominates India's films. Soaps are watched worldwide mainly due to the success of such series as Dallas and Dynasty.

Domestically-produced Indian language television serials came into their own only in the mid' eighties. For almost a decade since 1976 when the first commercials were allowed to be aired, Indian television was dominated by Hindi feature films and film-based programs. But the only 'sitcoms', soaps operas, detective or other T.V. genres telecast were from British, United States or German television. The British sitcoms shown during those early years of the national network were very regional in their humor and accent. Examples of these were To the Manor Born, Some Mothers do Love'Em and Sorry. However, British television also provide Indian viewers some of its foremost productions such as Bronowski's Ascent of Man, Kenneth Clark's Civilization , and nature documentaries by David Attenborough. American serials like I Love Lucy and Star trek, or German 'telematches' and detective series like The Fox, introduced Indian viewers to others kinds of foreign fare. Indian programs that proved popular were quiz shows like What's the Good Word?, talks shows by Kamleshwar and Tabassum, and of course, sports programs.

The most important development programs are in agriculture, family planning, health, nutrition and literacy. The conception of a pro-development soap opera originated in 1974 in television and Mexican commercial television network.

Pro-development soap operas are bright spot in the generally unfulfilled potential of contemporary third-world television. They represent a unique combination of education and entertainment style programming. In the mid 1980's, India began broadcasting a pro-development soap opera called 'Hum Log'(We People), which was tremendously successful with both its audience and its advertisers. Hum Log represents a turning point in the rise of T.V. in India, pointing it towards commercialization and consumerism. Soaps are characterized by a number of distinct features: the speed of production, the continuous use of sets, large casts and convoluted story lines which are spun out for weeks an end. Soaps function to bind us together. Soaps instill a sense of continuity.

Television, its viewers, and the way it functions in society are so multifarious that no tightly focused theoretical perspective can provide us with adequate insight.

Review of Literature

Women and Soap Operas: A Cultural Perspective in The Social Science Journal By Danielle Blumenthal informs us that her work stems from the need to bring sociology, her field of study, and her life as a homemaker together in a feminist format. Hence, her focus on soap operas as a lived perspective of her feminine existence. This is an interesting start since folk tales have been considered anonymous, timeless, and placeless, and are connected with an oral tradition as opposed to soap operas, which have publications offering daily updates to the viewership and readership. The author portrays herself as a cultural feminist, which she defines as attempting to empower women by "locating and valorizing women's differences from men, empowering women culturally rather than politically, psychologically, or economically." She further defines women's culture as referring to the "practice of symbolic cultural institutions that are engaged in primarily by women." It is here that she offers soap operas as an illustration of women's culture. In her delineation of women's culture she abandons the …

India's Information Revolution by Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers .In this book, there are some chapters about the popularity of Soap operas in India. Singhal and Rogers described serials like Hum Log, Mahabharata in the book, also described the impact of those serials in the development of television revolution, audience appreciations etc.

Prime time soap operas and women's empowerment By Shoma Munshi As part of The Hoot's continuing commitment toward creating greater media awareness and fostering debates related to media issues we are excerpting a passage from Shoma Munshi's Prime Time Soap Operas on Indian Television. New extracts will be posted on the site every month and readers are invited to send in comments, book recommendations, and reviews. Shoma Munshi's book is an ethnographic study of an extremely

popular and occasionally contentious form of entertainment on Indian television, i.e., soap operas. Her book provides a snapshot of the particular time and socio-cultural circumstances in which a set of soap operas were produced, enacted, and consumed. The book deals with a specific time period from 2000 to 2008, when soaps started airing for the first time on prime time television. Munshi focuses on five specific soaps: Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii, Kasauti Zindagi Kay, Saat Phere ... Saloni Ka Safar, and Sapna Babul Ka ... Bidaai. Although four of the five soaps discussed have gone off the air Munshi's analysis is of continuing generic value. Her analysis deals not only with the materiality of the genre in terms of production and television ratings but more crucially with thematic and ideological issues related to gender, class, family, and identity. While many commentators have seen the soaps as regressive modes of entertainment, Munshi argues that they are in fact empowering and that women across the board perceive them as such.

Women and Soap opera – a study of Prime Time Soaps by Christine Geraghty This is the first major study of the roles of women in prime time soap operas. In a comparative analysis of British and North American television soaps, Christine Geraghty examines the relationship between the narratives on the screen and the women viewers who make up the traditional soap audience. Within the structure of many of the most popular soaps, such as Dallas, Dynasty, Coronation Street and East Enders, the split between public and personal life, reason and emotion, work and leisure is turned into a lynchpin of the plot. The author argues that these themes are also linked to broader social divisions between men and women, divisions which soap operas both question and develop as a source of pleasure.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
The objectives of the study are –

- To identify the serials or the soap operas viewed by the housewives and the working woman.
- To find out the habits of watching television.
- To find out the impact of the soap operas on housewives and working woman.

Hypothesis:
While proceeding with the present research, no hypothesis has been formulated, because the answer to the research question is unpredictable. Also to maintain the wanted objectivity, formulation of any hypothesis has been avoided.

Variables:
- Television viewing habits.
- Channels which are familiar or popular for Soap opera or Serials.

Methodology

Research Design:
Survey method constitutes the design of the research study. It was conducted in Silchar town. The researcher was restricted to women folk only. The questionnaire method has been employed to know the impact of Soap operas among the housewives and working woman of Silchar town.

Sample size:
A total of 100 samples were taken up by the researcher and the respondents are housewives and working woman.

Sampling:
The sampling procedure for data collection for the present study is through simple random sampling technique.

Instruments:
Tool used for data collection was questionnaire.

Respondents:
The respondents of the study are the housewives and the working woman.

Procedure of data gathering:
The questionnaires were distributed among the housewives and the working woman from different age groups and sometimes the researcher go through some systematic open ended questions to respondents randomly.

Sources of data:
The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The main sources of primary data are the housewives and working woman of Silchar town. The sources of secondary data are Survey report based on internet.books, magazines etc.

Area of study:
The area of the study is Silchar. Silchar is the headquarter of Cachar district. The Cachar district is situated in the southernmost part of Assam. It is bounded by the North Cachar Hills on the north and districts of Karimganj and Hailakandi on the west. The river Barak is the main river traversing from the east to west. It is composed of high hills, low lands and level plains. Silchar is the headquarters of Cachar district in the state of Assam in India. It is the economic gateway to the state of Mizoram and part of Manipur. The town of Silchar has tremendous commercial importance and is the second largest in the state of Assam. It consequently, witnesses the settlement of a sizeable population of traders from distant parts of India.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS
The study entitled "Impact of Soap operas among the housewives and working woman of Silchar town," reveals that 100% of the respondents watch TV.

The study shows that 72% of the respondents watch TV daily, while 21% watch once a week and a very small section i.e., 7% watch TV on holidays while none of them watch TV on some special day.

The study also shows that 86% of the respondents have cable connection in their homes while the rest 14% don't have.

The study shows that 56% of the respondents watch TV for 2-3 hours per day, 23% of them watches 1-2 hours, and 21% for less than an hour while none of them are found to watch TV for 3-4 hours.

From the survey we find that 36% of the respondents prefer watching the channel Colors, 17% Sony, 20% Star, 21% Zee, and only 6% of them watch the National channel.

From the survey we also found that, 51% of the respondents watch entertainment related programs, 20% watch news while 18% watch movies, 6% of the respondents watch music related programs and 5% of them watch sports.

From the survey conducted among the housewives and working women of Silchar, most of them i.e. 41% of them were found to prefer family-oriented serials. 26% like women-related serials whereas 11% of them like watching mythological serials. Comedy and horror-oriented serials are watched by 10% and 12% of them respectively whereas serials not related to any of the above are not generally watched.

A huge number of housewives and working women were found to be regular viewers of serials like 'Ballika Badhu', 'Durga' and 'Bou kotha kou'. About 22% watch 'Ballika Badhu' whereas 'Durga' and 'Bou kotha kou' is watched by 20% and 17% respectively. 'Pavitra Rishta', DID little champs and 'Na aana is desh lado' is watched by 10%, 8% and 7% respectively. 'Choti Bahu', 'Uttaran', 'Sasural genda phool' and 'Saath nibhana saathiya' are watched by 5%,5%,3% and 3% respectively.

From the study we also found that 56% of the respondents watch the repeat telecasts of the programs while 44% do not watch the repeat telecasts of the programs.

72% of the respondents feel that repeat telecasts are necessary, 12% feel that repeat telecasts are not necessary while 16% cannot say anything regarding this.

This survey shows that most of the housewives and working women, to be accurate, 40% like watching the serials during evening and 35% watch the serials during afternoon. 15% watch at prime time, 6% at morning and a very meager number of them i.e.4% watch the serials late night.

Most of the respondents i.e., 95 % of them feel that the characters in the serial that they watch do not have any impact on their lives while 5% of them feel that they do have impact on them.

According to the survey conducted, we see that 56% of the respondents think that serials are not at all similar to real life.29% of them think that there is similarity between these serials and real life whereas 15% are not so sure of their opinion.

89% of the respondents feel that the serials have no impact on their life – style, 11% cannot say anything about this.

From the survey conducted among the housewives and working women of Silchar town, we find that 47% of their husbands do not prefer the serials watched by them. 11% of their husbands do prefer and 22% prefer these serials sometimes whereas in case of 20% of the respondents, it is not applicable

CONCLUSION

The present study shows that the most interesting and attractive programs in television are viewed by the housewives and working woman of Silchar town. The study shows that the respondents watch mostly the entertainment and family – related programs. Soap operas or the serials give relaxation from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Different type of Soap operas shows different type of tradition, culture etc. It reflects cultural value of India and it is a source of knowing the different culture, tradition etc of India. The study shows that the respondents watch the Soap operas daily and maximum of the respondents have cable connection in their house. Makers of the Soap operas make a target audience, and most of which are woman folk, they understand the audience choice and try to satisfy their wants. The study reveals that the characters in the Soap operas leave no impact on their life. The study also reveals that the respondents watch the Soap operas mainly for the purpose of entertainment, followed by relaxation, time-pass.

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8-A, BANAS, Opp. SLU Girls College, Nr.Congress Bhavan, Paldi, Ahmedabad - 380006. Gujarat (INDIA)

Cell: +91 9824702127, 8866003636

Printed at Unique Offset, Novatsing Rupam Estate, Opp. Abhay Estate, Tavdipura, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad

Designed By : AdVoice Inc. +91 9824484447