CHAPTER 7

MIXED CULTURE IN SERIALS OF EKTA KAPOOR

India reflects the co-existence of Multi cultures; it is often related to the lifestyle based on the social requirements of the society. The existing culture has been considered as mixed due to various lifestyles. These lifestyles vary according to the religion, cast, sub cast, community and they differ as a natural phenomenon. Mixed culture is the combination of various cultures signifying unity in diversity. India is known for unity in diversity as many communities live in unison. A common attribute found in Indians is that, they pay respect to each and every culture they co-exist with and take part in each other’s joys and sorrows.

Language, religion, community, customs, traditions, rituals, art, aesthetics, values, morals, hierarchy, power, nature are the different aspects where the mixed culture is very obvious. Different localities come together framing a common society giving rise to a mixed culture of food, language, dialect, weather, code of conduct, apparels, the art forms, economy, trade, customs and traditions are framed as per the common demand of the society. The first glimpses of mixed culture is noticed in language and its dialects in every state and the second
change is due to the ruling power just as the saying “yatha raja thata praja”.

A mammoth change in the culture was observed after the independence of India, when all the small kingdoms were brought together and transformed into a single nation. A common constitution and a common education system brought in a lot of changes, resulting in mixed culture.

Mumbai is one of the four metros, along with the development of the city, there are several chawls that are a shelter to the maximum middle class people, the characters of the serials live in one of the chawls and the people are also influenced by the common Chawl Culture.

Factors Responsible for Mixed Culture: Media, Environment and Education are the major reasons, for the diverse and the drastic cultural changes in the world. Mixed Culture is a combination of West and East for the Indians. Equality and Social change are also responsible for the adaptation of the mixed culture by the younger generation. The internet, media has been very active in the past 15 years and has had a severe impact on the adaptation of mixed culture.

Education and Social Equality: All the characters in the serial are educated in English medium schools and colleges; most of them complete their graduation from foreign universities and are very smart
in the use of advanced technology. Social equality is very common in serials. The scenes that focus on the boss employee relationship also exhibit equal treatment, both girls and boys of the serial are educated and are treated equal.

Intercaste Marriage: The second generation of the Virani family Mihir and Tulsi are from two different cultural backgrounds and the whole serial is knit around these characters. The opening episodes of the serial discloses the fact that the elders of the family have decided to get Mihir married to Payal. Arranged marriages are a tradition in India and the marriage arranged in between Mihir and Payal breaks up as Mihir falls in love with Tulsi and gets married to her without his parent’s consent. The episode promoted a fact that the youngsters must get married to people of their choice and not their parents or families choice. In the second instance Mihir’s brother Chiraag got married to an inter-caste and interstate girl, he being a Gujarathi marries a Maharashtrian which erupts a volcano at the Virani house. Both Mihir and Tulsi support this inter-caste marriage and try to convince the family members that caste does not matter but the person matters, inter-caste and inter-religion marriages have been promoted in the serial. Inter-caste marriages, love marriages, inter-religious marriage are an outcome of the prevailing mixed culture. The serial also
projected the problems of love marriage and its acceptance by the family.

Dress Code: Mr. Bajaj and Prerna are seen in the Bengali conventional dress, Mihir and Tulsi decked as a newly married Gujarati couple. But this conventional dress is not carried over, once the marriage ceremonies are over. The same couple is found in some casuals like men in jeans and women in some common sari, but it would not be as heavy as the bridal sari. So the casuals are a fact to prove that they are far off from the traditional or the ethnic ones. The dress that is worn by an individual also defines the person and his nature. Today people are found more in low waist jeans than in a pair of high waist trousers, the attire of men has significantly changed. We find very few people in the ethnic dress. A representation of a mixed culture is noticed when people are found in a pair of jeans with a red or a black colored thread tied to their wrist. Sometimes some girls are found with a nose ring but are decked in jeans; in spite of the several varieties of Indian dresses, people find the Western dress more casual and comfortable indicating mixed culture.

The red and the black tread around the wrist neck and in some cases on the right leg have a sentimental attachment with the God and his miracle, the nose ring is one compulsory ornament that a girl should wear to mark the Indian tradition. Culture is not stable and the
change seen is continuous and slow. Hence it appears to be mixed; cinemas and the TV channels have changed culture significantly. Costumes worn by few characters are Western but they are Indian at heart, Tulsi’s sister-in-law is dressed up in jeans and tees where as Tulsi and the other daughters-in-law are in sari, Tulsi’s co-sister changes her attire completely into modern professional outfit.

In ‘Kasauti Zindagi Ki’ Prem is a complete representation of the existing mixed culture among the youngsters of India, he is a cool friend, a rationalist. There is an instance where he throws a party to his friends in his house but gets lashed in front of his friends. Later he realizes his mistake. His dress is completely Western but his heart is Indian. Prem is picturized as a complete hunk, he had a needle pierced in his eye brow, dressed in low waist jeans, a round collared ‘t’ shirt and an open shirt, spiked hair, chewing gum. He did not believe in any of the traditions of his community and its culture, but showed his frustration on his family members for abandoning him. He loved to spend all his time partying at a pub but would not like to go to a temple. He believed in individuality and wanted space and privacy all the time.

Many of the viewers love to watch the serial and the regional culture that is represented on screen, along with the language there are many changes found in the dress. A typical Maharashtrian dress is
worn only on the occasions like marriage; men wear a dhoti with a kurtaa and a turban (peta) over their head where as the ladies are draped in a sari with beautiful border designs in the dhoti style and a pearl nose ring with green bangles and a ‘kada’.

Food: The third generation of ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ family; represents the 21st century, with change in their eating habits that are modern. There is an episode that picturize Gautam’s demand for pizza as breakfast instead of ‘parathas’ (rolled bread of wheat with stuffed potato vegetable); there is modernity found in the food habits of the fourth generation of the ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ family. The lead characters prefer eating Chinese and Continental, using a dining table itself is a foreign concept, using knife and fork on the table and eating bread jam as a regular breakfast is a contribution of mixed culture. A variety of pastries, junk food and soft drinks are advertised through these soaps. The table manners too have changed.

Language: The language used by these characters in the serial also signifies the mixed culture, a mixture of two languages. Every regional language is adulterated with the international language English. Mixture of dialects and influence of neighboring states also have affected the mother tongues. This has been utilized in the serials. Usually husbands are not addressed with names but in the serials’
wives address their husbands with their names which are also a result of mixed culture. A mindset is effectively created by the mother tongue, if a person belonging to a Marathi community is advised in English then the importance of the advice is not understood effectively by the people but if the same is done in Marathi then the immediate changes in one’s behavior can be noticed.

In the serial ‘Pavitra Rishta’, there are many occasions where Savitha Thai is found conversing in Marathi with her chawl people and at times people are also found conversing in Marathi using words like “aaii”, “thai”, “vayani”, “dada”, are the words that reflect the influence of the local existing culture; The above mentioned words mean mother, sister, sister in law and brother but one thing that should be noticed is that they address each other with the above said words but continue to talk in Hindi. English is used in the casual talks as a mark of sophistication in between the characters on the screen.

Misuse of liberty: Kasish warns Mahek several times to maintain distance from Rishi but fails to protect her from him as Mahek gets cheated, these episodes convey the importance of virginity and dignity. Mahek listens to her heart and surrenders herself to Rishi and the society does not miss a single opportunity in pelting stones at her. However developed a country may be but a few sensitive cultural attributes do not change. The episode also reflects the misuse of the
freedom and liberty given to her; most of the serials reflect the combined use of individuality, freedom and liberty given to women in the society.

Kashish uses the freedom and liberty given to her very judiciously and never lets herself down and lives up to her dignity which also is a result of mixed cultural values. Not only Kasish but all the leading characters in the other serials be it, Tulsi, Parvathi, Archana or Bani know when to draw lines; hence they have been appreciated in their respective serials.

The leading ladies of the soaps are a great combination of culture and modernity, they respect elders, never spill the beans out, obey their elders, they know everything about their culture, they are educated but very humane in nature, they are sacrificing and dictating. These ladies are the appropriated combination of several cultures.

Prerna gets conceived even before marriage and delivers the baby as a gift of her love but Anuraag’s family do not trust her and slings enough mud on her upbringing, Anuraag also gets carried away by the words and does not accept Prerna and her child. Prerna faces the music with dignity which also is a result of mixed culture. She feels terribly sad; when her daughter Kasak commits the same mistake and goes through the same suffering. At times, the attire they wear does not
go with their thoughts; they wear minis and expect people to behave decently.

One Night Stand: Kasam Se: Pia sleeps with Mr. Walia and considers it to be a one night stand, this concept itself is not appreciated in the Indian society but Pia makes the maximum use of this incident and gets married to Mr. Walia and elopes with her lover and does not let Bani lead a peaceful life with her husband. There are many more serials with similar concepts in few episodes. There are many more examples like Rishi from ‘Kayamath’ and Madan from ‘Kya Hua Tera Vada’ do not mind such life style and these concepts are influenced from the West.

Bachelors Party: This is not common in India and this usually happens in high societies, it is a party organized specially for men. What happens in these parties is not shown on screen but most of the serials have it as an important episode in the serials before a wedding. This concept is a contribution from the West.

Serials also have played a major role in changing women’s priorities and have helped many women look at life in a different way and accept the difference and make a difference in their life, by taking reel actors as their role models, to name a few Tulsi, Prerna, Parvathi, and many more down the line. The only fact in one’s life now is to fulfill their dreams and create an identity for them. And the identity
they make for themselves will usually be a product of mixed culture. Mixed culture can be a byproduct of love marriages that have so far happened in the history, in the latter years of independence, people did not hook themselves to caste and religion and mainly looked for a person where the compatibility between them worked. Caste and religion definably have their differences with each and every activity that starts from the dawn to the dusk. But as said earlier the priorities have changed its, more of their peaceful life then just their dedication to their caste and religion.