



Depiction of domestic violence in the primetime dramas of Pakistan

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Abstract

This study analyzes the depiction of domestic violence in the primetime television dramas of Pakistan. Domestic Violence is an international issue that is affecting women all around the globe. Television dramas shape the mindset of people and the culture of any country. Pakistani dramas have normalized and romanticized domestic violence against women. This study analyzes six primetime dramas on three of the famous private TV channels by using content analysis research methodology. In these dramas, women are portrayed as submissive and compromising and do not give up on their toxic spouses. Violence against women and the way these dramas have normalized domestic violence is analyzed through purposive random sampling. The study finds out that such dramas promote and normalize domestic violence. Although the ending of most of the dramas portrays domestic violence as a curse, the storyline of most of the dramas has many loopholes that create a stereotypical mindset of viewers, especially women. Instead of portraying women as submissive waiting for miracles, they should be portrayed as empowered women who can take a stand for themselves.

Key Words; *Domestic Violence, Pakistani Dramas, Television drama serials, Violence against women, Feminism in Pakistan*

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Introduction

Domestic violence refers to violence against a close family member. It usually involves physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse toward the immediate family members. Mostly it includes the marital life and affects the victim's health and well-being (Kaur & Garg, 2008). Abuse during childhood, gender inequality, low education, and attitudes toward accepting violence are some of the leading causes of domestic violence (Thevenot & Calmet, 2019). Media indirectly plays with the minds of the people. In one way or another, the media has incorporated violence against women and domestic violence into the minds of people through different films, dramas, and TV shows. "Being progressive" and "backward" are a few terms associated with the portrayal of domestic violence in the media. The media tries to impose patriarchal ideologies through their content, and domestic violence is one of those ideologies (Chesney-Lind & Chagnon, 2017).

Pakistan is a patriarchal society where most women are dominated by the male members of the family. There is a disclaimer on the television screen with every disturbing content, be it cigarette smoking or alcohol consumption, but when it's about domestic violence, there is no disclaimer. Brothers are shown slapping their sisters, fathers beating their daughters for being outspoken and husbands abusing their wives both physically and emotionally are all a part of Pakistani Dramas.

The media manipulates the minds of the people, and this is contributing to normalizing violence among Pakistani women. The relationship between media and gender is an obvious thing and a person learns from the content they consume. Especially housewives who spend most of their time in front of the television watching these dramas have considered violence something normal, that is their fate and they have to bear it for being "good women". In Pakistani dramas, they have always shown the hope that the abusive partner will change sometimes, and that's why women keep stuck with them for their whole life. Lack of financial support, better nourishment of children, and lack of support from parents, family members, and friends are some of the major factors that contribute to bearing the abusive relationship (Ali, Naylor, Croot, and Cathain, 2015). The need of the hour is to discourage such content and encourage women to speak against the oppressors.

Literature Review

The already present literature on the media and gender-related issues in Pakistan depicts that Domestic Violence is a significant issue in Pakistan. Things and trends are changing now with time, but still, women are portrayed to be dependent, more compromising, having no self-respect, and the one who needs a male partner to survive both emotionally and economically. Violence against women is a human rights issue and it's common worldwide. Be it street harassment, catcalling, acid attacks, or domestic violence from immediate family members it's affecting women from around the globe. This not only affects the physical and mental health of women but also the psychological and sexual well-being of women. Domestic violence takes place across different social groups, races, and ethnicities. It not only affects the well-being of the victim but also traumatizes the children, friends, and family members. Studies have depicted that domestic violence and childhood trauma are interrelated. Those children who had seen violence growing up tend to become more violent than others. Although men also face domestic violence, however, the ratio of women victims is far more than that of male victims (Rollè, Ramon, & Brustia, 2019). One of the basic forms of domestic violence is intimate partner violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines IPV as "any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those in the relationship" (WHO, 2012) Intimate partner violence is a significant problem in Pakistan as well. Many cases are reported and many go unreported every year.

In Pakistan, domestic violence is considered a personal matter and other people who are not directly related in the surroundings usually do not interfere in such matters. Discrimination against women is considered something normal and almost 70 to 90% of women face discrimination and violence either in the mental or physical form in Pakistan. Some common types of domestic violence include acid attacks, emotional abuse, honor killing and physically abusing the female family members (Ali & Gavino, 2008). Domestic violence in Pakistan prevails because of the patriarchal norms of Pakistani society. Male dominance is the leading cause of violence against women. This stereotypical traditional norm leads to gender inequality and discrimination against women. The existing literature on gender and media depicts the stereotypical portrayal of women in Pakistani media. Way women are portrayed as being the “so-called perfect women” who bear both mental and physical abuse with the hope that their abusive partner will get better in the future (Ali, Naylor, Croot, & Cathain, 2015).

The media plays a huge role in developing the mindset of the common public. Tuchman (1979) argued that since media addresses the “masses” they should be careful in portraying their content. The mass public will be affected by the content they consume no one had ever imagined and this will shape the norms and values of society. The image of women being portrayed in the media has a detrimental impact on the collective social life and individual consciousness (Tuchman, 1979). The media plays a huge role in developing culture and norms. Although there are strict actions, rules, and laws available in Pakistan for the content being displayed in media and for violence against women, still these cultural and traditional values are hugely responsible for the violent behavior against women. People who had more exposure to television started to consider that the content shown in the media is “true to life” (Ford, 1997). The woman that is portrayed today in mass media doesn’t depict the reality of women. They are merely shown as stereotypical sex object who doesn’t have their core values and authority over themselves. They are shown as someone dependent on male members of the family and are not intelligent, confident, or independent (Kaul & Sahni, 2010). New ideas, thoughts, the latest fashion trends, latest hot topics are all discussed in soap operas and television dramas, but instead of portraying the empowered image of women, these dramas contribute to showing the stereotypical timid women on television. Our drama writers need to impose innovation in their writings and they should try to introduce strong and powerful characters (Huma, 2015).

Domestic violence is one of the stereotypical issues being shown in these Pakistani dramas. Honor-based violence is the main issue discussed in dramas. Honor is wrongly associated with women, and honor crimes are rising because of the content shown in the media. Women are not just an object who should be objectified and portrayed as something that doesn’t have values; rather they should be shown as human beings having values, emotions, and feelings (Fatima, 2019). The media manipulates the minds of the people, and this is contributing to normalizing violence among Pakistani women.

Women are always portrayed in the role of the loser be it the main role or the leading role. The roles are assigned to them to hit the ratings and to show them as someone who doesn’t have the decision-making ability, who can’t decide whether she needs to leave their abusive partner or not because of the fear of judgment from the people. She cannot tell about her abusive relationship with her parents because of the fear of the emotional trauma they will go through. Emotionally and economically dependent women are the favorite roles of Pakistani drama writers. Only a few women are shown empowered and could make their own decisions, but at the same time, they have to suffer a lot because of their firm and non-compromising attitude (Parvez & Roshan, 2010). In Pakistani dramas, women usually have roles in the house. Stove and acid burn, mental and physical torture, forced marriages, child marriages; marital abuse is some that are of no serious issue for these patriarchs of the society. Violations of basic rights, the right to marry, honor killing, and the accusation of being characterless are being shown openly in these dramas without any disclaimer or trigger warning. These issues can have serious psychological effects on the audience and can manipulate their mentalities as well. No doubt there are many good dramas as well. Some producers and drama writers are trying to change the trend of cowardly women and are writing dramas on the prevailing social issues.

Theoretical Framework

According to McLeod (2016), “Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior” (McLeod, 2016). Media and dramas are said to be a great influence on people. What is being shown and how it is being shown unconsciously plays its part in learning the behavior of the people. The media is said to be the basic tool of agenda-setting. Individuals learn from the direct experience of the people they are observing, and media is the basic thing that portrays various behaviors in the form of its content. When something such as domestic violence is portrayed in the media again and again, it will contribute to the normalization of such things. People especially men will learn domestic violence is something necessary to tame the female members of the family while women may depict it as something normal and ultimate fate. Repeated exposure to violence on television reinforces existing beliefs that the world is a dangerous and unsafe place. Exposure to television further strengthens the position that acts of violence are a natural response to situations of conflict.

Research Method

Research methodology is the science of knowing how that research work is being conducted scientifically. Research methodology is the basic tool of scientific research. This study investigates Pakistani dramas to have insight into the depiction of domestic violence. Qualitative content analysis is the research technique used in this study in which a coding sheet was formulated. For this study, a qualitative tool has been used. For this, content analysis is used to analyze the emerging trends in the depiction of domestic violence in Pakistani Dramas. The population of this study consists of six primetime dramas (broadcast from 08.00-10.00 p.m.) on three TV channels (Hum TV, Ary Digital, and Geo Entertainment). To select the sample, a purposive sampling technique is used. The sample size consists of six dramas. The titles of the dramas taken from three of the famous TV channels (Hum TV, ARY Digital, and Geo Entertainment) are Tarap (Outrageousness) at Hum TV, Yeh dil mera (This is my heart) at Hum TV, Bikhrai Moti (Scattered pearls) at ARY Digital, Kaisa ha naseeba (What a fate!) at ARY Digital, Kahin Deep Jaley (Somewhere there is a light) at Geo Entertainment, Muqaddar (Destiny) at Geo Entertainment.

Limitations of the study

Here are a few of the limitations of this study:

1. This study only takes a few of the dramas from primetime television dramas.
2. This study only takes three of the famous drama channels that are ARY Digital, Hum TV, and Geo entertainment.
3. This study takes the content through purposive random sampling.
4. This study focuses more on the aspect of domestic violence and ignores all the other aspects of these dramas.

Findings

This section consists of further two sections. The first section deals with the plot of the dramas, the storyline, and the description of the major characters, while the second section describes the three components:

- Depiction from domestic violence
- Normalization of domestic violence
- The romanticization of domestic violence

Domestic violence has various forms; the most prominent one is intimate partner violence. The following table indicates the relationship between leading male and female characters in the dramas, the depiction of domestic violence at certain times, the normalization of domestic violence, and the way domestic violence has been romanticized in the following dramas.

Table 01: Depiction, normalization, and romanticization of domestic violence in the dramas.

Drama	Name of male and female characters in the drama	Relationship between male and female characters	Depiction from domestic violence	Normalization of domestic violence	The romanticization of domestic violence
Tarap	Adil and Arshad (Male character) Rabia, Zunaira and Haniya (Female characters)	Adil is the brother of both Zunaira and Haniya and the husband of Rabia. While Arshad was the Husband of Zunaira.	Adil's firm rule in the house, not allowing his wife to go to her mother's house, slapping her wife, not allowing his sisters to have some personal space, and against their education. Arshad slapped and beat Zunaira.	Adil's grandmother says that he's the sole bread earner of the family and everyone should follow his rules no matter how cruel his rules are, this is for their safety. Meanwhile, when Arshad used to beat Zunaira it was said by everyone that it is justifiable as Zunaira is characterless (Although she was not)	Adil's grandmother says to Rabia, that all husbands are like this and there is love and care hidden in their firm behavior. A wife should always please her husband. On the other hand, Zunaira tolerates physical violence at the hands of Arshad and considers it her fate and continues to be non-vocal about this, as she was expecting a baby.
Yeh Dil Mera	Aman Ullah and Mir Farooq (Male character) Noor ul Ain, Nilofer, and Saira (Female Character)	Aman Ullah was the husband of Noor ul Ain, who married her to take revenge on her father Mir Farooq. Nilofer was the first wife of Mir Farooq and Saira was the second wife of Mir Farooq.	Aman Ullah is abusive towards Aina on their marriage night, mentally torturing her throughout the drama and blaming her for her father's deeds. On the other hand, Mir Farooq is depicted as a retard who used to beat his first wife, Aina's mother, Nilofer. Along	Aman Ullah's mental illness is normalized as a lame excuse for him being rude to Aina, when he was having a psychotic episode because of remembering his parents, he physically injured Aina, and this was depicted as a normal thing. Saira suffered domestic violence at the hands of Mir	On the night of their marriage, Aman Ullah says to Aina to treat him just like a child and should ignore his ill-mannered behavior as she's his wife and this will strengthen their bond and love relationship. Although Mir Farooq's beating of his second wife was not romanticized, there were no reasons for that

			with this Mir Farooq is also seen beating his second wife Saira, because he thinks she is inferior to him and he can do anything with her. He used to abuse her both physically and emotionally.	Farooq because he was supporting her luxurious life and also supporting her family financially.	domestic violence.
Bikhra y Moti	Zulfi and Ghulam Sahib(Male Character) Shahzadi, Aiza, and Her elder sister(Female characters)	Zulfi was the husband of Aiza, who married her after the death of his first wife, Aiza's elder sister. Shazadi was the daughter of Zulfi and the wife of Ghulam Sahib	Zulfi beats his first wife, and she dies of domestic violence. Zulfi beat his children, and his second wife, Aiza. Zulfi does marital rape with Aiza. On the other hand, Ghulam Sahib beats Shahzadi, kidnaps her, and says that she's his wife and he can do whatever he wants to do.	Aiza's father says to Aiza that it's Zulfi's right to treat his wife, Aiza's elder sister like that. It's normal and even after marriage, Aiza should bear all the physical and mental abuse because Zulfi is her husband. Zulfi's mother marries Shahzadi to an aged man, Ghulam, and normalizes it by saying that Ghulam is rich and she will be very happy.	Zulfi's mother and his brother support marital rape and justify to him that if Aiza is not ready for this relationship they should impose themselves on her. This will increase understanding between both of you and you should do whatever you want to do.
Kaisa ha naseeba	Ahmed (Male Character) Marium (Female Character)	Ahmed was a husband and cousin of Marium	Ahmed slaps Marium when after marriage when she reaches Malaysia, he beats her out of nowhere just because he cannot control himself. He mentally and verbally abused her most of the time and threatened her	Ahmed's mother justifies to Merium that Ahmed is frustrated that's why he is doing such things. On the other hand, Merium's father quotes his and her mother's example and justifies it that it's normal between husband and wife to have on-	Ahmed's mother romanticizes it by saying that Merium should give him some time in their relationship and should always listen to him and eventually one day he will be a better person because of her love.

			that he will create a panic situation in case she tells this to her family this.	and-off verbal and physical abuse.	
Kahin Deep Jalay	Zeeshan (Male Character) and Rida (Female Character)	Zeeshan was Rida's husband	Zeeshan verbally abuses Rida because of the misunderstanding created by her sister-in-law and asks her to leave his house. Apart from this, Zeashan accuses her of being characterless and bashes her in front of everyone.	Rida's brothers listen to the false allegations of Zeeshan against Rida and believe them without any proof and blame her that he's right and Rida is characterless although she was not.	Rida still goes back to Zeashan and forgives him for what he did with her and her family no matter how abusive he was throughout her married life.
Muqdar	Saif (Male Character) Raima (Female character)	Saif was Raima's husband	Saif kidnaps Raima just for the sake of marrying her, and threatened her that he will ruin her family and will murder her fiancée. he also verbally abuses her now and then.	Instead of taking legal action against Saif who kidnapped and forcefully married her, Raima accepted that marital relationship with Saif.	Forced marriage is romantically portrayed in the drama, it is depicted that forced marriage will eventually turn into a love relationship.

Analysis of normalization and romanticization of domestic violence in these dramas

All six primetime dramas were analyzed and domestic violence in these specific dramas has been explained in this section.

Domestic Violence in Tarap

Domestic violence in Tarap has been portrayed as a part of their personality of Adil. In the first episode, he is portrayed as someone who is very firm with his rules and regulations that don't allow disobedience in any form whether it's from his sisters or his wife. He doesn't like his wife going to her mother's place as according to him it's useless and her maternal relatives are stupid. Even he verbally abuses her about her relatives. In episode no. 3, when Haniya (Adil's younger sister) is seen to be missing as her bus met with an accident, Adil accuses her wife, Rabia of all of this. He beat her in front of his grandmother and sister, and out of his anger, divorced her. Even after this, Adil would still torture his ex-wife and wouldn't allow her to meet her only son.

This is how he is shown to mentally torture his partner. Even in episode 22, Adil slaps his

sister Zunaira because of the false accusations of her being characterless. Out of anger, Adil makes her sister marry a cruel man, Arshad. Arshad used to do physical, mental, and verbal violence to her. In episode 25, Zunaira seems to bear all this violence because Arshad is her husband, and being a good woman, she must bear all this. Arshad falsely accuses her of being characterless in episode 26 and slaps her. Zunaira bears this as well because she was shown to be pregnant at this stage, but Arshad misbehaves with her, accuses her that the baby is not his, and divorces her. This whole drama has many loopholes that play with the mindset of its viewers and in many aspects; it has tried to normalize domestic violence both in marital and domestic relationships of a family.

Domestic Violence in Yeh Dil Mera

Domestic violence has been romanticized to a great extent in the drama Yeh Dil Mera. Aman who is portrayed as a bipolar person abuses his wife both mentally and verbally, even before marriage. In episode 7, even before marriage when Aina calls him at night he misbehaves with her because he was having a psychotic episode. Aina ignores this and this portrayed the fact that one should ignore red flags even before marriage. In episode 10, Aman directly says to her that he cannot marry her because he's mentally not stable, but Aina insists on him marrying her and this depicted that a woman should stand along with the man no matter how abusive he is. Aina is portrayed as the one who is a supporter of the fact that how red a flag can get. In episode 14, Aman mentally and verbally abuses her on the night of their marriage, and throughout the drama, he misbehaves with her on and off.

Mir Farooq is portrayed as a rich person having both wealth and power, and who can do whatever he wants to do. He marries Saira, after murdering his first wife Nilofer, Aina's mother. In episode 10, He is shown to physically, emotionally, and verbally abuse Saira, saying that he supports her and her family financially and they are inferior to him. This portrayed the fact that a rich man can do anything, and that domestic and intimate partner abuse is justifiable for a rich person. Mir Farooq has also been shown as beating his first wife Nilofer with no implications for his actions. In episode 21, he murders his second wife Saira, and in a flashback episode 24, he is shown to have murdered his first wife Nilofer, and no legal actions were taken against him. This is the main flaw of this drama, instead of legal actions things are portrayed in a submissive way. Domestic violence has been portrayed in the worst way possible in this drama and has been normalized, justified, and romanticized to a great extent.

Domestic Violence in Bikhray Moti

abuse and domestic abuse are the major themes of this drama. In the very first episode, Zulfi is portrayed as a drug addict who doesn't care about his family. He is seen beating his first wife in episode 2, and because of this, she dies. After her death, he is shown to beat his children out of his anger and abusive nature. This has been shown in episode 3 where Zulfi and his mother torture his daughter Shahzadi and force her to do household work all day long. On the other hand, in episode 5, Aiza's father is shown to make hurdles for her job and is against her education. He would always say that those girls who study more tend to become more aggressive and are not perfect housewives. Aiza's father is depicted as the one who supports domestic violence and tries to normalize it now and then for Aiza and seems to romanticize it for her elder sister. In episode 9, just to lessen the burden of a daughter, Aiza's father makes her marry Zulfi, the murderer and abuser of her elder sister, and Aiza accepts this proposal for her niece, Shahzadi. This thing depicted that women should always compromise their ambitions and dreams for the betterment of their families. Just to take good care of her niece and nephews she marries Zulfi who is shown to physically, mentally, and verbally abuse her.

In episode 13, Zulfi does marital rape of Aiza and that has been romanticized in the drama. It is portrayed that it's the religious right of the husband to do whatever he wants to do with

his wife. Even Zulfi's mother and brother support him in this regard. Zulfi's mother forcefully marries Shahzadi, her granddaughter, without her consent to an aged man, Ghulam Sahab. In episode 19, it is portrayed that Ghulam Sahab abuses Shahzadi sexually, physically, mentally, and verbally and no proper actions are taken as he is her husband, irrespective of the fact that she was only 15 years old when she was forced to get married to an elderly man. Things are portrayed in a complicated way in this drama that plays with the mindset of the viewers and most people tend to think that their abusive husbands will change one day. It is ok to compromise for the happiness of your loved ones, no matter how abusive your partner is.

Domestic Violence in Kaisa ha Naseeba

Kaisa ha Naseeba is purely a drama based on domestic violence having firm lessons in the end. It is said to be one of the better dramas following the legal rights, but still, it has many loopholes in its story as well that may trigger its viewers. In episode 3, Ahmed beats Merium after a few days of their marriage, and Ahmed's mother justifies it by saying that it's because of his frustration as he had lost his job. On the other hand, in episode 3 Ahmed forces Merium to do a job in a restaurant and even forces her to have an extramarital relationship with one of his friends, Noor ud Din. Ahmed's mother makes her feel inferior in front of others and forces her to forgive Noor ud Din for harassment in Episode 7. This drama has many intense scenes that can be triggering for the victims of abuse, harassment, and domestic violence. From episodes 13 to 16, domestic violence has been normalized and romanticized to a very large extent. Even after telling her parents about the odd and offensive behavior of her in-laws and husband, Merium's father tries to normalize intimate partner violence by saying that it was common between him and her mother too. But her mother never resisted and she should do the same. She should compromise and be patient and eventually things will get better. Upon returning to Malaysia, Ahmed's behavior doesn't change and he becomes more toxic. In all this Merium gets pregnant, but Ahmed doesn't bother to take good care of her. One day, violence leads to Merium's miscarriage. Not only miscarriage but also Merium is shown to become infertile. This was the level to which she was abused, and it is portrayed without any disclaimer. Merium then returns to Pakistan and her parents take custody of her. This drama is a bit different from the traditional stereotypical storylines because Merium decides to speak against Ahmed. She takes legal action and punishes Ahmed for his deeds. Although there were many loopholes in the story, this drama was somewhat empowering out of all the other dramas.

Domestic Violence in Kahin deep Jalay

"Kahin deep jalay" is a drama about the misunderstandings that can lead to domestic violence in a marital relationship. This drama depicts the reality of society that people and circumstances of the surroundings can lead to domestic violence, no matter how loving and caring your partner is. Zeeshan who is shown to be very loving and caring to his wife initially ruins his marital life because of outside factors and his insecurity of being infertile leads him to be violent. In episode 15, when Shanella asks Rida if she loves her husband more or her brothers more leads to insecurities in the mind of Zeeshan. That was the triggering point for him as he is shown to become insecure and verbally abusive towards his wife after this. Another reason for this is shown to be the class difference between the two of them. Rida belongs to a financially stable family; on the other hand, Zeeshan comes from the middle class. In episode 16, when a doctor falsely tells Zeeshan about his infertility issues, leads to more insecurity, and just to save his ego, he starts abusing Rida. In episode 20, he abuses Rida in front of the house help. In episode 22, when they get to know about Rida's pregnancy, Zeeshan and his whole family start accusing her of being characterless. This gives the fact that women cannot do anything to protect themselves from the false accusations of the people, and she has to bear it no matter what. In episode 28, when Zeeshan finally gets to know about the mistakes that he had falsely accused Rida of, he starts feeling ashamed.

This drama depicts that if you are honest and haven't done anything wrong, you should be patient and wait for the miracles. It taught the audience that a woman who compromises and bears

everything with patience wins in the end. In this way, this drama wrongly portrayed being patient towards domestic violence.

Domestic Violence in Muqaddar

“Muqaddar” drama depicts the flaws in our system in which a rich person always finds a way out to do whatever he wants to do. In episode 2, Saif is shown threatening Raima’s uncle about marrying her to him otherwise he will do something worse. Instead of seeking legal help, the uncle ignores the red flags. In episode 4, Saif kidnaps Raima and forces her to marry him. This depicts that a rich person who has control over certain departments can take advantage of things. In episode 5, Saif forces her to marry him, but in episode 6, she somehow manages to escape him. Meanwhile, her family denies accepting her which shows the extreme level of domestic abuse. A family that should be accepting and should listen to your stance, accusing you of being kidnapped. This may give an idea to the viewers that no matter how good you are, you are responsible for the bad things that happen to you. Society has the right to judge and punish you even for the things you haven’t done. In episode 8, Saif says sorry to Raima on the night of their marriage for kidnapping and forcing her to marry. The storyline of this drama has many loopholes and it leaves an unmarked influence on the minds of viewers. Young girls after seeing this may start to imagine that their abuser may change and forceful marriage is not a big deal if your husband loves you or is rich. In episode 14, Saif is shown verbally and physically abusing her for not loving him. Gradually as the story moves forward, Raima starts loving Saif, and eventually forgives him. This drama has normalized and romanticized domestic violence and forced marriage to a very large extent.

Interpretations

The following section explains findings from the selected dramas and the interpretations about the endings of the dramas, loopholes in the storyline, promotion of domestic violence, and recommendations for the depiction of domestic violence in the selected dramas.

1. The selected dramas have many intense scenes depicting domestic violence sexually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and verbally. These scenes are portrayed in the cruelest way possible and this is tending to have negative impacts on the mental health of its viewers. Marital rape has been portrayed in some scenes, which’s alarming for the viewers.
2. The selected dramas portrayed domestic violence without any trigger warning, the already affected audience may have devastating effects because of such scenes. Such scenes may model the behavior and attitude of the audience.
3. The selected dramas did not have any disclaimers regarding the abusive content being portrayed. By putting a disclaimer it can be ensured that the content portrayed is for information purposes only and is devastating to the values and norms of a society. We have a disclaimer for every cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption scene as they are injurious, but we don’t have a disclaimer for such triggering content.
4. In the selected dramas, anger issues are portrayed as an excuse for intimate partner violence, and the people in the surroundings are shown to support this by saying that women should always compromise. Anger issues in the marital relationship are normalized and romanticized in the dramas. Most of the time, because of the anger issues the partner becomes insecure.
5. In the selected dramas, mental illness is also portrayed as a reason for domestic violence. It is normalized and romanticized through these dramas, that one should support the psychotic partner no matter what and should be patient to bear the verbal, emotional, and mental violence at the hands of their partner.
6. In the selected dramas, the ending is very drastic. Things are portrayed in a positive way that the abusive partner will change in the end, and one should endure the violence. In reality, however, the personality of a person will never change, and nature is innate. Out of six dramas, in five dramas it is portrayed that the abusive partner changed himself and became a better person because of some external factors.
7. In the selected dramas, abuse has been glorified. Normalization and romanticization of abuse are portrayed in the dramas to a very large extent. Most of the time, a girl’s parents are portrayed to normalize and romanticize it.

8. In the selected dramas, at certain points, domestic violence has been justified, and it is portrayed that it's ok to slap a woman. It's shown that slapping women is not an odd thing and it's part of our culture and society.
9. In selected dramas, gender stereotyping is normal. Women are shown as submissive, compromising, depending on the male members of the family, and financially and emotionally dependent.
10. In the selected dramas, out of six dramas, in only one drama legal actions are taken against the abusive partner. In all the other five dramas, women waited for a miracle that all of a sudden things will get better and no legal assistance is necessary.

Discussion

Indian dramas portray the leading female character of its dramas as submissive, loaded with heavy jewelry and heavy costumes working the whole day in the kitchen. The nation who is said to be on the verge of modernization and globalization portrays women in a traditionally dependent way. Indian dramas are in no way innovative and revolve around romantic marital relationships and familial plots. Indian woman is shown as a faithful wife who never gives up on her husband and no matter how abusive her partner is, she still tries to compromise with him. There is a concept of bad and good women in Indian soap operas, bad women do not compromise and leave their families for other materialistic purposes, while good women stay at home looking after their families, kids, and husband (Roy, 2012). India is among the worst countries for women. Domestic violence, street harassment, and acid attacks are common in India, while in the media women are objectified in advertisements, dramas, and films. The media is mostly showing biased things and portraying women as happy housewives. Ambitious women have to pay for their ambitions and have to suffer a lot. Not only this, women are not even shown as equals in Indian media. Women's health, education, and employment are a few of the things that are given low importance in their dramas and films (Ojha, 2011). The above-mentioned literature concludes that domestic violence is a common issue on both sides of the border, Pakistan and India. Not only Pakistani dramas but also Indian dramas try to romanticize the depiction of domestic violence. There is a development in the media, yet women are still objectified in the media. They are portrayed as weaker than men who should not give a reaction in their defense; they should suffocate and suffer in silence most of the time. The media is biased toward the gender inequality issues in Pakistan (Huda & Ali, 2015).

In table 01, the depiction of domestic violence is briefly explained in the individual dramas. There are many ways through which domestic violence has been depicted in these dramas. In the drama *Tarap*, it is depicted as Adil's firm rules in the house, not allowing his wife to go to her mother's house, slapping her wife, not allowing his sisters to have some personal space and against their education; Arshad slapping and beating Zunaira. In *Yeh Dil Mera*, it is depicted as Aman Ullah is abusive towards Aina on their marriage night, mentally torturing her throughout the drama and blaming her for her father's deeds. On the other hand, Mir Farooq is depicted as a retard who used to beat his first wife, Aina's mother, Nilofer. Along with this Mir Farooq is also seen beating his second wife Saira, because he thinks she is inferior to him and he can do anything with her. He used to abuse her both physically and emotionally. In *Bikhray Moti*, it is depicted as Zulfi beating his first wife, and she dies of domestic violence. Zulfi beat his children, and his second wife, Aiza. Zulfi performs marital rape with Aiza. On the other hand, Ghulam Sahib beats Shahzadi, kidnaps her, and says that she's his wife and he can do whatever he wants to do. In *Kaisa ha Naseeba*, it is depicted as Ahmed slapping Marium when she reaches Malaysia, he beats her out of nowhere just because he cannot control himself. He mentally and verbally abused her most of the time and threatened her that he will create a panic situation in case she tells this to her family this. In *Kahin Deep Jalay*, it is depicted as Zeashan verbally abusing Rida because of the misunderstanding created by her sister-in-law and asking her to leave his house. Apart from this, Zeashan accuses her of being characterless and bashes her in front of everyone. In *Muqaddar*, it is depicted as Saif kidnapping Raima just for the sake of marrying her, threatening her that he will ruin her family and will murder her fiancé, and verbally abusing her now and then.

The storyline of almost all the dramas has many loopholes. Most of the time domestic

violence is seen between intimate partners and it is seen to be justified by the people around them. Mostly the family members are seen to be blind about the happenings or persuading the female member that it's the ultimate thing and everyone has to face it and that things will eventually change. Most of the time mental illness is the reason for intimate partner violence and it is often justified.

In table 01, a brief analysis of every drama has been mentioned and these dramas are trying to romanticize domestic violence through their content. It is portrayed that a man is always aggressive and with his wife's love he can be changed. No matter how violent he gets, a woman's love will change him from an aggressive to a loving and caring man. Toxic relationships are portrayed as romantic ones in which ill-mannered husbands are being pampered by their wives. Marital rape is justified and along with these forced marriages turning into love relationships are also romanticized and justified through these dramas.

Domestic violence is a serious threat to the mental and physical health of a person and in no way it is justifiable to normalize or romanticize it. In a country like Pakistan where domestic violence cases are already very high, such dramas create more vulnerable situations. According to research, only 3.2% of women in Pakistan didn't report any type of domestic abuse. This ranges from shouting to use of the weapons and marital rape. (Hussain, Hussain, Zahra, & Hussain, 2020) With such a great number of domestic violence, the media should take responsibility in portraying its content. Social responsibility theory suggests that the media is responsible for the portrayal of the media and it's their responsibility to portray the content that has a positive effect on the mindset of people. On the other hand, Bandura's Social Learning Theory depicts that people learn from the modeling and behavior of the things they are influenced by. As the media is an agenda-setter, it's the responsibility of the stakeholders to portray things that will model the positive behavior of its viewers. Such mindsets are created by the media content we consume according to Bandura's social learning theory. Things will not change until or unless such gender issues are portrayed in a better way and women are portrayed as the ones fighting against violence instead of considering it their fate.

Conclusion

This study concludes that gender stereotypes are incorporated so much in society that things that are very devastating for society are portrayed as something normal. Domestic violence is one of the worst things in marital relationships, and with the help of the media content especially in dramas; it is portrayed as a normal and romantic thing. Things need to be changed and media stakeholders should make strong policies for content about such sensitive issues. Instead of portraying women as submissive and inferior waiting for miracles, they should be portrayed as strong individuals who are aware of their rights. Pakistani dramas are not only glorifying domestic abuse; they are also promoting it. The message most dramas communicate is that men being men can abuse women physically or mentally. Recently PEMRA has banned hugging and caressing scenes in dramas on the pretext that these are not permitted by Pakistani culture. As per PEMRA intimate scenes are "utter disregard to Islamic teachings and Pakistani culture" and do not represent the true picture of Pakistani society. Are domestic violence and marital rape the true picture of Pakistani society? Is slapping your wife, shoving and pushing her, or throwing her out of the house not against Islamic teachings? Slapping is a brutal and barbaric act and has been forbidden in our religion. Although the ending of most of the dramas portrays domestic violence as a curse, the storyline of most of the dramas has many loopholes that create a stereotypical mindset of viewers, especially women. Violence against women is not justifiable at all, according to the eighth secretary-general, Ban Ki-Moon: (Ki-Moon, 2008)

"There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures, and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable."

In short, dramas and the drama industry are trying to justify domestic violence by playing with the subconscious minds of people. It is of no use to drastically change things in the end. Because in real life things never change drastically in the end, personalities, circumstances, and situations never change as a sudden, one has to take some measures to change his circumstances. If women are portrayed as submissive and silent, they will remain silent most of the time waiting for miracles that will change their lives.

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