CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION
Introduction:

That reality is constantly getting mediated, or mediatized to put it in a slightly different way, is a statement that seems almost axiomatic at present. People live under the constant shadow of mediated reality which refuses to disappear, thanks to the proliferation of mass media across formats - print, television or new digital platforms like internet. In an interesting extension to the corpus of thinking on media vis-à-vis the real, Bolter and Grusin (2000) have put forward the theory of reading it through two interdependent concepts of 'immediacy' and 'hypermediacy'. These two are two different styles of representation that, taken as a supplementary conceptual tool, serve to show the cognitive mechanics of the phenomenon called 'Reality Show'. As for 'immediacy', the very presence of the medium is forgotten paving the way for an impression of straight access to the content of the medium. On the other hand, 'hypermediacy' gives the representation a stylized look thereby drawing attention to the presence of the medium. Both immediacy and hypermediacy go on to construct the fabric of the mediatized event called 'Reality show'. While immediacy seeks to convey to the television audience a direct (and apparently unmediated) sense of the 'real', hypermediacy provides the look and feel of the 'show'. Taken together, it delves deep into the making of the televised contest that reality show is.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word ‘reality’ as a quality of being real not imaginary. When that aforementioned word is put together with the word ‘show’, it produces the product of a formulaic genre that is a simulation of real life (The Daily Banter, 2007).

Reality television show is a dominating component of the contemporary television scenario. It has become so popular that it may be considered as a social
phenomenon (Biltereyst, 2004). It is a genre of television programming that presents purportedly unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and usually features ordinary people instead of professional actors (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). It is difficult to overlook the emphasis and the role the media plays in shaping or constructing the identity of the participant or ordinary person who is viewed as a celebrity within these reality TV programs.

Celebrity is the democratization of fame, but more importantly, it is fame commodified. It is a symbolic form whose transmission and reception within a commercial media system renders it a cultural commodity. Celebrity is established by its appearance as a function of its reproducibility, or its exposure to audiences. In this discursive construction process people subjectively participate and maintain their of fame through their reception (Collins, 2008).

Children talent competition type reality shows are nothing new. Such competitions have been filmed and broadcast on television many times in the form of music competitions, dance shows and so on. In this type of reality programme participants usually compete under pressure, faced with the threat of elimination and these altogether help to increase both drama and ratings of the show. Voting occurs immediately after performance and children usually do not get the opportunity to modify their drawbacks or to display their skills later until the programs filmed over a long period of time (Shmueli, 2015). This makes the pressure more intense for children. Youngsters may look eye-catching in these reality TV shows but they don’t have that much emotional maturity to accept the failure and sufferings as adults do. Children who are talented, some expectations develop about them from viewers, as well as from their families. Thus when these children fail, they often leave the stage being embarrassed and disgraced. Consequently, while the camera stops following
them, the feelings of failure in front of public as well as audience, grasp them. Since, they may have laboured enormously for many months for their brief appearance on reality TV show (Shmueli, 2015).

1.1 Reality show performance & self esteem

In India as well as in Kolkata reality shows of child performers, focusing on singing is enjoying a wide spectatorship and is doing brisk business as well. Participants of these programmes belong to different age groups. Show-organizers groom them up with the skills and attitude which, as is widely believed both by the organizers and the audience, are necessary for on-stage performances. These junior participants evaluate themselves based on their knowledge and imagination of how others evaluate them (Ghosh & Mukhopadhyay, 2015). The evaluative and affective judgment of self is called self esteem. It concerns how the individual measure themselves along the dimensions considered by them to be important (Butler, 2001). Individuals with high self-esteem have a more stable sense of self and are more emotionally stable (Baumeister 1998; Campbell 1990; Campbell, Chew, and Scratchley 1991). High self-esteem people appear to have more cognitive resources to deal more effectively with unsatisfactory circumstances of their life (Baumgardner, Kaufman, and Levy 1989; Spencer et al. 1993; Steele 1988). Thus, self-esteem has been found to protect the self from harmful experiences which are perceived as stressor to the self (Longmore and DeMaris 1997; Spencer et al. 1993). This self esteem also acts as a motivating factor from another viewpoint. Research from this perspective suggests that people are motivated to uphold or develop their current levels of self-esteem in several ways. They may start to behave in a manner that helps to increase their self-esteem when it has been lowered and redefine the situation to
reflect more positively upon them. Else they give effort to create an impression of themselves in terms of positive worth and effectiveness (Rosenberg 1990).

Self image represents a descriptive aspect of self – the constructs, dimensions or characteristics by which the self is identified (Butler, 2001). Apart from media-related knowledge child’s self image might also be influenced by their mother’s self image.

Study conducted by Coppersmith (1967) reflects a direct connection between parents’ self-esteem and children’s self-esteem. Results suggest the mothers of children with high self-esteem also have high self-esteem; they are more independent, emotionally stable and flexible. Parents of these children establish clearer forms of authority and responsibility and they appraise the achievements. Whereas the parents of children with low self-esteem more consider social approval. At the same time the feeling of confidence among parents may contribute a child’s belief that his parents are successful, providing indirect and direct experiences of success at children (Jaredić, et al., 2013).

1.2 Reality show performers and their temperamental disposition

In the course of the show the contestants get regularly eliminated. Every round of elimination is followed by some tear-jerkers that capitalize on the weeping and sobbing of the eliminated people. Every participant has a single target – to be a winner. Their guardians also expect them to come up as so. Hence they are expected to adjust frequently to the changing situations. Adjustment capacity of the person is related to their personality. According to Cloninger et al. (1993) personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of the psychobiological systems that modulate adaptation to the changing environment. This psychobiological system of
the individual control cognition, emotion, mood, impulse regulation and social relations (Cloninger & Svrakic, 1997). Cloninger initially developed a neurobiologically based operant learning model, which was based on the assumption that the temperament systems in the brain are functionally structured as independently differing systems, for the activation, maintenance and inhibition of behaviour in reaction to specific classes of stimuli. Behavioural activation concerns the activation of behaviour in reaction to novelty and signal of reward or relief from punishment, which he called Novelty Seeking. Conversely, behavioural inhibition concerns the inhibition of behaviour in reaction to signals of punishment or non-reward, which he called Harm Avoidance. Moreover, behaviour that was previously rewarded and maintained afterwards without further reinforcement he called Reward Dependence. Thus three quantitative dimensions of temperament emerged and formed Cloninger’s tridimensional model of personality (Cloninger et al., 1994; Magada & Hansenne, 2007). Later in his psychobiological model he conceptualizes personality as an interaction between temperament and character whereby each interacts with the other in producing behaviour (Adan, Serra-Grabulosa, Caci & Natale, 2009).

According to Cloninger’s psychobiological model, temperament is the components of personality that are heritable, fully evident in infancy, and stable throughout life. The dimensions of temperament control automatic emotional reactions and are often referred to as the ‘emotional core’ of personality (Cloninger & Svrakic, 1997; Svrakic et al., 2002) and are thought to reflect individual differences in procedural learning of habits and skills. Hence, temperament can be defined as the “automatic associative responses to emotional stimuli that determine habits and moods” (Cloninger & Svrakic, 1997, p. 266). Temperament is moderately heritable, stable from childhood through adulthood and structurally reliable within diverse
cultural and ethnic groups (Cloninger, 1994). Furthermore, this construct is generally believed to involve with neuro-chemical systems (Prosnick, Evans & Farris, 2003). The key brain system believed to underlie temperament is the limbic system and the striatum (Cloninger & Svrakic, 1997; Gardini et al., 2009).

The four temperament dimensions can generally be defined as follows: harm avoidance (behavioural inhibition dimension) entails a heritable bias in the inhibition of behaviour in reaction of stimuli of punishment. It is reflected as pessimistic worry in anticipation of problems, fear of uncertainty, shyness with strangers and a proneness to fatigue (Cloninger et al., 1993). Novelty seeking (behavioural activation dimension ) entails a heritable bias in the activation of behaviour in response to novel stimuli. It is reflected as exploratory activity in reaction to novelty, impulsiveness, excessiveness in approach to stimuli of reward, and active avoidance of frustration (Cloninger et al., 1993). Reward dependence (social attachment) entails a heritable bias in the tendency to maintain behaviour in reaction to stimuli of social reward. It is reflected as sentimentality, social sensitivity, attachment and a dependence on others approval (Cloninger et al., 1993). Persistence entails a heritable bias in maintaining behaviour regardless of frustration, fatigue, and reinforcement that only occurs from time to time. It is reflected as industriousness, determination, and perfectionism (Cloninger et al., 1993).

The aspects of character were added to Cloninger’s model of personality are as follows: Self-directedness relates to the extent to which an individual is responsible, reliable, resourceful, goal oriented, and self-confident. Self transcendence relates to the extent to which individuals consider themselves an important part in the universe. It is reflected in spiritually mature, unpretentious and humble individuals. Cooperation is the last character dimension, which relates to the extent to which
individuals consider themselves an important part in society. It is reflected in socially mature, empathic, agreeable, and cooperative persons (Cloninger et al., 1994).

Mother is one of the most important persons in child’s life. Child’s temperament and behaviour is also influenced by their mother’s temperament and character (Clark, Kochanska & Ready, 2000). Children are much more dependent on their mother’s decisions. Therefore mother’s temperamental disposition may also have an important role to send the children in reality television shows.

1.3 Reality show and frustration tolerance

However, these reality shows are scheduled to have a single winner only, with other contestants falling at regular intervals. With their desired goal fading away, these losing participants feel frustrated.

Freud (1943) developed the concept of frustration first time in human beings. According to him, “frustration occurs whenever pleasure seeking or pain-avoiding behaviour is blocked”. Frustration was defined in Encyclopedia of Psychology (1951) as any interference with a goal response. It has been referred as to the blocking of behaviour that is directed toward a specific goal (Robinson, 1961; Murphy, 1964; Kretch & Crutchfield, 1965).

Dollard et al. (1939) formulated a theory and postulated that frustration results in aggression. Explaining the causes and effects of human aggression, Freud (1920) perceived it as an inborn device and an unavoidable motive in human beings. Aggression is one of the alternative responses for situations of frustration (Rosenzweig, 1945; 1963; 1978). There are two types of frustration: (i) primary, and (ii) secondary. The primary frustration is regarded as subjective dissatisfaction and started as a result of lack of satisfaction from any active needs. On the other hand,
secondary frustration consists of obstacles or difficulties taking place in the way, which leads to the satisfaction of any needs. (Ferreira, 2013) Another important aspect of the theory of Rosenzweig frustration (Rosenzweig, 1945; 1963; 1978) is defined by the attitude of the person who tolerates frustration without getting involved into different types of maladaptive responses. These explanations indicate the existence of individual differences in situations of frustration tolerance. These differences are thus related to the amount of pressure of needs, and also with the person’s personality characteristics (Ferreira, 2013).

Therefore the probing needed to have a knowledge regarding frustration reaction of the junior performers of reality T.V show. Furthermore, aggression which is directed on to the environment known as extrapunitiveness (E); the type of aggression which is turned by the subject upon himself/herself is known as intropunitiveness (I); and impunitiveness (M), in which aggression is evaded in an attempt to gloss over the frustration. Types of reactions to frustration included, obstacle dominance (O-D): in which the barrier causing the frustration stands out in the responses; ego-defense (E-D): in which the ego of the subject predominates; and Need Persistence (N-P) in which the solution of the frustrating problem is emphasized (Rosenzweig, 1945)

Of the different patterns of interpersonal relationships in life, the one between the parent and child is among the most important (Steinberg, 2001). Parental warmth is reflected through concern for the child and parent-child harmony. It is an important aspect in the development of the child. It has to do with the quality of the affectional bond between parents and their children (Dash & Sriranjan, 2014). It has been revealed in the previous study that parent’s lack of warmth was found to be a significant factor in children’s risk for developing behavioural and emotional
problems (Shaw, Owens, Vondra, & Winslow, 1996). In other words parent-child relationship can be described as the socialization between parent and child (Sears, 1951). Research has found that a loving, responsive, and helpful parent who is always available for their child serves the function of binding the child to them and contributes to the reciprocal dynamics of that binding (Bowlby, 1988). The tinges of reward and punishment; nature of discipline; amount of permissiveness; bonding and interaction in a parent child relationship are the expressions of healthy development of the child (Rao, 1989).

Keeping in view all the aforesaid aspects it is deemed desirable to delineate the i) self image profile, ii) temperament & character, iii) frustration reactions & direction of aggression and iv) perceived parent-child relation of junior reality television show performers. Simultaneously efforts have been directed in this work to carry out a thorough investigation of i) temperament & character and, ii) self image profile of the mothers’ of junior reality TV show performers.
Definitions of the terms used in this thesis

Reality TV: It is a genre of television programming that presents purportedly unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and usually features ordinary people instead of professional actors (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004).

Celebrity- It is a symbolic form whose transmission and reception within a commercial media system renders it a cultural commodity. Celebrity is established by its appearance as a function of its reproducibility, or its exposure to audiences. In this discursive construction process people subjectively participate and maintain their fame through their reception.

Self esteem The evaluative and affective judgment of self is called self esteem. It concerns how the individual measure themselves along the dimensions considered by them to be important (Butler, 2001).

Temperament- Temperament is the components of personality that are heritable, fully evident in infancy, and stable throughout life. The dimensions of temperament control automatic emotional reactions and are often referred to as the ‘emotional core’ of personality (Cloninger et al., 1994).

Frustration - Frustration is an emotional state assumed to be resulted from the act of blocking, interfering with or disrupting behaviour that is directed towards some goal (Reber & Reber, 2001).

Aggression - Aggression is defined as behaviour intended to injure another person (physically or symbolically) or to destroy property. Aggression is one of the alternative responses for situations of frustration (Rosenzweig, 1945; 1963; 1978)