Chapter - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
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The demarcation of the schema of any qualitative research work is a Herculean task but for proper theorization, analysis and documental presentation the researcher has gone through much transdisciplinary theoretical as well as research documents ranging from social theories to linguistics, from communication theories to their related research studies. Hence this chapter describes the purpose of the literature review undertaken by the researcher along with the discussion of the output of these reviews.

2.1. Purpose of Review of Related Literature

A lot of researches have been carried out concerning stereotyping women in the soaps. Television and women, television and children and violence and television have been topics of currency for research but religion and television has remained a neglected topic. The little works that have been carried out relating to television and religion is limited to the epic based serials such as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and Sri Krishna. Therefore an extensive amount of literatures are reviewed for framing the theoretical as well as the methodological framework of the study.

2.2. Literature for Forming Theoretical Framework

The culture industry according to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, was the result of an historical process that with an increase in technology (including mass communication technology) there was an increase in the ability to produce commodities, which enabled increased consumption of goods. In their work the Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical
Fragments (1972) they argued that the consumption of mechanically reproduced cultural products predominately radio and film led to formulas of producing them for entertainment purposes, and it did not occur to consumers to question the idea that the entertainment presented to them had an ideological purpose or purposes. On this note, both Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) claim that the consumers of this culture industry are integrated by it. It was their contention that consumers adapted their needs around these cultural products, and in doing so no longer knew of anything else that they might desire, or that there might be anything else they could desire. The entertainment that they enjoyed did not reflect their real social, political, or economic interests, but instead blinded them from questioning the prevailing system. Entertainment also had the function of allowing the dominant system to replicate itself, which allowed for further expansion in production and consumption. Thus, for Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) the culture industry worked in such a way that those who were under its influence would not even notice that they were being manipulated. Keeping at par with Adorno and Horkheimer, Homi K Bhabha (2004) in his book The Location of Culture rethinks questions of identity, social agency and national affiliations. He then provides a working theory, which may be considered as controversial, of cultural hybridity. In this book he uses concepts such as mimicry, interstice, hybridity and liminality to argue that cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent.

Arguments have been also been forwarded stating the ubiquitous nature of television, which holds that television and the electronic media have provided a new kind of cultural experience and symbolic environment. One of the foremost thinker in this regard is Douglas Kellner who in his essay “TV Ideology and Emancipatory Popular Culture” (1982) argues that ideology is a synthesis of concepts, images, theories, stories, myths in imaginative, symbolic or mythical
forms. Such a strategy of image “production-consumption and domination, in the view of Kellner (1982), follows the logic of advanced capitalism as a system of commodity production, manipulated consumption, administration and social conformity. He also points out that television images and stories produce new mythologies for problems of everyday life. Again “Myths” argued by Kellner (1982) are simply described as stories which explain, instruct and justify practices and institutions, they are lived, and shape thought and action. It should be pointed here that since myths deal with the most significant phenomenon of human life and enable people to come to terms with death, violence, love, sex, labor and social conflict, television portrayal of religious discourse (here dominant) may replicate itself, allowing further expansion in production and consumption. Here the concept of “bardic television” developed by John Fiske along with John Hartley in the book Reading Television (1978) can be echoed. According to them television performs seven functions in a modern society that the bard performed in a traditional society.

Again John Fiske in his book Television Culture (1987), looks at television’s role as an agent of popular culture, and goes on to consider the relationship between this cultural dimension and television’s status as a commodity of the cultural industries that are deeply inscribed with capitalism. The detailed textual analysis and audience studies carried out by Fiske (1987) shows how television is absorbed into social experience, and thus made into popular culture. Another book that investigates American television viewing habits as a distinct cultural form is Thinking Through Television (2000). This book by Ron Lembo helps to draft certain essential details for research in television generated culture. Based on an empirical study of the day to day use of television by working people, Lembo (2000) develops a unique theoretical approach integrating cultural, sociology, post modernism and the literature of media effects to explore
the ways in which people give meanings to their viewing practices. While recognizing the power of television, Lembo (2000) also emphasizes the importance of social and political factors which affect the lives of individual viewers.

The relationship between political economy and culture is pointed out by Natalie Fenton (2007) who argues that critical political economy seeks to reveal how forms of financing and organizing cultural production has consequences for public discourses and representations and the public’s access to them within a broad context of social and economic structures. In her article Bridging the Mythical Divide: Political Economy and Cultural Studies Approaches to the Analysis of the Media (2007), Natalie argues “we live in deeply unequal capitalist societies, driven by profit and competition operating on a global scale”. Fenton (2007) argues stating that cultural studies puts ordinary, everyday life at the centre of research and foregrounds issues of subjectivity, identity, discourse and pleasure in relation to culture.

Again Fredric Thompson (1990) is of the opinion that it is not possible to interrogate the consequences of mediated culture by focusing on the structure and content of media messages along with an attempt to read off the impact of these messages. So, rather than just looking at how the mass media may exert an ideological or hegemonic effect on the behavior and attitudes of individuals, it is crucial to consider the functioning of the mass media within the larger sociological perspective of culture, social structure and social groups. Ignoring the fact that we still live in deeply unequal capitalist societies, driven by profit and competition operating on a global scale would be sheer irrational. We can also not deny that we live in a media dominated world with many different ideas and identities in circulation at any one time. We need to understand the former to appreciate the latter. It is vital to appreciate the relation
between individual autonomy, freedom and rational action on the one hand and the social
construction of identity and behavior on the other.

The stereotypical representation of women as "dependent, docile, and extremely religious"
succumbing to untiring performance of religious rituals for successful household, settling
down in matrimonial bliss, bearing children and making them ideal human beings is a procedure
of "internalization" of "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1979). On this note, Sandra Lee Bartky
(1997) argues in her article that women's body language speaks eloquently, though silently of
her subordinate status in a hierarchy of gender. Michael Foucault (1979) tends to identify the
imposition of discipline upon the body with the operation of specific institution. Hence when
the female protagonists are repetitively portrayed performing religious rituals to settle
matrimonial bliss, imposition of religious disciplines upon the female body is attempted.
This system aims at turning women into the docile and compliant companions of men. This
will add up to the dominant gender arrangements where women's subjectivities are structured
within an ensemble of systematically depicted practices. Internalization of religiosity is
attempted to enforce the patriarchal system. The repetitive media imagery of such devotees
"may leave no doubt in the minds of most women that they fail to measure up" (Bartky,
1997).

2.3. Literature related to Soap Opera Text

The aim of this related review of literature on soap operas is to analyze the pattern of studies
undertaken related to soap opera genre and to note any resemblance to the objectives formulated
by the researcher for this study. The soap opera as a genre has been naturalized as 'feminine'
(Brundson, 1977). This legitimization of soap opera as feminine have forced studies
surrounding gender stereotyping, commodification and ideological construction in its narrative and content. Since the days of its commencement in India as well as abroad, soap operas were structured revolving the intricacies of domesticity. The apparent multifariousness of the plots, their inextricability from each other, the everyday quality of narrative time and events, in the words of Christine Geraghty (1981) ‘is not to be found in the subject matter of the serials concerned but in the way in which narrative, character and the passage of time are organized’.

Tania Modelsky’s ‘The Search for Tomorrow in Today’s Soap operas’, first published in 1979 (reprinted 1982) was innovatory in its focus on soap operas which leads her to define them as multi-narratives, with the focus on women and the home, the scheduling to fit the viewers’s domestic work, and never endingness. Modelsky (1982) holds the view that although the soap opera provides visual pleasure to its female viewer but at the same time the disempowerment of the spectator reinforces hegemony rather than challenging it.

The emphasis of this study is on the elucidation of dominant discourses related to family, religion and women, hence the hegemonic ‘women at home’ (Modelsky, 1982) ideology is focused by the researcher. While conventional soap opera female characters are often constructed as ‘ideal’ and desirable but unlike Modelsky’s (1982) attribution of ‘transforming her traditional feminine weaknesses into sources of her strength’, she resorts to mercy of an external power which is an attempt to weaken the position of women while promoting and keeping the structural power of patriarchy. Tania Modelsky (1982) lists the intolerable issues which are being used in the soap operas for meaning making by the viewers, these include careers for women, abortion, premarital and extra marital sex, alcoholism, divorce, mental and physical cruelty and last but not the least explosive issue of homosexuality. The tensions which get portrayal in the soap opera text are constructed conforming to the dominant ideologies.
concerning women's roles and structural changes hence the researcher tries to find if any of these dominant construction take place with respect to the religious discourses present in the visual as well as oral text of Indian soap operas.

2.4. Mediation of Religion

Much of the activity of the world's great faiths is, after all, precisely concerned with the communication of values and ideas using a variety of media. Neil Postman in his seminal work "Amusing Ourselves to Death (1985) points out that the media can only survive if people "consume" what they produce and an audience or a readership can only be obtained if people are offered what they want. What Postman (1985) negates in his article, Chris Arthur upholds in his book Religion and the Media (1993), stating that religious education and media are related. In this book he suggests that every expression of human religiousness is, inevitably, a mediated expression, which comes to us through a variety of means of communication. Indeed religions themselves could be seen as powerful systems of mass media. According to Arthur (1993), no transfer or passing on of religious ideas can take place apart from the use of media in some form or other. The individual religious believer or religious leader has always been crucial in the communication of religious ideas throughout communities and societies.

Argument have been laid out by many theorists that the multicultural societies experience a number of communication flows where the dominant social order undergoes a constant process to sustain its "imagined community" and value system through mass media that it controls. Echoing on the issue of multiculturalism, Mark Juergensmeyer, (2004) argues that in multicultural societies it is a difficult task to differentiate among the national identities based on their communities hence this is where religion and ethnicity step in to redefine public
communities. He argues in his article ‘Religious Terror and the Secular State’ that the withering of old forms of secular nationalism have produced an urgent need for national identity based on the old staples such as religion, ethnicity and traditional culture have become resources for national identification. Hence heavy use of technology and mass media helped foster creation of national identities based on these ethno-religious movements. The serialized presentation of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the two mythological saw a huge success both in terms of profit and fandom. Hence Andrew Jakerbowicz in his essay ‘Media in Multicultural Nations: Some Comparisons’ in the book Questioning the Media (1995), presents a critical analysis of media in multicultural nations citing the examples of United States, United Kingdom and Australia. He analyses the cases of these three multicultural nations to depict the sense of nationhood and multiculturalism being portrayed in the media. He also points that since these three nations are the conglomerations of many cultural groups there is every possibility of one or two of the groups posing as dominant.

The increasing and ubiquitous presence of media of some kind in our daily as well as in various social, cultural, political and economic spheres has led to the introduction of a new concept of ‘mediatisation’ by Stij Hjarvard (2008) in his article A Theory of Media as Agents of Religious Change. In this article he claims that religion can no longer be studied separately from the media as it has become intertwined with other fields or social institutions such as political and family. In general mediation denotes the social and cultural process through which a field or institution becomes dependent on the logic of media to some extent. He argues that the mediatisation of religion is not a universal phenomenon rather a development that accelerated during the past decades of the twentieth century in modern, highly industrialized western societies. The nature of this development according to Hjarvard (2008) culminates
into various consequences due to various avatars taken by it depending on the specific religion, media and content.

Richard Jackson Harris (2009) argues that nothing elicits a more fundamental positive emotional response than appeals to one's deeply held religious beliefs or a more negative emotional response than an attack on the faith. Hence religion is considered as an emotion laden topic with a power to make or mar a societal cohesion. While explicit religious visual imagery is avoided for the fear of controversy but implicit or unwaved religious elements in the entertainment, news and religious media. Harris (2009) also adds that the absence of religious themes in entertainment tv series except occasional exception of portrayal of religious fanatic or terrorist as a villain in American media is mostly due to the tv producers' and writers' relative lack of involvement with religion themselves. Even it is considered as a sensitive subject to easily offend people with religious belief absent in the media (ibid).

A content analysis conducted by M.I.Pinsky (2007) titled ‘The Gospel According to the Simpsons’ estimated that these prime time American animated sitcoms give space to religious discourse imagery in its text. Pinsky (2007) found that unlike almost any other family portrayed in television, the Simpsons attend church every week, pray before their meals, identify themselves as Christians and consider spiritual issues important in their lives. Hence the first objective of correlation between the representation of characters and the frequency of their religious practices is of great importance in order to dissect the dominant religious discourse present in the soap operas in Indian media. The depictions of religious affiliations of the characters although stereotypical as well as derogatory, are used for the generating profits for the producers who maintain the reproduction of an ideology of their benefit. Elements like ‘prayer sequence’ and appearance of ‘heavenly characters’ in the discourse of the text of these
soap operas (Pinsky, 2007) are considered as parameters for the Critical Discourse Analysis undertaken by the researcher for the present study of Indian soap operas.

The mere presence of television as communication medium has ‘altered all religion in subtle but profound ways’ (Harris, 2009) in such a way that the perception about religion has undergone changes in the minds of the viewers. In his provocative critique of popular culture, Amusing Ourselves to Death, Niel Postman (1985) argued that television has played an important role in reshaping our lives. The aspect that needs special mention is religion with far reaching implications. Postman considered the entertaining value of television has transformed the ‘preacher into a star performer’ (Postman, 1985). In his opinion, the viewers are offered those aspects of religion that has saleability or in his words ‘something that they want’ and not the rigidity of ‘Biblical Christianity’. This concept is similar to that of the ‘banal religion’ conceptualized by Stig Hjarvard (2011). In his article ‘The Mediatisation of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change’ (2011), Stig Hjarvard presents a theoretical framework for understanding the increased interplay between religion and media. While his former article pointed out role of media in providing information on religion issues and taking over many functions of the institutionalized religions. The recent advances, according to Hjarvard in mediatization theory include media’s role in providing spiritual guidance, moral orientation, ritual passages and a sense of community belonging. The concept of mediatization has been explained elaborately along with other related concepts such as ‘banal religion’, ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ religion. While the article outlines the core elements of mediatization theory with specific reference to the mediatization of religion in which media may articulate religious imaginations. Again it considers the relationship between mediatization and secularization. Hjarvard (2011) upholds the fact that both individual faith and collective
religious imaginations are created and maintained by a series of experiences and representations in the media that may have little or no relationship with institutionalized religions. Accordingly we find distinctions being made in the article between explicit and elaborate texts and practices of institutionalized religions and the implicit and 'bricolage-like' religious texts and practices of the media.

Media have become an important producer and distributor of 'religious rearticulations' about the supernatural and intentional force behind natural phenomenon such as the sudden strike of lightening (or victory of protagonist over the antagonist in the case of this study). Since our contemporary world is as furiously religious as it ever was, the 'demystification' and 'disenchantment' of the modern world could never be an explicit process. And because the media's roleplay as a producer and distributor of symbols and practices, they amplify the 'reenchantment' process of the modern world in myriad ways. With media moving to the centre stage of society both religious institutions and society have reduced to a 'niche society'. While the prior responsibility of media lay on serving other institutions such as political, science and religion, but now they are increasingly governed by logic of their own at the same time as they articulate society's common experiences and societal secularization. In the final part of this article, Hjarvard (2011) conceptualizes a three tier relationship between mediatisation and secularization. While at the society level mediatisation is an integral part of secularization, at the organization and individual level it may both encourage secular practices and beliefs and invite religious imaginations typically of a more subjectivised nature.

Members of a particular community will align their loyalties to a given set up of references (moral values, duties and rights; cultural practices such as religious rituals) and a dynamic process of continuous negotiation for construction of community feeling will then take place.
It is clear that if a multicultural state is prepared to adopt clear policies that seek to create the conditions for cross cultural communications and social justice then this can result into more just outcomes, which if neglected may force the notion to face a major threat. Stewart M. Hoover and Kurt Lungby attempts a complex approach to examine the relationship between religion and mass media by bringing together perspectives from cultural studies, sociology of religion, media studies, ritual studies and religious studies in the book Rethinking media, religion and culture (1997). In his book ‘Religion in The Media Age’ (2006), Stewart Hoover develops a highly interesting argument about the media handling the steering wheel of religion. By this he means that media do not replace religion but rather media are religiously relevant. So while religion does not disappear in the media age, we cannot understand religion beyond the media and its influences on religion any more. Another concept that is raised by Hoover (2006) is ‘articulation’. ‘Articulation’ (Hoover, 2006) is a rather general term that refers to the process of connection and disconnection but also the way people appropriate cultural forms for their own purpose. The notion of ‘articulation’ however implies that the starting point for any investigation should be with the people themselves and how they experience particular media as integrated in or separated from their religious experience. While this is markedly different from the previous approaches, it does acknowledge the empirical possibility of similarity between media and religious experience, separation between media and religion, or completely mediated religion.

In an attempt to dissect the incorporation of newly accessible mass media into practices of religious mediation in a variety of settings, including Pentecostal-charismatic churches and Islamic movements, and the use of religious forms and images in the sphere of radio and cinema Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors (2005) examine the role of religion and media in the
emergence and sustenance of new ‘aesthetic formations’ that appeal to the body and the senses, and generate new styles of binding and moods of belonging in our time in their book Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere (2005). Increasingly, Pentcostal, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and indigenous movements all over the world make use of a great variety of modern mass media, both print and electronic. Moreover Andreas Hepp and Veronika Kronert (2008) argued that ‘branding’ of religion is one of the dominant patterns of mediatisation. According to them ‘branding religion’ means on the one hand presenting religion in the ‘profane’ space of mostly commercialized media without losing on the otherhand the ‘sacred’ aspect of the religious offer (Hepp & Kronert, 2008).

2.5. Soap Opera paradigm in India

The objective of finding the representation, if any, of the characters belonging to other religions and their deviation from the role of the protagonist formulated by the researcher for elucidating the dominant discourse construction in Indian media can be justified when the arguments put forwarded by Christianne Brosius (1999) can be echoed. There is a difference between explicit or ‘waved’ religious text and implicit or ‘unwaved’ religious texts (Hjarvard, 2011). The second kind of text gives rise to ‘banal religion’ which may incorporate representations that have no necessary religious meanings or symbolism used (such as ringing of temple bells, dropping of flower, sudden appearance of allegorical characters and hymns as background score in the case of this study). The ‘iconography and liturgical practices’ of both institutionalized religions and folk religions become ‘stockpiles’ of the media’s own production of factual and fictional stories. The religious representations are there to serve the conventions of the melodrama and invest the story with mysticism, magic and excitement. Banal religion, according to Hjarvard (2011) consists of elements taken from institutionalized religion hence
in the case of Indian television soap operas, the iconographies used such as temples, idols of worship as motifs and practices such as fasting, rituals, superstitions reinforces the banal form of the institutionalized religion. This banal religion and its practices are exploited for formulation of a homogeneous consensus. Brosius (1999) argues that the 1990’s have witnessed an increasing awareness of the need to popularize Indianess through the Hindu revivalist ideology of cultural nationalism (Hindutva). This, according to Brosius (1999), is done by means of “branding” and displaying a selection of images, metaphors and narratives deriving from broader realms of popular culture. According to Brosius (1999), it is only through the use and packaging of such symbolic means that enforce a complete communication system to which agents can relate and form which they can derive meaning, that this notion of community can be constructed. Most people like Arvind Rajagopal (2001) agree that the rise of the militant Hinduism on the one hand, and the spread of capitalist ideals on the other are both linked to the new prominence of the media. Some among such thinkers are Britta Ohm (1999) and Christianne Brosius (1999) who have tried to delve into the topic stating that both these serials were trying to give a definitive and collective valid narration and interpretation of the two epics that so far had been a loose frame for interpretation. One can still see the reproduction of these Hindu mythologies on the priate channels. In fact according to Lalwani (2003b), they have become the inspirations behind making of most of the soap operas which can be validated from the statement made by Ekta Kapoor, the owner of Balaji Telefilms that produce such soap operas in India. Ekta Kapoor said that she wanted to make a modern day Ramayan in the form of Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki (Lalwani, 2003b). Taking this argument further, Shoma Munshi (2010) suggests that the epics play a pivotal role in the conceptualization of the text of these soap operas.
Again there are many studies that explored how women are represented on the medium and some of them demanded a change in the representation. Punwani (1988) concluded after an analysis of some of the earlier soap operas that Indian women are represented as tradition bound, passive person and domesticated.

One of the drastic changes that took place in the pattern of content in the soap opera of India was noticed after the intense growth of transnational television in India. Though it opened a plethora of advantages for the producers of soap opera content, it irritated the religious leaders who considered it as the cultural invader (Butcher, 2003). With this development of private channels viewers were turned into consumers of goods advertised during the programmes (Singhal and Rogers, 2000). Hence the images of poverty, vulnerability, rural men and women got erased from the screen of television soap and were replaced by the urban higher caste elites. There are always forces in any society that are constantly struggling with each other to obtain a position of leadership. The audience may form a perception that certain rituals and cultural practices are the life blood of Indian homes. The preference for the portrayals and representation of a particular set of practices over others in most of the soap operas shown in the four major Hindi entertainment channels may produce a preferred set of practices as natural ones in India. The television text is expected to objectively represent the social world in meaningfully coherent ways, even if the normative frameworks that provide such coherence are in tension or conflict with one another. In discussing this problem, Rosengren (1981), has offered a simple typology which cross tabulates two opposed propositions: ‘social structure influences culture’ and its reverse, ‘culture influences social structure’. Therefore the visual imagery of the religious discourses in the Indian soap operas is very much in practice at some parts of the nation. However, the consistent domination of the certain religious discourses
over the others may force the viewers whose perception of the real world is entirely based on the tele-visual imagery, in a claustrophobic situation. The researcher wants to map the dominant discourse that is represented in the four major television entertainment channels in India.

With an aim to correlate national identity based on ethno-religious movement Gita Viswanath (1999) argues in essay ‘Saffronising the Silver Screen: The Right-Winged Nineties Film’ that Hindu nationalism enjoys a hegemonic status in present day India. She argues that Hindu nationalism is based on the construction of a homogeneous and assimilationist culture which equates Hindu culture with ‘Indian’ culture. The visual imagery of the religious discourses in Indian soap operas lies abundant with allegorical references and religious rituals being performed at every drop of a hat. The strength, misery, triumph etc are signified in terms of symbolism such as drop of flower from the idol of any deity, ringing of temple bells etc. Although the director may argue that these clichés are used for their entertainment value but we cannot deny their implicit saffronizing power in the minds of the passive viewers. The consistent portrayal or say the saffronizing spree of the certain religious discourses in the media space may force the viewers whose perception of the real world is entirely based on the visual imagery, align to the portrayed ideology thereby subject to hegemony.

2.6. Literature for Formulating Methodology

The most rigorous formulation for discourse analysis is a combination of semiotic analysis and a study of the context. While for such an analysis, Roland Barthes’ Mythologies (1973) helps to give a formative knowledge on a particular conception of the relationship between texts and ideology. In Mythologies (1973), Barthes analysed a variety of everyday phenomenon (adsvertisements, popular films, sports events, etc.) and showed that they hold two kinds of
meaning: one which is immediately understood, and another which is “carried” by the first meaning. Intertextuality is a term about which there is a good deal of controversy. For purposes of this discussion, it will refer to the use in texts (consciously or unconsciously) of material from other, previously created texts.

Norman Fairclough (1995) emphasizes the multi-semiotic character of texts in his book Media Discourses and adds visual images and sound using the example of television language, as other semiotic forms which may be simultaneously present in texts. In this study, Bazerman’s (2004) perspective on intertextuality is employed as the point of departure to analyse the intertextual practices of each sample text. For the purposes of analysis, these levels of intertextuality can be recognised through certain techniques that represent the words and utterances of others. These techniques start with the most explicit ‘direct quotation’ and ‘indirect quotation’; to ‘mentioning of a person, document, or statements’ and ‘comment or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise invoked voice’; to more implicit ‘using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular document’ and ‘using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents’ (Bazerman, 2004).

Marcel Danesi points out in Understanding Media Semiotics (2002), the film Blade Runner contains many references to Biblical themes, such as the search for a Creator. Unconscious intertextuality involves textual materials of many kinds (plots, themes, kinds of characters, and so on) that become common currency, pervading cultures and finding their way into new texts without the creators’ being aware of it. Hence an intertextual analysis of the content to trace the dominant discursiveness of the soaps is justified. It will bring out the inert meaning
of the text when combined with the wider contextual or ‘extra-textual’ nature of the subject, it can still offer insight and inspiration.

To stress on the fact that there are four basic mechanisms for producing national identity: territory (story location); language (normalization and normativization mechanisms); representation of culture and tradition; and other historical, social and political representations, the article National Construction in Fiction Series: A Look at the Decade of Production from Televisio de Catalunya (2006) by Enric Castello earns a commendable reference. In his opinion, the nation is presented in quite a normalized way, particularly from a linguistic point of view. This paper helps in securing an idea of how some textual elements such as plot, semiotic elements of fiction, from a linguistic point of view, has tried to become a tool of “language normalization” or portraying a dominant discourse of power. The second objective of the study dealing with finding out the frequency of appearance of iconic, associative and symbolic semiotic elements signifying a particular religious discourse is justified in the sense that it will help to proceed directly from textual structures to consider the relation between the parameters of the study while the relation of these parameters with the macro context of the institutions under study, the family and religion, will bring out their possible ideological effects.

A combination of Foucoulilian Critical Discourse Analysis and Dispositive Analysis (Jager & Maier, 2009), CDS- a Socio- Cognitive Approach (van Dijk, 2009), the Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) and Dialectical Relational Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2009) is presented for carrying out in-depth analysis of the sample texts in this study. While van Dijk (2009) focuses on undertaking an exclusive research on theoretical as well as the practical aspect of CDA and argues that there is still a gap between
the more linguistically oriented studies of text and talk, on the one hand, and the various approaches in social sciences, on the other hand. CDA according to Fairclough (2009) sees the relationship between language and society being dialectical: on the one hand, language is influenced by society; on the other hand, society is shaped by language. The Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis and Dispositive Analysis (Jager & Maier, 2009) is further adopted to interpret the various ‘discursive knot’ analysed in the text of the select soaps. These ‘discursive knot’, are entanglements of discourse strands that can take form of one text addressing various topics of equal degrees. Again they can also address mainly one topic while referring to other topics only in passing. The entanglements of ‘religious discourse’ with ‘culture discourse’, ‘religious discourse’ with ‘economic discourse’, ‘religious discourse’ with ‘gender discourse’ can be more or less intensive in the text of the select soaps. Political economy and cultural studies approaches to the media have historically been seen as divergent and antagonistic in the ways in which power and culture is theorized and the appropriate means of researching media, communication and culture.

It would be foolish to ignore that we still live in deeply unequal capitalist societies, driven by profit and competition operating on a global scale. It is also undeniable that we live in a media dominated world with many different ideas and identities in circulation at any one time. Douglas Kellner in his book Media Culture- Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and post modern (1995) helps to develop method to analyse nature and effects of the media, be it film, television, music or other artifacts. Another article of Douglas Kellner that presents an allegorical spectacle about contemporary society and culture while providing a diagnostic critique is Buffy, The Vampire Slayer as Spectacular Allegory: A Diagnostic Critique. Popular television articulates in allegorical forms fears, fantasies, and dreams of a
given society at a particular point in time. In this paper Douglas Kellner takes the help of a popular television series titled “Buffy the vampire slayer” to provide access to social problems and issues and hopes and anxieties that are often not articulated in more “realist” cultural forms. The richness of symbolic allegorical structure and content in these shows allows the production of meanings and identities beyond that of more conventional TV and provides a wealth of different readings and appropriations. Three levels of readings are being adopted by Douglas Kellner in this paper and they are ‘realist level, mythology level and allegorical level’.

Another work which helps in dissecting the codes of domination in the discursive elements of plot, characters and semiotic elements is White (1988) by Richard Dyer, where the author tries to look into the subject of representation of whiteness as an ethnic category in mainstream film. Accordingly Dyer (1988) tries to study the images of groups represented as oppressed, marginal, or subordinate (women, working class, ethnic and other minorities). In order to make his point more clear, he carries out a discursive analysis of three films: Jezebel (1938), Simba (1955) and Night of The Living Dead (1969). Each is characteristic of the particular genre and the period to which it belongs. The differences between the three films are important and inform the ways in which they represent whiteness. Dyer points out that there is no denying the fact that part of “strength and resilience” of the non-dominant groups resides in their variation and flexibility—stereotypes are seldom found in a pure form and this is part of the process by which they are “naturalized or kept alive” (ibid).

In order to extract the racist dimension of U.S. media, Ash Corea in her essay, ‘Racism and American Way of Media’ published in the book Questioning The Media (1995), systematically deals with the producers and the produced. In the opinion of Corea (1995), the dominant
white discourse has not only subjugated the blacks but also the Native Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latinos. Racism communicated both in mass media and in every day conversation fed by the mass media, sustains it as an active cultural and political force. Corea (Ibid) provides a detailed examination of the way media especially television continue to stereotype both majority and minority by means of some exclusive contrasts.

In terms of media representations, the analysis of the construction of ‘difference’ is fundamental. Stuart Hall (1997) explains that while construction of difference is useful to understand the world but it has its negativity when it creates hostility between categories of represented entities. Stereotyping classifies people according to norms and splits ‘the normal from the abnormal, the accepted from the unaccepted’ thereby constructing what is called the ‘other’ (ibid). These classifications, according to Hall (1997), are simplified through ‘binary opposition reductionist way’ for example ‘us and them’ where ‘us’ is associated with normal and ‘them’ with abnormal or outcaste. Moreover Hall (1997) points out that since the practice of stereotyping tends to crop up at cites of gross inequalities of power, it establishes hegemonic positions according to symbolic power vested on the owner of its means of production in other words the ‘dominant bloc’ (Fairclough, 2001). While ethnicity and race is considered as a produced difference’ in American media and more particularly television, religion and culture are considered as axes of ‘difference production’ in Indian media. Hence the portrayal of dominant religious discourse, if any, is the major concern of the researcher.
References and bibliography

Books


Articles


Websites


