CHAPTER: 1

CULTURE, CULTURE INDUSTRY AND WOMEN

CULTURE: Culture is the benchmark of civilization. Indian Culture is the product of Vedas, Smritis, Puranas and Upanishads. In Indian terms, it can be defined as an ‘Ethical living’. The ‘Indian Cultural Heritage’ is in her ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Religious’ beliefs. The main motto of the ‘Vedas’ is the welfare of mankind, including recreation and realization of the supreme spiritual beatitude. Vedic literature marks the beginning of the sophisticated civilization and it has been recognized as the ideal, literary form. Sruti and Smriti are the two cultural institutions of the Hindu society; Sruti reveals the truth of life, where as Smritis are the customs and traditions to be followed.

Manu Shashtra is the embodiment of the Indian culture with its rituals, customs and traditions. Manu determined Hindu code of conduct for all the ages, the antiquity of Manu Shastra and the cultural heritage associated with his name are attested by Rig Veda. Manu is the genitor of the human race and has laid the edifice of code of conduct for his progeny.

Manu Shastra speaks of ‘Grahastha Ashram’ (family life): which includes marriage and its eight different forms, and periodical
observances, daily prayers, offerings, the periodic shradhas, charity, hospitality, character and code of conduct, women and their lifestyle. It gives instructions to rulers, ministers, counselors, diplomats, messengers, and army. It also directs administration of the villagers, communities, merchandise, collection of revenue, punishment, and clearance of antisocial elements, administration of law and order, of birth and life after death, astrology and karmic law.

Bhagavat Gita, a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, preaches bravery and declares that, everything is fair in love and war. It teaches how to lead a righteous life. Orthodox India follows the scriptures, as they are the cultural determiners and carriers from generation to generation. Culture is a social heritage that is carried on to future generations. It is shared, learned human behavior and a way of life. It is a set of rules, ideals, values practiced. It has patterned ideas, symbols, acquired habits that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals. It is based on arbitrary meanings that are shared by a society.

Culture differs from place to place; studying culture in such variable and highly vulnerable circumstances of 21st century is a matter of learning and updating oneself. Culture is easily shared and transmitted through social networking sites, technology is educating
people, but it has its own merits and demerits. These entertainment mediums have partially turned themselves into educators; people spend most of their time with technology and media than with human beings. The younger generations are adapting the new trends shown on screen as their culture. The soaps, cartoons, and the NEWS channels are creating a new culture and the young generations are accepting it without knowing its repercussions. Hence media serves as a text for cultural study.

This new behaviour and way of living is compared with the age old culture of India and is debated. The struggle to accept the old with the new changes is reflected in a few soaps; which continue to determine the changing culture from the ancient times to date. Culture is produced in new attire with many unanswered questions on screen; the cultural creations are often from the Aristocratic Class. Their world looks pretty colorful and classy to the masses; that tend to accept the fake outlook of the society as their culture; which is again temporary and variable.

The human ability to assign arbitrary meaning to any object, behavior or condition makes people enormously creative. They readily distinguish culture from animal behavior. Hence it can be understood that, culture changes according to place and community.
DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE

The term culture is ‘extra large’ to be defined. It is considered as ‘Samskruti’, ‘Sanskar’ ‘Dharma’ which means doing one’s duty with discipline and dedication. There is an existing assumption and belief among the wide masses that ‘Dharma’ is culture and is ‘a way of living’ which showcases ‘the triumph of humanity’. ‘Sanskar’ is understood as ‘one’s adapted behavior’. A person is identified, based on the one’s ‘culture’; which usually describes the character of a person, family, friend and a society.

Culture is a word derived from “cultura” and the Latin “colere” which means to inhabit, cultivate, protect, and honor with worship. [1]

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, concepts of the universe, and material objects. It includes possessions acquired by a group of people through individual and group striving. Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; which is the totality of a person's learning. Culture is concept communication. Some of its concepts include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the concepts are learned and deliberately practiced in a society.

Culture consists of behavior acquired and transmitted by scriptures, featuring the distinctive achievement of society, including
their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; Culture is the learnt and the same is transmitted to the younger generations.

According to the ‘Oxford Dictionary’ the term culture means:

Intellectual and artistic achievement, or an expression, refined appreciation of arts, customs and civilizations of a particular time or people, improvement by mental or physical training, cultivation of plants, rearing of bees, a quantity of bacteria grown for study[2].

This can be used as a basic definition to understand the literal meaning of the term ‘culture’. George Simmel referred:

‘culture’ to the cultivation of individuality through the agency of external forms; which have been objectified in the course of history. [3]

In the Twentieth Century, ‘Culture’ emerged as a concept central to anthropology, encompassing all human phenomena that are not purely the results of human genetics. ‘Culture’ is a ‘way of living’, a set of codes implied in the behavior of an individual. It enables people to be good and noble. It is a process of bringing things in order. It changes and develops like a living organism. Culture is a term in anthropology which comprises; everything from the traditional manner in every act to suit the social, moral, and religious values. Raymond Williams said,

‘culture is ordinary, every human society has its own shape, its own meaning, its own purpose every human society expresses these in institutions, art and learning; [4]
It includes both material things and symbols. It is concerned with practices, institutions and modes of classification, through which cultural values and norms are instilled in the population. Mathew Arnold said,

‘Culture is not solely the scientific passion, but the sheer desire to see things as they are; natural and proper. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulse towards action, help and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion and diminishing human misery, the aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it’[5]

Swami Vivekananda says, “The sublimity of Indian culture is as old as that of the Indian religion.” It has been one of the great civilizing and humanizing factors evolved by man, in other words: culture of Asia has been a complex fabric of life, woven by several different strands of which India is most prominent. B N Luniya writes that,

‘Hindu culture was not merely a civilizing force, but it brought the Intellectual awakening, social consciousness and material prosperity’. [6]

Indian culture is like a huge tree with its numerous branches representing various communities and their way of living. Hindu culture is often identified as the Indian culture as the word Hindu itself means ‘way of living’. Hence most of the serials revolve around the Hindu families and their beliefs. Most of the soaps exhibit the families’ culture and struggle for its name, fame and dignity. Ekta Kapoor’s Serials project the joint families of the 21st century.
FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTURE

India is the seventh largest country in the world, second largest in Asia covering an area of 1,127,000 square miles. It extends over 2000 miles from North to South and 1,700 miles from East to West. It has land frontiers with Pakistan, Russia, China, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Burma; which stretches over 8,200 miles across deserts, mountains and tropical forests. Its’ coastline is over 3,500 miles long.

India’s Population 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Population of India in 2012</th>
<th>1,220,200,000 (1.22 billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Male Population in India</td>
<td>628,800,000 (628.8 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Female Population in India</td>
<td>591,400,000 (591.4 million)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Star website there are more than 500 million viewers in 53 countries and is viewed by 120 million viewers every day. To describe the Indian culture depicted in ‘K’ (All the titles of the serials begin with the alphabet ‘K’ as it was predicted that ‘K’ was a lucky letter for Ekta Kapoor) serials, it is necessary to study culture in limited geographical contours. Geography of a nation has a great role to play, in framing the cultural values, as one’s way of living, depends on the land they inhabit and its climatic conditions. Most of the geographical factors have influenced their food, dress, and rituals and the same is featured in the popular ‘K’ serials. Gujarathis’ vary from Rajasthanis’ majorly because of their geographical factors. Most of the
serials are based on Maharashtrians’, Bengali’s, Gujarathis’, Rajasthanis’ and the conflict between the high-class and the low class.

Geographical factors: India has three major zones: - The Himalayas, the Indo Gangetic and the Deccan plateau. Indian culture is a nutshell of various thoughts, beliefs and practices. Culture is a matter of experience, it is not just the awakening from a swoon but a transformation of one’s being. While studying Indian culture, ‘Geography’ determines the activities, thoughts, and literature.

Indian civilization is shaped on the banks of river ‘Indus’ hence, it is known as Indus valley civilization. It has harbored in her bosom, various races and cultures from prehistoric times. Both immigrant and autochthonous have influenced the culture. In this chapter an attempt has been made to show, the impact of different factors influencing Indian culture and its continuous change till date and its application in the serials of Ekta Kapoor.

India has linguistic peculiarities and different regional spirits, fostering fissiparous tendencies. The rivers, forests, mountains and the sea are the four geographical factors that have deeply determined the thoughts and feelings of the civilization and its culture. India’s vastness and variety has always been an integral geographical unity.
MYTHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The motto of Indian Culture has been expressed in the Rig Veda dictum: ‘ekam sada, vipra bahuda vadanthi’- truth is one but sages describe it differently. There are many religions, living in harmony and each religion has several sub castes. They all follow the same truth of life but are described in different languages.

RIVERS

Rivers are the roots of Indian civilization. The places of their origin are the pilgrim centers. It is believed that River Ganga washes away one’s sins and helps people attain salvation. The most important ritual after the funeral is to dissolve the ‘bones and ashes’ of the dead into the rivers, as a symbolic end to man’s journey on this earth.

The opening episodes of the serial “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” are cinematographed on the banks of River Ganga at Haridwar. The director creates a spiritual feeling among the viewers with good classical music that falsely creates a spiritual ambience; which definitely lets the viewer believe that, the Virani Parivar is cultured and principled.

Virani family visits Haridwar to offer prayers to Goddess Ganga and on this occasion the lead characters, meet each other for the first
time. This episode glorifies the importance of River Ganga. The viewers feel the divinity of the holy place and they are under an impression that, a girl born and brought up in such a holy place (Dev Bhumi) is cultured.

The name of the lead character “Tulsi” itself signifies purity and divinity, a woman nurtures culture in her family, the viewers develop a hope that “Tulsi” definitely will bring in cultural changes in the high class Virani family. She is simple and is aware of all the customs and traditions. She knows the reason and logic involved in these traditions. Such episodes reflect; the importance of the rituals, customs, traditions in the Indian families.

People tend to copy these rituals, traditions, customs assuming, it to be right, in reality the director doesn’t reflect the truth in depth but superficially uses these customs and it is emphasized in the Soaps. Similar episodes are seen in all the ‘K’ serials. All the other rivers are also given equal importance. People have great faith in the River Ganga, as it is not just treated as a river but also a goddess, who purifies one’s soul; who also has divine power of granting boons.

People make several wishes and get involved in the Grand Aarathri performed on the banks of the river. Hence these historical holy places gain a lot of popularity and publicity, people visit these
places in large numbers. The directors have used the blind faith and devotion of the Indian masses in their serials. This impact of television on culture turns out to be a TV culture or a culture industry.

FORESTS

Forests have a great religious importance in Indian culture. The lure of the forest is great. Buddha practiced his austere penances in a forest. Gurukulas in ancient India were in the forests. Teachers taught students with practical and logical examples of the nature: as it is the best teacher. Aged people usually resorted to forests to spend rest of their lives; sages performed ‘Homa’ and ‘Havana’ in the forests. Serials have projected the importance of ‘Homa’ and ‘Havana’. And the same is depicted in the serials through offering prayers to the ‘Tulsi plant’ and the ‘Peepal tree’.

MOUNTAINS

Mountains have cultural significance, snow clad Himalayan peaks are described by ‘Kaviratna Kalidas’ as King of Mountains, ensuring divinity, security and safety. Mythically these mountains are the abode of Lord ‘Shiva and Parvathi’. King of Mountains is the father of Goddess ‘Parvati’. The Mountains, Rivers, Forests, Seas and Oceans have thus inspired love and reverence for nature in the Indian
mind; which is unique and is reflected in every aspect of the Indian life. Mountain views are another attraction in the serials.

IMPACT OF YUGAS’ (eras’)

Yugas are the historical classification of time in periods in Indian Mythology. The stories in the serials depict the role models of the various yugas like “Raja Satya Harish Chandra”, of ‘Satya Yuga’, Lord Rama of ‘Tretha Yuga’ and Shri Krishna of ‘Dwapara Yuga’. These role models are relevant even today. Values, rituals and the philosophy of life have been imbibed from the Epics. Rama is a strong representation of an ideal son, king, brother, and a human being, who upholds the Indian culture of obedience, truth, and sacrifice. Lord Krishna, Lord Rama and Goddess Sita are worshiped in serials like “Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki”, “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi,” “Kutumb,” “Kasm Se” etc.

Dwapara Yuga speaks of the decline in the cultural values. It is in this period, Lord Krishna preaches that, ‘life is a battle and one has to face it’. References to Bhagavat Gita, Mahabharata and Lord Krishna are very commonly used in the dialogues of the “K” serials. The lead character warns her opponent by stating ‘shlokas’ from “Gita” and “Mahabharata”.

12
Kali Yuga is the worst period with many self centered and cruel people. A world filled with social chaos, inequality, fear, hatred, intolerance, violence, terrorism, deceitfulness, and inhumanity. In most of the serials, there are dialogues that reflect the impact of Kali Yuga, on its ancient culture. There are instances in the Soaps, where a mother trains her children by quoting examples from the ancient texts.

THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY ON CULTURE

The words good and bad can be better understood only after understanding the term culture; it varies from people to people based on their communities and religion. In India, culture is vastly understood as ‘way of living’. Hence people tend to follow everything, in the name of ‘God and Religion’. These words have a great impact on the commoners. Thousands of them follow the religion, to be on the safer side and avoid committing sins. Hence all the scriptures approved by the religion are taken as the final verdict.

Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world. Majority in India are Hindus, religion plays a vital role; religion is in the life and blood of every Indian. Hindus believe in (ahimsa) non-violence and the sanctity of life, and emphasize on self realization and acquisition of knowledge and conquer self.
Dr. Radhakrishnan interprets “Hinduism as a museum of beliefs” and it has changed from age to age, and from community to community.

Macnicol an indologist, described Hinduism as “a mixed union of several religions an amalgam of often contradictory beliefs and practices held together in one, by certain powerful ideas and a system of social regulations.” The diversity in culture has been the centre of attraction of ‘K’ serials. These have been discoursed with illustrations in the following chapters.

IMPACT OF INVASIONS ON CULTURE

Mughals: India lived an undisturbed life for thousands of years till the invaders found their way in the country, one after the other, when Mughals invaded India; they demolished temples and the ‘idols to loot the hidden treasure in the temples. Many people came to India and left a striking impact on the natives, several countries came, in the name of the trade, with a hidden agenda to rule Indians and carry back, huge amounts of wealth; they carried spices and other important treasures from the nation.

Mughals ruled India for two hundred years leaving a deep and everlasting impression on the method of administration, art,
architecture, literature, music, manners and the way of living. Arab traders knew people from the West Coast of India, stretching down from Indus to Cape Comorin in the South. When the merchants came from the other world with their dates and frankincense, their faith joined them. They left an ever lasting impression which has resulted in the mixed culture. During the reign of ‘Akbar the great’ India experienced equality and respect for various cultures, all the cultures lived united and breathed free.

Christianity came into India in the name of trade and established itself as a cult under the patronage of Christian rulers for worldly gain. The East India Company, ‘The Dutch’, ‘The Portuguese,’ ruled the Indian land for ages and left an everlasting impact on the natives. They were rich and powerful. They used weapons to have control on the common crowd, who succumbed to them in the worst situations.

East India Company ruled India for three hundred years, during their stay; for power and treasure, there was a lot of social chaos, people were harassed to death, the natives were treated like slaves and a major part of the natives’ earnings were taken away as tax. Indian culture had major changes in it, when the British took control over most of India.
During the British rule, there were a few gentle British officials, who thought of reforming India from few rituals and customs; which actually made less meaning and were forced upon people, they didn’t want Indians to be superstitious. The British were responsible for the decline of the Gurukulas, and the establishment of the Schools and Convents. All were taught to read and write English than Sanskrit. Today the Cultural Heritage of India is read and understood in English language, but not in Sanskrit or any other ancient language.

Change in Education system, was brought in schools. The students learned not to discriminate among them in the name of caste and creed. They developed equality in mankind. Indian culture drastically changed with the rulers, as they would forcefully convert people from one religion to the other. Just as the saying goes “yatha raja thatha praja”, festivals, marriages, beliefs and the changes in them completely depended on the bureaucracy. The new cultural trends shown on television also have a similar impact on the masses.

A similar change came in with the cultural industry through films and television, various soaps and programs signify changes in the culture, and the soaps reflect the cultures of three generations and still glorify the Indian cultural heritage. Religion has direct influence on culture. And it is identified by their names. Culture differs with
religion, castes and sub castes. In this chapter Hinduism has been considered as the culture of the nation, whether it is the Virani’s, Agarwals, Mittals, Deshmukhs, Bajaj, or Basu families of the popular serials. All are Hindu families hence are accepted by the audience. Majority of the population in India was Hindus and the soaps depict stories closer to their heart and life style; soaps have been selling like hot cakes and gaining huge TRPs.(Television Rating Points)

IMPACT OF VALUES ON SERIALS

Indian society is ‘value based society’. Women are the cultural queens and carriers. Characters like Tulsi, Archana, Kashish, Kusum, Bani, Prema, and Parvathi are embodiments of values. Most of the serials glorify values and their importance, while imparting it to their younger generations with modifications.

In an episode from “Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki” Parvathi advises Pallavi to change her ways and lead a righteous life but Pallavi laughs at her, for her age old faith and belief. Pallavi tries to be righteous but does not have the same patience as Parvathi. Hence, very soon resumes her original vicious character, ‘Chaya’, Parvathi’s sister-in-law is not ‘value based’ hence, tries to create problems for Parvathi. Characters in the Soaps fight with each other as their values differ.
In the serial “Kasauti Zindagi Ki” Mukti and UD hate each other because Mukti is morally right and UD is not. Later on Mukti’s values impress UD and he changes his lifestyle. Characters like Mr. Bajaj, Anuraag, Karan and Gautam are morally right. Hence Gautam and Karan have won the ‘Best son’ award. The serials have won awards like, the best mother, father, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son, husband, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, mother and father in the Star Parivar Awards.

CULTURAL FEATURES IN THE SERIALS OF EKTA: FINDINGS

1: Culture is shared and transmitted.

2: Culture is cumulative.

3: Culture is adaptive.

4: Culture is not stagnant.

Culture is shared and transmitted:

Transmission of Rituals: Culture is about group dynamics and a basic need of groups is to communicate, both at a superficial level and at depth. A set of common rules and regulations are framed, shared and are transmitted from generation to generation: for instance, worshipping Ganesha before commencing any important work, to
avoid interruption and hindrances. This ritual is followed since times immemorial and the same is transmitted to the younger generations in all the Serials. A few changes are common and adapted during transmission.

In ‘Pavitra Rishta’ the characters pray to Lord Ganesha in their soliloquies and share their feelings, miseries and ask Ganesha to help them and guide them to lead a righteous life. Archana prays to Ganesha when Manav goes in search of a job, both Manav and Archana visit world famous “Siddhi Vinayaka” very often. Through the serials influence the younger generations to visit such temples.

Every serial shares such a plot, the characters visit temples in happiness as well misery, the characters reflect a common fact that, God knows and understands them better than any other character. People have a deep faith in this concept. Hence their discussions often involve God; they often swear by his name to gain trust among their family members, because Indians believe in a concept; which says that a man will be punished and rewarded according to his deeds and God keeps a watch on everyone. Most of the lead characters in ‘K’ serials are God fearing, hence most of the times are found talking to the idols either in the temple or in the prayer hall. They often question God and demand answers; when they don’t understand why they are undergoing
an emotional crisis. A common fact that everyone’s life is predestined and executed by God makes the character impeach God.

Such episodes are closer to the viewers life, most of the times such unanswered questions trouble common people, viewers analyze and are disturbed but still their faith in God does not shake; as God can make miracles and he is never partial. Most of the Indians pray to God, no matter, to what religion they belong, this faith of the common place is used by the director in serials. It is believed that, a man’s wishes are granted if he/she asks for it, with complete faith in the God.

Characters in the serial are found making wishes and ask him to be a little generous in granting them. Negative characters as well as Positive characters seek God’s blessings and make wishes before him. They also confess and share all their secrets with him. There are episodes in which the characters, take out their anger and frustration on God and they also challenge him and question his existence.

Such episodes are immediately accepted by the viewers as it seems similar to their behavior; a common psyche presented here is that God is responsible for everything happening in one’s life. If a character has a blissful or a miserable life then he/she holds only God responsible for it and practically not their deeds. The directors of the
‘K’ serials have used this concept in every serial. People generally are of the opinion that, they are puppets and act as per the God’s wish.

Tulsi, Parvathi, Archana, Mihir, Om, Manav, and many other characters in the serial believe in God and his miracles (leelas). Savita Thai, Ramola and the other negative characters also believe in God and in few episodes even misunderstand him; they believe that he is there with them in their good and bad deeds. They are also under the impression that all their sins will be washed away by offering prayers to him, they visit Lord Ganesha to avoid obstacles and achieve only success. They visit Goddess Durga for strength and peace of mind, Indians believe that Goddess Durga has several forms and in every ‘Avatar’ (form) she plays the role of a mother. She is considered to be the mother of the whole universe. Hence there are several families; who worship her as their family deity. People talk to her and share their feelings just like they do with their mother. It is also believed that the universal mother listens to her children and helps them to resolve their problems.

In the serials, it is visualized that, characters represent the major common folks that, often visit temples with a problem and come back with a solution. This is a common faith and trend in the masses and when people view such episodes their faith in their respective God
increases. In the serial “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” it is found that Lord Krishna is worshipped as a family deity, similarly in “Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki” Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman are worshipped, in the serial “Pavitra Rishta” Lord Ganesha is worshipped, in “Kasauti Zindagi Ki” Goddess Kali and Durga are the main deities. Lord Shiva is worshipped in “Karam Apna Apna”. Such beliefs are shared and transmitted in serials with their own impact on the viewers.

Shared Rituals: ‘Nature’ is worshipped with great reverence; Hindu places of pilgrimage are situated deep in the valleys and on the hilltops, river banks, lakes and beaches. As a result, people of all ages often visit these pilgrim centres. Every Serial promotes the visits to holy places and its cultural significance is narrated to the viewers through these daily ‘Soaps’. A fact that, ‘God is omnipresent, ever pervasive and cosmos is the universal truth’ is believed that human life is precious; hence people must be value based and God fearing. The concept of hell and heaven has great impact on the Hindu way of life.

Rangoli: every serial promotes this common ritual of drawing a beautiful rangoli in the front yard; it is believed that, evil spirits will not enter a house; which has a rangoli. It is also believed that God particles exist in rangoli. In Serials like “Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki”, “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi”, it is often shown that, women in
a family draw rangoli’s on the pedestal as a good omen. There are
episodes from these serials where a bad omen is signaled with a family
member destroying rangoli and dishonoring it by stamping on it.

Rangoli’s are used as formulas to welcome the Gods for the
Pooja that is being performed at home, and Gods are given a place in
the Rangolis drawn for worshipping. It is also believed that, God’s
guards’ live in these rangoli’s and they shield the families from the evil
spirits. Such episodes strengthen the beliefs of the masses. The
cultured ladies from these on screen joint families emphasize on the
significance of the rangoli. Such cultural information is shared and
transmitted to their younger generations by the elders of these pseudo
families. It is usually the grandmother narrating the importance of
rituals through mythical stories.

Tulsi pooja: Tulsi plant is found in the front yard of every house,
it is considered to be very sacred, and every woman offers prayers to
the Tulsi plant in the early hours of the morning, Tulsi is regarded as
lord Vishnu’s wife, offering prayers to Tulsi plant brings in good
fortune. Hence people worship Goddess Tulsi in all the serials and
these are the rituals that are telecasted and transmitted to people.

Logically a Tulsi plant is offered prayers to keep the front yard
clean because anything associated to God involves cleanliness, hence
every family adapted it. In the serial “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi”, when the plant starts withering its leaves, it indicated that something bad is awaited. If the plant is lush green, it signifies the existence of God’s grace on the family; it reflects happiness and peace of mind. “Ba” and Tulsi are found discussing their family problems near this Tulsi plant. When conspirators are successful in their evil plan, the directors draw viewer’s attention by bringing in a stormy wind and rain that destroys this Tulsi plant. People generally worship Goddess Tulsi because she is Lord Vishnu’s wife, offering a prayer to her is like pleasing Lord Vishnu and getting blessed from him. Without knowing its significance, just to follow these rituals, people have started keeping Tulsi plant in their balconies because of the apartment system and lack of knowledge.

Lamp: lighting a lamp, early in the morning and evening before God brings in knowledge and shuts away darkness and ignorance. It symbolically means that, a man must crave for knowledge and stay away from ignorance. Lighting a lamp symbolically means igniting one’s mind, it’s an awakening from darkness to light. This is an important ritual transmitted from one generation to the other.

People believe that a lamp flutters and dies down symbolizing death, accident or a bad omen. People always protect the lamp they
never let a breeze blow it off. All the lead characters in the serial always protect and safeguard the lamp and the interests of the family. They also protect the viewer’s faith and belief. Such episodes naturally drag everyone’s attention, as masses believe, more in the unseen divine powers than themselves.

This lamp is also used to offer Aarathi to the family deity in serials, every morning the heroine offers prayers and Aarathi and asks the family members to seek blessing from Aarathi. Every person in the family attends to these customs and rituals of the family. Such episodes convey a fact that a cultured woman will always be interested in following the rituals and customs, for the welfare of the family. Such sentiments are glorified in the serials helping the viewers to distinguish between the good and the evil.

Sindhoor (vermilion): has a great cultural significance amongst the Indians as it is a symbol to identify a married woman. The serials exhibit its importance, when a marriage is on the verge of breaking, Sindhoor falls down and scatters on the ground; which is strongly believed to be a bad omen, it symbolizes the entry of a new woman in her husband’s life. If a husband meets with an accident the lead lady immediately smells something fishy because the sindhoor falls down. Similarly if a man is destined to marry a woman then accidentally
sindhoor falls on her forehead as an indication from the God. Such episodes glorify the importance of sindhoor and they strengthen such beliefs in the unseen power and among the viewers with special touch of background music and effects.

All these rituals are shared and transmitted by the women of the family. Similarly they offer prayers to the ‘Peepal’ tree with a notion that Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev reside in this tree, it is also believed that this tree has the capability of granting boons. Hence women circumambulate this tree early in the mornings. Such rituals are transmitted to the younger generations by the women and these concepts are promoted by the viewers.

Unity in family: Every soap portrays, three generations of the family living together under the same roof with unity and dignity promoting joint family system, with a very few cultural differences. Although present Indian scenario is promoting nuclear families, the serials project team spirit. They strongly believe in the quote “united we stand and divided we fall”.

Patriarchy: These serials also promote existing patriarchy in the society, but in most of the serials head’s of the families are very passive, while resolving petty issues; for example in “Pavitra Rishta” ‘Savita thai,’ ‘Sulochana thai’, and ‘Rasika thai’ take decision for the
family and their husbands seem to be henpecked. Most of the times, they are snubbed by their wives, this is a common reality shown in the serials. Viewers compare their husbands to the on screen husbands and sympathize with the lady characters of the show.

In “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi”, “Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki”, and “Kutumb” there are a few episodes were patriarchy is imposed: for example when ‘Guari’ complaints against ‘Pratham’ his father Mr. Mittal takes strict action against Pratham. Similarly in “Karam Apna Apna”, Shiv’s father decides and requests Guari to transform Shiv. Characters like Mihir, Anurag, Bajaj, Om, Karan, Pratham, and Sujal represent patriarchy. In few episodes the trifles between women are resolved by the men, who put an end to it by force or by request. Mihir and Bajaj are recognized as good decision makers, serials have adapted patriarchy to satisfy the viewers and not hurt their sentiments. This patriarchal culture is shared and transmitted through the serials.

Worship of Celestial bodies: Indian culture strongly believes in offering prayers to the celestial bodies because the nine planets play a major role in everyone’s life. The younger generations have been drifting away from the Indian culture under the pretext of modernity and development. Hence serials exhibit the importance of these values
to the masses. Today’s fast moving culture doesn’t let Indians follow certain traditions, hence serials telecast changed and adapted version of culture.

The families belonging to the ‘Suryavanshi’ clan offer prayers to the Sun God, early in the morning and this tradition is followed by generations till date. Even in the TV Serials, the same is projected. The younger generations also know the scientific importance of all these rituals; as it communicates positive energy. In Rig-Veda it is said that prayers to Lord Surya(sun) free one from sins, diseases, poverty, bless them with long life, vigor, strength, virility, and divinity; but most of the times, women hardly find time to worship ‘Sun God’ regularly, hence, while it is telecasted in the serial, it gains popularity. Men and women do visit temples on Saturdays and worship all the planets to have mercy on them.

Similarly Chandrama (Moon) is revered because it is considered as ‘God’ of the mind and emotions. Since mind is very fickle and wavering the Moon keeps it under control. It is a symbol of special powers in the body and is believed to reside on the forehead between the two eyebrows; this is where a ‘tilak’ is applied. The scientific significance of this ‘tilak’ is that it gives peace of mind. Full moon days are considered to be very auspicious, most of the festivals are
celebrated on those days, and Ladies fast on full moon days for a better future and pray for their husbands’ long life. All the ‘K’ serials celebrate ‘Karva chouth’ and these episodes convey the sanctity and significance of this festival. This message is communicated and imitated by the younger generations.

Performance of Yagya: Yagya and Havana’s are performed in the soaps for peace and prosperity of the families, it is an important part of most of the episodes, in spite of the truth that the Havana and Yagya performed in the soaps are pseudo, as the priest chanting mantras is only enacting and in reality does not even know a single ‘mantra’ the impact they have on the viewers is strong, as Havana’s and Yagya’s are closely associated to religious sentiments of the viewers. Such episodes glorify Indian culture and viewers’ unanimously appreciate.

Worship of Nature: The worship of the five elements is also a tradition. It is not just a superstition. In the Mythological scripts (Puranas) and other religious texts, great importance has been accorded to trees and plants, equating them with Gods. It is recommended that they should be treated as members of the family. It is said that trees bring with them the fruits of their deeds from their previous birth. They are living things and experience pain and pleasure. God has created them for the welfare of all. They protect those who come under their shade.
During ‘Vata Savitri’ ladies offer prayers to the peepal tree (Bargad). On Thursdays prayers are offered to the banana plant. The use of banana leaves for serving food is considered pure and clean. On Asoka ashtami, Asoka tree is worshipped to end sorrows. There is a strong belief that Gods reside in the trees. All the important beliefs discussed above are learnt and transmitted by the cultural carriers. These indirectly convey the message to save the natural resources.

These ceremonies not only communicate the procedures of rituals but also transmit the cultural significance and its link to people. The publicity of these beliefs is widely done in serials that are telecasted in the channels like Star, Zee, Sony and many more.

Greetings: Discipline is the hallmark of culture. Home is the first school and mother is the first teacher, moral values and discipline are taught at the home front and the legacy continues. One of the best examples to show that culture is learnt and transmitted is the simple etiquette of greeting each other as “jai mata di”, “jai shri krishna”, “jai takoorji”, “radhe krishna”, “namaste”, “namaskara”. All the traditions, customs, etiquettes are acquired during the childhood and the same is imitated in the serials.

Cradle of Civilization: Indian society has always given a greater importance to behavior; the human behavior has its impact on the
society constructively and destructively. All the Hindu scriptures sing the glory of the “God” and the righteousness which is called as “Dharma”.

Motherhood: She is responsible for disciplining the children’s behavior. There are episodes in “Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” and “Kasauti Zindagi Ki”; when Gautam and Prem were introduced they were depicted as uncultured boys in the latter episodes their mothers discipline them. Culture teaches a person to be decent and dignified, hence culture is discipline and it is a must in a society.

In the serial “Pavitra Rishta” Sulochana, the mother of the three main characters Archana, Varsha, and Vyshalli regrets her own upbringing. In an episode, it is shown that Varsha being very ambitious aborts her child; which shatters her husband’s dreams and breaks her marriage. In this episode Varsha’s mother-in-law blames Sulochana for a bad upbringing. Varsha is represented as a modern daughter-in-law.

Culture is cumulative: As the saying goes “like minds think alike” and ‘birds of same feather flock together’. Society follows the same kind of rituals, customs, and traditions, celebrate festivals, marriage, follow the same value system. The socio-cultural life hasn’t perished in India because of its family structure and bindage.
Family: is the smallest unit of the society and a magnificent institution since ages. Patriarchal system is dominant in India. Family system is first seen in mythical stories. All the serials of Ekta Kapoor, represent a joint family, this system has been successful for ages and is the best example to declare that culture is cumulative. In the serials ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Bahu Thi,’ ‘Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki’, ‘Kasauti Zindagi Ki’, ‘Kutumb’, ‘Karm Apna Apna’, ‘Kahaani Mahabharath Ki’, ‘Kahin To Hoga’, ‘Kasm Se’ the directors of the serials have projected the joint families as the best, as people are happy together, the viewers also like to view the stories of the joint families and its functioning.

Norms of the Society: Rules framed in the society are meant for each and every one and this system encourages interdependency. It helps in gratifying needs. As a result the society came up with few common rules for everyone and the families adopted their own rules, even though culture keeps changing, it is necessary to have a system; which makes each and every individual be on track. Thus the rules are framed by the society, for the society, to the society. Culture is cumulative because it is transmitted from one generation to the other with additional changes.
Rishi an egoistic brother in the serial ‘Kahin Tho Hoga’ seduces Mehak and denies to marry her and take up the responsibility of their child, this episode is the representation of the misery that one has to face. One is carried away by desires and temptations because the characters in the serials even though decked in the Western dress are still native and Indian. The freedom given to ‘Mehak’ is misused because, she conceives before wedding; which is a great sin. She repents for her deeds. The above said example only expresses a fact that, it is only the costumes that have changed and not the Indian mindset. It’s just like the old wine in the new bottle. Mehak represents many teenage girls who have been cheated under the pretext of love; such episodes warn the others and remind them of their chastity.

Culture is Adaptable: Girls are married and they adapt themselves according to the requirements of their in-laws. There are many qualities that man adapts in his life. Women adapt themselves to the different roles depending on the circumstances. In serial ‘Kutumb’ women are meek, fragile and dependent on men; Guari fights for her self-esteem and proves that, she is independent, dignified and intelligent. All the serials highlight this fact because all the daughters-in-law adjust themselves to their family. A man adapts himself to changes in nature, relationships, and society; according to time and
space. Tulsi tries hard to bring changes in Ansh but he had adapted cruelty and treachery since his childhood. Hence he could not free himself from its clutches and lead a cultured life.

Culture is not stagnant: Culture definitely is not stagnant because human beings have always accepted the cultural reforms, that have happened till date, one or the other cultural variation is witnessed, to state one example; in ancient days waking up after sunrise, would be offensive but these days waking up around 10 am is the trend. Intercaste marriages were a great sin then but are common today, casteism has reduced and equality and humanity prevails. Fighting for the human rights and the women rights, revolting and fighting for self dignity is shown in the serials. All the above changes would not have happened if culture was stagnant.

In ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ Tulsi Virani goes against the tide, when she discovers that her brother-in-law loves a Marathi girl and wants to marry her, she tries and convinces all the family members and then gets him married to that girl. When Tulsi Virani discovers that, her husband has an extramarital affair, she stands alone to fight for her dignity and is successful. So there are several examples which declare that, culture is changing and is not stagnant.
Culture is personified to the ocean as it is filled with life. The ocean has a special mythological reference in ‘Samudra Manthana’. Just like the good and evil are churned out. ‘K’ serials have highlighted Indian culture and have also accepted changes.

CULTURE IN EKTA KAPOOR’S SERIALS: AN ANALYSIS

Value based Serials: Serials are based on Indian culture. Most of the episodes are relevant to the middle class family. Joint families are popular in soaps, family has always been first priority, and Hero’s of the ‘K’ serials are often from a rich family with a good cultural background, while the heroines are from middle class. Thoughts and beliefs of both the classes match but they differ in lifestyle. Whether it is Virani’s, Agarwal’s, Mittal’s, Basu’s or any other popular ‘K’ family a greater importance is given to the value based life and society. These families are identified as cultured families.

These families are involved in social service. They are all Industrialists, they also are trendsetters, and most of the people in the society try to imitate them and their lifestyle. Women from these families are found in ethnic attires on all occasions, they also promote the significance of the Indian culture. They follow rituals, customs and traditions; their faith in culture is exhibited through the celebration of
all the festivals, their pleasant and dignified behavior also reflects the superiority of Indian culture.

Respect for family, relationships, marriage, education, value based life, love are exhibited in the serials. Relationships, and responsibilities of a family are given greater importance in all the soaps, they have highlighted a few trivial issues. Politics at the family level due to jealousy and hatred, sibling rivalry, fight for property, inequality and injustice is found in all the soaps.

All the heroines of the soaps are very humble, down to earth, value based, cultured, disciplined, trustworthy, epitome of truth, service and sacrifice. Heroines are from the middle class and lower middle class and they believe that, their values are their assets; all of them are educated but give importance to their family life than their professional life. They follow all the rituals from offering prayers to ‘Tulsi plant’ they cater to every bodies needs.

Women the cultural queens; ‘K’ serials revolve round women and their cultural differences, most of the plots are based on mother-in-law/daughter-in-law syndrome and festivals. Apart from that women protect their families from the evil eyes. They shield their families from all the enemies and pledge to fight for the truth.
Unrealistic aspects in the Serials: Serials are fictitious, often continuity is not found in few episodes, they have abrupt ending, and few important characters in the show slowly disappear. Men of the family are often found missing in the latter episodes of the soap. Kidnaps are common, accidents resulting in memory loss, plastic surgery, predictable story lines, and extra-marital affairs in all the serials. Divorces and remarriages, teenage pregnancies are very commonly adapted in the serials.

Impact on viewers: Repeated relays and sound effects of certain scenes make it significant. Special effects are such that viewers become pseudo actors while watching the episodes. Serials attract viewer’s attention in emotional scenes like, a death, children kidnapped, love between couple, courtship, hatred, jealousy, extra-marital affairs, friendship, loneliness, mother-child relationship, father-daughter relationship, husband-wife relationship etc. Family name and fame are very important for Indians; they live and die for it, but do not let anybody sling mud at it. The same concept is pictured in the serials.

Most of the serials are close to the viewer’s heart, as the plots presented in the serials are the common plots that a spectator comes across in his real life. The viewers share similar feelings and relationships. The culture that they follow is more or less the same on
the television. Ekta Kapoor and her team have made a study of the Indian culture and psychoanalysis of the Indian masses, based on which they have come up with stories that effortlessly draw attention.

Catchy Titles: The titles of the serials are either on relationships or family but they are very catchy. The titles like ‘Pavitra Rishta’, ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’, ‘Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki’, ‘Kasauti Zindagi Ki’, ‘Karam Apna, Apna’, ‘Kanya Dana’, ‘Kusum’, ‘Kasam se’, definitely force the spectators and the reader to think and debate over it. Hence most of the Indian culture is presented gracefully on TV.

These soaps have presented both the Western and Eastern culture, women from cultured families are found in ethnic dress, Western dress project modernity in the serials, these serials are for all age groups, Hence the conclusion is that ‘Indian Television Soaps’ do not misinterpret Indian culture but glorify it.

Culture Industry: is a term coined by critical theorists Adorno and Horkheimer in the Twentieth Century. It produces cultural products that are mass deceptive. Balaji Telefilms reproduce popular art. Radio, Television and Movies are not considered work of art they are technological and involve mass reproduction and team work. Stories, Plays, Epics, and Novels are reproduced through Culture Industries. Sound, picture and music are mixed together and reproduced in an
attractive manner. These industries are generally owned by capitalists and the reproduction of stories through Culture Industries can create a lot of variation in the content.

The content can change according to the whims and fancies of the capitalists. They have set in new trends, which are deceptive. Culture Industry is a popular cultural factory producing cultural goods. Adorno and Horkhiemer felt that this mass produced culture was a danger to higher arts as it produced unwanted needs that can be satisfied by the Culture Industry. Its major productions are movies and soaps that easily convert the huge masses to passive viewers and cater easy pleasure fulfilling episodes.

Culture Industry is concerned with the production of cultural content of the capitalist societies. These cultural reproductions have replaced all the other kinds of Entertainment, only a few are healthy and enlightening. Cultural Industries produce artistic and creative outputs; which have potential for income generation through the utilization of cultural assets, facts, and mob psychology. Cultural Industries use cultural knowledge and intellectual property to produce products with social and cultural meaning to the contemporary world. It effectively works in generating creative products based on the necessity of the huge masses.
Common dreams, values, etiquettes, are presented to the world incandescently. A story of a common man, his struggle, values, and dreams are glorified in the serial, few episodes instill a ray of hope in a few viewers, and hence culture industries indirectly counsel the spectators.

The picture of the society in the classical works is very close to the real life, a crisis handled by an ‘Elite’ writer never disturbs the peace of the society, and expressions in their work have certain unseen lines drawn for themselves. The language used is decent and elite. Slang and cheap language is not used by the writers. Soaps, movies, music, radio and technology are never considered as art forms but are mere imitations of mass cultural reproduction. The phenomenon of mass culture has a political implication; all forms of popular culture belong to culture Industry; whose purpose is to ensure the continued obedience of the masses to the market interests.

Science and Technology is growing at a great speed in the West and have spread its arms across the world, people have turned in to slaves of Science and Technology, from peacock feathers to gel pens, from letters to E-mails, from spinning clothes to textile clothes, from lanterns to tube lights, from leafs to papers, from Chula to gas stove, from books to movies, from movies to serials or soaps.
Impact of Television and English on the masses:

Television is a powerful fictional medium in the contemporary society it is produced by a combination of Technological, Industrial and Ideological society. Before discussing the impeccable impact of the television on the Indian culture, it is necessary to know, one common characteristic features of the human being which is to imitate. The invaders could not influence the lifestyle of the people immediately, alterations happened at a slow pace. TV was very much influential, the change noticed is ten times faster than it actually used to be, the fact that culture is not stagnant gives an impression that culture does change with the capitalists. TV acts as an informative source, people get the latest NEWS reports and updates, and TV has produced more number of couched potatoes from all the age groups. Mothers and mothers’-in-law spend most of their time before the TV.

These examples clearly state that Science and Technology has a major impact on the cultural life of India, cultural life involves food that has changed from ‘roti’ to burger and dress has changed from ‘dhothi’ to trousers and shirts, saris to skirts and trousers.

The role of English medium schools and their impact on the Indian masses is more because English is a mandatory language, people forgot to master the languages that their country actually
generated and found Indian cultural life much influenced by the English, for example people read stories of ‘Popeyee’ and novels of ‘Hardy Boys’ and they tend to read romances published by ‘Mills and Boons’ and ‘J K Rowling’s ‘Harry Potter’ the generation today is well aware of ‘Lord Voldmont ‘ but not of ‘Ravana’, they know Harry Potter and have less information on the mythical characters. Language is the fastest medium to spread one’s empire, language creates trust or mistrust between two people and their work culture, language, glorifies its cultural values and heritage.

‘Work of art’ has always been a thing of ‘beauty and joy’ to the art lovers. Art forms have been diverse from crude paintings on the wall to the delicate painting on the paper, from paper to print, from print to photography, from photography to cinematography. All the art forms are mechanically reproduced in the different genres. Stories, novels are converted into scripts for serials and movies. Classical and Western singers are given an opportunity to present their talent on screen; actors and actresses showcase their talent and participate in different forms of art.

Creative art forms are divided into more specific categories, each related to its technique, or medium, decorative arts, performing arts or literature. An art form is the specific shape or a quality of an
artistic expression. The form of a particular ‘work of art’ is determined by the formal qualities of the media and is not related to the intentions of the artist; these properties are related to content rather than form. A genre is a set of conventions and styles within a particular medium. For instance, well recognized genres in film are Western horror, and romantic comedy. Genres in music include death metal and trip hop. Genres in painting include still life and pastoral landscape. A particular work of art may bend or combine genres but each genre has a recognizable group of conventions, clichés and tropes.

‘Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty or God; it is not, as the aesthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man’s emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity’. [7]

‘Art is a discovery and development of elementary principles of nature into beautiful forms suitable for human use.’[8]

Some other ‘work of art’ is a contribution of booming Culture Industry as it is reproducible. This mechanical reproduction of art advanced with accelerated intensity. Lithography set an example that mechanical reproduction is the face of new art. Writing was practiced on leaves, wood, walls and stone, the printed form of writing was a mechanical reproduction; which gave more scope for literature, different genre of literature were reproduced in printed form with its longevity. Mechanical reproduction is nothing but imitations of writing
work in the mechanical form. Greeks mechanically reproduced coins, bronzes and stamps. The term art is diverse it involves painting, printmaking, photography, visual arts and visual media. Music, dance, drama, films, literature and the other interactive media is included in the art forms today. Walter Benjamin says,

That the art form in the age of mechanical reproduction is more independent of the original than manual reproduction.[9]

For example, photography can bring out those aspects of the original that, are attainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens; which is adjustable and chooses its angle at will. Photographic reproduction with the aid of certain processes, such as enlargement or slow motion can capture images which escape natural vision.

Culture Industries In India: ‘Modes of Entertainments in the nineteenth century were street plays, story narrations, dramas, folk dances, folk songs etc. People lived in joint families and spent their leisure in chit chatting, knitting, singing and listening to the stories. Radio was the first technological entertainment medium, next was Television; which has a government networking channel called Doordarshan(DD1), private channels came into existence with legal permission. A new era in the field of entertainment began with capitalists investing in the Indian market on the digitalized cultural content.
Television has several channels with different programs, for different groups of viewers. TV channels like Sports, Star, Sony, Zee, M TV, V TV, Pogo, Cartoon Network, Sun TV, Kairelli TV, National Geography, HBO etc.

Hundreds of channels are viewed. It began with DD1, today, there are several channels and Viewers have a multiple choice. Star Plus, Sony, Zee are the most viewed channels, as the language used by these channels is easily understood by masses.

Cable TV market in India is quite large. ‘Media Partners Asia’ has estimated that, there are nearly 78 million cable connections. There are nearly 128 million households out of the total 225 million household that own television set Hong kong based, Asia Pacific pay TV and broadband markets claim that, there were a total of 65 million cable satellite homes in 2005. This is expected to grow to 100 million homes by the end of 2012. The average revenue of TV household is estimated at US$ 55 in India. Television was digitalized by the Indian government in 2012 by saying goodbye to the cable TV. Television market in India has estimated that, there are 402 channels operating in India.

It is an Asian TV service owned by Rupert Murdoch, News Corporation, which is head, quartered in Hong Kong with regional
offices in India, Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, as well the other South Asian countries, according to the Star website there are more than 500 million viewers in 53 countries and is watched by 120 million viewers every day.

STAR


Star TV network pioneered Satellite Television in Asia and in the process catalyzed explosive growth in the Media Industry across the region. In 1993 Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation purchased 63.6% of Star and in January 1993 purchased the remaining 36.4%. In 2009 August Broadcasting Corporation Star revealed a restructure to its Asian broadcasting units into three namely: Star India, Star Greater China, Fox International Channel.

Today STAR Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts over 60 services in 13 languages. Uday Shankar is the chief executive of Star India and here follows the list of channels under STAR Broadcasting Corporation.
Star Movies: English, Star World: English, Star Plus: Hindi, Star Utsav: Hindi, Star One: Hindi, Star Gold: Hindi movies, Star Vijay: Tamil, Star News: Hindi news, Star Anand: Bengali, Star Malaya: Marathi, Star Jalsa: Bengali. Zee TV is the first Indian channel and it was linked to Star TV till the year 1999, Star Plus in India was launched in Feb. 1992 Star Plus struggled to survive with shows like Kora-Kagaz, Saans. It received great appreciation in 2000 with the Soaps of Balaji Telefilms. TV is the direct medium of exposure to the viewers, any change, in school of thought that occurs in India is first reflected on the TV screens.

BALAJI TELEFILMS: A CULTURE INDUSTRY IN INDIA

Balaji Telefilms has played a great role in the cultural change of India in the past ten years. It has captivated maximum viewers and all the serials of Balaji Telefilms are based on the Indian value system.

Balaji Telefilms was incorporated in the year 1994 with a comedy called ‘Hum Paanch’ and rouse to great heights in 1990’s and 2000’s. Balaji created the satellite boom in India. The performance and dominance of the Hindi entertainment channel was pioneered by Balaji. Shows have run successfully for over a decade, with blockbuster like ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’, ‘Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki,’ and have garnered remarkable TRPs. The company has
produced over 15,000 hours of television content since its inception including content in Hindi, Tamil, Telagu, kannada, and Malayalam etc.[www.Balajitelefilms.com]

Balaji Telefilms as an Industry remains India’s most preferred content provider for the Television Industry. It is India’s only production house to have produced over 100 shows till date, across five languages (Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam) over the last 15 years the company ushered in the cable and satellite boom in India. The performance of the Hindi television channels and the dominance of the Hindi general entertainment channel were catalyzed by Balaji differentiated content. The shows attracted skyrocketing TRP’s. The company developed prime time shows enhancing the Television viewing hours of the Indian audience. ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Bahu Thi’ is the only Hindi show in the history of Indian Television Industry to have crossed 1500 episodes, besides, Balaji posses’ 23 modern sets and 37 editing suites in India, an unrivalled achievement in India.

In 2005 Balaji forayed into the domain of motion pictures for producing and distributing films. Today Balaji Telefilms is one of the best content providers in Hindi and General Entertainment Channel (GEC) and also filmed entertainment. With approximately 138 million
TV households, India is the third largest market of the world. New technologies like high definition and set top box within built recorder and delivery platforms are rapidly making a sound presence in the Industry.

Cable and Satellite has penetrated close to 80% of the total market. In 2010, Indian television has added 100 million viewers; whereas the number of channels has reached 550 in the current fiscal. Regional television is growing rapidly with increased viewership. The industry is focusing on the implementation of advanced technologies such as planning, budgeting, Cultural Relationship Management (CRM) and strategic outsourcing to achieve profitable growth. The distribution Industry is the largest part of the Television Industry, contributing about 63% of the total revenue. The high growth of Direct To Home (DTH) Industry and advances in digitalization resulted in a 16.4% growth of the distribution, Industry in the current fiscal, the sector is expected to continue its steady growth and add more to the overall television revenue.

Driven by the growth in non fictional shows and regional markets, the Indian content Industry achieved a growth of 13% in 2010, compared to the last year there is an increase of 1.5 billion revenue in 2011. Balaji Telefilms has strategically positioned in the
Indian Culture Industry to capitalize the future growth opportunities in television and film Entertainment strata. The Industry is focusing on creating original and diverse show content to retain its leadership in Hindi GECs. It is also penetrating the regional GECs to leverage on the increasing opportunities in those markets. The company is focusing on identifying and nurturing talent to generate out of box scripts and filmed content meet viewer expectations.

BALAJI PRODUCTIONS

A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

Balaji Telefilms is a world famous Entertainment Industry nestled in India with headquarters in Mumbai. It was established in the year 1994. This production house is produced by Ekta Kapoor, Shobha Kapoor, Jeetendra and Tushar Kapoor. The products of this Industry are Television programmes and motion pictures. It has an official website with the following emblem.
Balaji Telefilms has produced a number of famous serials in India and has become the largest Television production house in South Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East. ‘K’ is meant to be lucky for Ekta Kapoor so most of her productions start with the alphabet ‘K’.

Balaji Telefilms is based in Mumbai in the Balaji House on New Link Road, Andheri West, Mumbai. Balaji Telefilms operates from its Head Office in Andheri West and has studios in Film City and other locations in Mumbai. In terms of studio facilities Balaji Telefilms is one of the largest productions houses in Mumbai’s large film and Television production hub. Balaji Telefilms is making a range of television serials for STAR Plus, STAR One, Zee TV, Imagine TV, Colors TV and they have also been making films with leading directors and stars.

The company retained its position as one of the few multi-lingual production houses. Content is produced in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. It continued to create a majority of its content in Hindi. Balaji gives an aggregate share of 56.45 percent of the TRPs of top 100 programmes in C&S homes. This included repeat telecast of its programmes, some of which did better than fresh programming on other channels. Within Hindi programming, Balaji telefilms focused on mass entertainment and enjoyed the highest viewership and generated
the highest revenue. Since regional languages accounted for almost 38 percent of viewership, the company also retained its share of programming in this segment. The company’s serials are telecast, across the evening prime time band, 7 pm to midnight - across various satellite channels. In spite of growing competition, the company emerged as the unrivalled leader in prime time shows with 63.42 percent of the aggregate TRP of the weekday prime time shows.

This helped the company enhance its relationship with the customer channels. The company’s repeat telecast is during the afternoon time-slots. In this non-prime time segment, the company commanded 47.59 per cent of the total aggregate TRP of the weekday non-prime shows featuring in top 100 Hindi C&S shows. BTL [Balaji Telefilms] is a preferred content provider because of its ability to drive overall channel viewership. This is borne by the fact that most of Balaji’s serials are top TRP grosser for their respective channels.

The company continued to diversify its channel profile to mitigate an over-dependence on any single channel. It produced serials for Star Plus, Sony, Zee TV, Sahara, Gemini TV and Udaya TV. It leveraged the Indian reach of these channels and capitalised on their higher budgets to create serials that were invested with a superior visibility and visual appeal. There was a conscious decision to migrate
into the early prime time slots on southern channels to capitalise on lower telecast fees (a saving of almost 40 percent compared to prime time slots) without a commensurate fee reduction, which turned into a higher cost-revenue differential on the Udaya and Gemini channels. The company struck long term deals with key advertisers and media houses, which resulted in assured realisations from single client, media houses and a protection from diverted add spends during high popularity events. Balaji consolidated its customer base, which ensured that 80 percent of its divisional revenues were derived from a small number of advertisers. The extension of a transaction into a relationship de-risked the company’s revenue sources from attrition and enlisted partner support in all the company’s new projects.

The Company focused on plugging vacant time slots across all conventional time bands. The company not only continued to demonstrate its primetime supremacy but also succeeded in extending it by half an hour until midnight. Balaji Telefilms Limited extended into weekends and afternoon. Their success is reflected in the fact that Kayamat, the company’s weekend offering on Doordarshan has been consistently present in the top five ever since its launch.

The Company’s flagship continues to dominate prime time shows an unprecedented phenomenon. Following a temporary dip, Kusum returned to the top 50, strengthening Sony channel’s
popularity. Kahin to Hoga reported impressive TRPs within weeks of its launch. The Company not only continued to demonstrate its prime time supremacy but succeeded in extending it by half an hour; which was dragged until midnight with the success of Kahin Kissi Roz. These initiatives enabled the company to command a significant premium over prevailing market rates for mass entertainment content. The outlook remains positive as the company expects to widen its genre presence, enter newer programme delivery formats and dominate newer slots on satellite channel.

Brief Description of the Serials:

Bandini: Story of an unassuming Gujarathi girl; who ends up in a strange city marrying a man of her fathers age; who has children of her age. Bandini was the famous TV Serial; which originated in the Network channel ‘Imagine’ in the year 2009 from January on words till date on the weekdays starting from Monday to Saturday in the time slot 10.30 PM IST.

Pavitra Rishta: This serial was screened on the Zee TV Network Channel in the year 2009 from June 1st on words on the weekdays from Monday to Friday during the Time slot 9.00 PM IST and has charged the interest of the audience till date. It is a story of a young girl
Archana; who doesn’t get a suitable offer just because she is not educated and the story revolves around her struggle.

Sarvaguna Sampanna: This serial was screened on the Imagine TV Network Channel in the year 2010 from May 11th on words, on all the weekdays from Monday to Friday during the Time slot 8.00 PM IST and has charged the interest of the audience till date. It is a story of a young girl, Swara, a well known theatre dancer who is the only child to her parents.

Tereliye: This serial screened on Star plus TV Network Channel in the year 2010 from June 14th on words on all the week days from Monday to Friday during the Time slot 10.00 PM IST. It is a story of two friends bound together in childhood, separated by circumstances and brought together by an unbreakable bond of love but only to be separated again.

Pyar ki ek Kahani: This serial screened in the Star One TV Network Channel in the year 2010 from Oct 18th on words on all the weekdays from Monday to Friday during the Timeslot 8.30 PM IST. It is a story of young child Pia, who is told by her mother that she is a special child, who has a lot of love around her.

Bairi Piya: This serial started in the Colors TV Network Channel in the year 2009 from 3rd Sept to 21st. It is a story of young girl named
Amoli who deals with the problems, faced by poor peasants of Vidarbha of Eastern Maharashtra.

Bettaab Dil Kee Tamanna: This serial was screened on Sony TV Network Channel in the year 2009 Oct 6th to Feb 24, 2010. It is the Story of three girls: who came from a small town, to make their dreams come true in Mumbai. They face the difficulties of a lifetime to survive and to get a job.

Ghar Ek Mandir: This serial was screened on the Sony TV Network Channel in the year 2000 and ran up to Sept 2001. It is a beautiful drama which creatively exhibits the love and unity amongst the members of the Gopal family.

Hum Paanch: This serial started in the Zee TV Network Channel in the year 1995 to 2006 and was the first serial of Balaji productions. It is a comedy featuring the Mathur family and its 5 daughters– Meenakshi, Radhika, Sweety, Kajal and Chhoti.

Itihaas: This serial started in the DD National TV Network Channel in the year May 12, 1997 – July 30, 1999. It is a story of Ambika, from a royal family, who embarks on a journey to seek justice for her husband's death.
K Street Pali Hill: This serial started in the Star plus TV Network Channel in the year September 27, 2004 – October 12, 2006. It is a story of three friends who live in a mansion and are plagued with strange and unusual circumstances.(total episodes:440)

Kaahin Kissi Roz: This serial started in the Star plus TV Network Channel in the year April 23, 2001 – September 23, 2004. It is the story of Shaina, who is happily married to Kunal, but mysteriously encounters death due to his dark past.(total epi=715)

Kaun started in the DD National Network Channel in the year 2001. It is the story of a secret female detective whose tactfulness and guile are put to the test.

Kabhi Soutan Kabhi Saheli: This serial started in the Star Gold in the year 2001 Sept 10th. It is an emotional saga of two childhood friends, Tanushree and Sonia. Who happened to marry the same person without each other’s knowledge.

Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki: This serial was screened on the Star Plus Channel in the year 2000 16th to Oct 9th 2008. An immensely popular series based on the life of Parvati, the eldest daughter-in-law of the Agarwal family.(total episodes:1700)
Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi: was screened in the year 2000 and ran successfully up to October 2008. The story revolves round the mother in law and daughter in law syndrome of the Virani family.

Kasauti Zindagi Ki: is also a serial that telecasts the story of true love between Prerna and Anuraag and the problems that come their way.

All the above serials are similar in one or the other plot hence a few examples are used from all the above serials to support the thesis.

Forms of Entertainment: have differed from time to time from outdoor games to indoor games, from listening, reading to viewing mythological, wisdom based, value based stories in the form of street plays to movies and serials, not just the mythical stories but the other fictional stories are telecasted in the form of movies and serials as the viewers are more in number.

Balaji Telefilms not only gave entertainment but also gave life to veteran actors, many new faces are recognized as characters of a particular serial and these actors have a fan following. There are few viewers; who watch the serial not because of the content but because of the attractive actors. Many entertainment mediums have worked on it and use the same characters in organizing events on festivals and
weekends, the same characters perform on stage during the award ceremonies which also gain a good TRP on the weekends.

Channels like STAR, SONY, and ZEE often chart out weekend programmes that usually involve their favorite characters. These companies also have a tough competition amongst themselves hence Culture Industry is a booming Industry in the Asian market.

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE SERIALS

Serials are one of the most popular genres that are easily accessible and viewed today. Serials are small episodes of 15 to 20 minutes; they are made of several plots and subplots. Serials have continuity but the characters are temporary, a few characters are missing in most of the episodes, serials and their plot keeps varying and shuffling.

These serials are very much connected to day today’s life, many of the serials, act as a stress buster and a wish fulfiller for the viewers. Shy viewers love to watch bold women; the implication here is that, the shy viewer is partially fulfilling her wish to be bold and outgoing.

Serials are not systematically framed, they are completely factious. There is no continuity in them, many characters in the story are ignored and the story revolves around the protagonist. Few serials
are ironical as they are screened on sensitive issues like gender bias, 
casteism, landlords, inter caste marriage, politics etc. Serials are 
completely commercial; they make a lot of money by marketing the 
cultural content in a legal way. The serials that attract a lot of attention 
are commercial.

Serials were first broadcasted in the Radio’s, then in Television. 
These Television shows were even more attractive because of visual 
effects and sound effects, Many business men invested money in to 
this flourishing business, it is this business; which plays with the 
viewers emotions, values, dreams and desires.

People in this Television Industry have understood the psyche of 
the masses, and accordingly have made serials that, are not against 
their cultural values. This Television Industry is also called as Culture 
Industry. As money is minted out of the culture one believes and 
follows. Taking India as an example in this chapter, one can easily 
understand how Television Industry has turned into Culture Industry.

India is a ‘land of diversity’ in terms of ‘culture’ and languages, 
there is unity in terms of values, and Television Industry has been 
mainly working on the diversity and importance of the values of the 
post colonial India.
Common features of ‘K’ Series: Joint family system: family is an institution that has deeper roots in the Indian History, in the ancient days people lived in joint families but now they are breaking into nuclear families. Joint families do exist in few parts of the nation and nuclear families are found in metros like Mumbai, Bangalore, and Delhi etc.

Ekta Kapoor and her team actually worked on the Indian psyche and materialized their values, and principles, by having joint family as a main plot in all her productions, stories revolve round relationships. Ekta Kapoor has represented Indian families fighting with the new and the old trends. She has represented different faces of woman as a warrior and worrier in India.

Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Syndrome: all theserials of Ekta Kapoor represent this syndrome, as it has been a trend to ill treat each other. ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ won popularity because of the clichéd title. Serial portrays typical Indian characters; mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are most prominent. The plots are all about their relationship, hence every woman; who plays these roles in real life is curious to see the in-secured feeling and its effect on each other.

Ekta Kapoor and her creative team studied that a bride feels insecure in her mother-in-laws company and a mother-in-law is scared of losing
her control on her son. Most of the daughters’-in-law feels that mothers’-in-law are dominating: where as mothers’-in-law feel that daughters’-in-law will smartly convince their husbands and will outcast her husband’s parents and their wishes.

This syndrome rules and over rules every family since times immemorial. There are several movies produced on the same theme, Ekta Kapoor encased the same theme and won the hearts of all the viewers. In all the serials the fictional characters are being true to their family, leading a selfless life.

Customs and Traditions: are systematically represented in the serials. Episodes are linked onto the festive occasions. Rituals and customs followed by the various communities are projected in the serials, Marriage is a common episode in the serials, and all the customs and traditions are shown in a sequence.

One common dream: in almost all the serials, either the hero or the heroine is from the middle class and the other belongs to the upper class; for example in the most popular serial ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ Tulsi hales from a lower middle class family from Hardwar and Mihir Veerani is from a rich family living in a metro. Every girl dreams of a young prince on a white stallion is on his way to marry her and give her a better future. Hero’s are from rich families, are
handsome, and well cultured, generous, respect her parents, protect her.

Villain, Witch or Vamp: characters that play negative roles and try to mess up things for the protagonist, they plot against good people, as they are selfish and jealous of them.

Continuity: few popular serials ran for around eight years and in this span the serial continued with the family tree and new social problems of new generations.

Wish fulfillment: many of them slog all day and night, to make their ends meet, dreams are common, people speak of their dreams before their friends, few wishes that can never be fulfilled is fulfilled on screen for the passive viewers.

Women portrayed as revolutionaries: they do not succumb to worst situations, they stand as confident women, struggling for existence, Serials have changed society’s outlook towards women, many episodes mock at the society. The first revolutionary attitude is shown in not accepting husband as God; clichéd view of the husband is boldly broken in the serials.

The lead heroine comes from a poor family or from a middle class family. She is good looking and brings a truck load of ‘values’ as
dowry to her in-law’s place. She is completely draped in an Indian dress code, with bangles and ‘bindi’ on her forehead, draped in a sari with accessories like anklets, hanging earrings and a matching necklace. The neatly done eye brows, painted lips, open hair, the sindhoor or vermilion add to the face value of the characters. It is not possible for all women to match the description. The story projected in the serials is more or less closer to reality.

Emotional value is marketed by the capitalists in their shows to run it successfully so this conveys that in culture industry there is no special value for culture but culture definitely can be marketed and the concepts can be designed at the Industries. Similarly the cultural connectivity with the name of the lead heroine’s Tulsi, Parvathi, Prerna, Gowri, Archana, Ganga, Kasturi etc symbolically represent the ideal names of the Indian mythology and philosophies of their great culture.

The target audience to these serials in large masses are women, one common cultural factor that is being projected in the serials is that woman are always dominated by men, all the traditions, customs, and rituals on few occasions seem very biased, and men oriented. All the members of the family obey the orders passed by the head of the family and give importance to tradition. All the Indian women feel that
the fictitious character in the serial resembles each and every Indian woman because they go through the same saga that is being telecasted with few changes.

Serials convey a message to the world in which men and women do struggle for existence. Serials also address social issues like the problems of extra marital affairs, widow remarriage, gang rape, dowry harassment, women and her freedom, respect to the ladies of the family, taking care of the elders, women empowerment, liberty and female infanticide and gender bias. ‘Kyunki Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ is mainly dominated by women and it is the same tale and same fight between an angel and the witch that go on changing from generation to generation.

These Industries have understood the pulse of the Indians; hence stories involving human relationships and behavior are creatively written in the form of episode and catered. People adore tragic figures; they are more interested in somebody else’s life. Movies that speak high of the cultural values are the most popular ones, similarly serials are accepted.

Balaji Telefilms is a booming Culture Industry; which has added to the revenue of the country. Indian culture is the main content of the product, the same is used for marketing Indian based soaps, and these
industries have brought in great employment opportunities for millions of people. This Industry is very effective in bringing subtle changes in the society like promoting female education, preventing female infanticide, breaking prejudices and stereotypes. Balaji Telefilms is the number one content providing culture Industry.

The positive impact of the serials on the viewers is such that the main lead ‘Smriti Irani’ of the popular shows ‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ was elected as the member of the parliament. The serials encouraged a lot of social reforms especially with respect to women empowerment.
WOMEN IN EKTA KAPOOR’S SERIALS:
Women:

‘This whirlpool of suspicion, this mansion of immodesty, this city of audacity, this sanctuary of errors, this home of hundred deceits, this field sown with doubts and distrust, this creature even hard to tame by the best bulls among men, this casket entire of tricks, who created this contraption called woman? This nectar coated poison to set virtue and law at naught’. [9]

Women are mysterious, be it, the Vedic times or the twenty first century, women remained a question mark. They represent sanctity, sacrifice, and wisdom. They were the other synonyms for virtue and sacrifice. They withstood the tempests, were known for chastity and meditative power. Mothers and grandmothers narrated stories of great mythical women. The best part of the story narration would be the strong implication of the ‘values’ of the ‘characters’ in the real from the mythical.

‘Gods dwell where women are respected’ said sage Manu. Women enjoyed a higher and an equal status in the Vedic times, Rig Veda clearly mentions the names of the women scholars like Ahalya, Maitreiyre, Arundati, Vidula, Sangamitra, who were honored for their knowledge in ancient days. In later period, great women warriors like ‘Kittur Rani Chennamma’, Jijabai, Rani Lakshmi bai, fought against the invaders and are remembered even today for their bravery.

Women took these mythical characters as their role models. The first imitations were observed in religious activities like the ‘Vat Savitri Vrata’, ‘karva chouth’; which is performed for the welfare of
husband and his family members, women fast all day and offer prayers to the ‘Moon God’ before having food. This is commonly practiced by the married ladies from times immemorial. They are very pious and disciplined. Women were addressed as ‘Sati’ with great reverence. These women forgave and forgot the mistakes committed by their near and dear ones. They were the epitome of patience, sacrifice and service. They hunted, cooked, reared kids, protected themselves, mastered few skills, learnt to read and write.

Women are adaptable, obedient and the cultural carriers. Women and culture are the two faces of a coin; woman represents culture and passes it to her younger generations with suitable modifications based upon the need of the society. They have gone through a series of changes and have accepted the changes as challenges. Rig Veda is a best example to prove that women were at par with men. Women took part in chanting, performing ‘Homa’, ‘Havana’, ‘Yagya’ and participated in debates, chose their bridegrooms; they had equal rights.

Status of women changed in the medieval period, she was ill-treated, not given equal status. A perfect image of a woman was constructed where her choice and interest were never a priority. The constructors knew that, she is very witty and sharp. A woman is supposed to be submissive, obedient, faithful, honest, and truthful to her master. She should not question, argue, but follow, she must not be
given freedom, and she must always be taken care of by father, husband and a son. She has no right to make decisions, perform Homa, Havana and Yagya, but always be a subordinate and serve her husband and his family. She was not given education, and was considered a burden, pain and agony for the father; Vishnu Sharma says,

‘No sooner born than her mother’s heart she steals; growing up she brought pain to loving hearts; given in marriage, she can still bring dishonor, daughters! Unavoidable disasters.’ [10]

Just as the verse goes, a father looks at his daughter as a burden and exercises complete control over her, so that, he can get rid of his burden after her wedding. Tradition declares that, a father has to bear heavy expenses; daughters were considered unavoidable disasters and responsibility and a woman was treated like any other tethered cattle.

Masses in India believed in the above concept, unfortunately there are areas; which encourage, such ill treatment of women, under the cover of custom and tradition. Women believe that, they are subordinates hence, believe in leading an undignified life. These values are deeply instilled in the name of culture and tradition. In most of the rural areas, a father still is an example of the following verse;

‘a daughter is born; start of a world of worries; find the fittest bridegroom- the biggest problem of all; once wed, will she be happy, or will she weep; father of a girl! –just another name for grief’ [11]
Such verses sent strong messages to people, hence fathers planned to get them married soon, and this would lead to a less stress which gave birth to a social evil called child marriage.

‘Manu Shashtra’ said that ‘a woman must be taken care of by her father in her childhood and by her husband after marriage and by her son in her old age’. A woman’s vanity and chastity were and are a prestige issue hence; men got them married even before they understood the term marriage. They could not allow a women fall in love and sling mud at their family.

Manu also said ‘once a girl is nubile, she gives herself to whom she will; so marry a girl off at a tender age’ [12]

Such verses had a stronger impact on the masses because they believed in casteism. Inter caste and love marriages were a taboo and considered defaming act. Such thoughts had to be engrained in the mindset of women.

Men and women were not let to think rationally, few verses are not less than future predictions which forced the ignorant masses to tame a woman into a subordinate for example;

‘a girl ought to be wedded before she enters womanhood, marriage is highly commended for girls just eight years old,’ ‘the first signs of womanhood bring death to the elder brother, the budding bosom to the younger; passion consummated to all near and dear, the monthly flow is a death to the father’. [13]

The implication of the verse can be interpreted in two ways; firstly the masses will straight away believe that a girl after eight years
is a misery to their family as she will put an end to the rightful inheritors and genitors of the family. The second connotation is very scientific, animal instinct in a man doesn’t understand that, a growing women’s chastity must not be defamed by a sexual abuse by her own brothers and father as passion within, does not recognize the relationship, it only consummates.

Such statements brought in a lot of changes in a woman’s life, her speech, dress, behavior, interests, hobbies were kept under check; which ultimately resulted into the death of a women’s dream. She lived in the four walls, she dealt with household chores like cooking, serving the aged, taking care of the babies and giving birth to sons, get condemned on the birth of the girls; which lead to female feticide and the increase of it has led to less number of girls than boys in the society today.

Women are getting literate and are giving preference to an independent life. A lot of gender bias is washed off, with the advent of schools where girls and boys are treated equal. The constitution of India has given equal rights and importance to woman. They also are given equal rights to choose Education, marriage, profession and property. Women are given freedom of speech, expression and thought. The advent of media in India brought in a great change in the life style of the women.
Women of yester years had less social exposure, so the entertainment was stories and singing ‘bhajans’ in groups. The stories acted as the unseen bars that kept a check on the human behavior. The stories glorified the victory of good over bad and also conveyed a message to keep a self check on their behavior. Ladies in the Indian mythology are known for their chastity, sacrifice, obedience, selflessness. Goddess Sita plays the role of an ideal woman.

Independent India saw many developments that had a direct and partial impact on the people, the advent of schools were the first signs of commercial development in the Indian world. Men and women loved reading magazines and newspapers and then came in the radios that caught the attention of the thousands and they loved to listen to the programs that were telecasted in the Vivid Bharathi.

Then came the Television that actually attracted corers of people; which telecasted several programs, all informative and entertaining, at the same time there were many different modes of entertainment from street plays, stage shows to the films.

Films were made in all the regional languages and were value based and motivating, the general public to have a value based life. For quite a long time DD1 was the only channel that telecasted the programs and the shows would be on Ramayana, Mahabharata,
Panchatantra, Mogli, cartoon show and movies would be relayed on the weekends.

Women and Serials: Indian women had less exposure to the social life; she spent her leisure hours in gossiping, reading, and sleeping. Women are not very often found playing in the field or grounds but are found working in the fields. Women in India don’t laugh loudly in open public; they don’t watch dance forms or dance, watching street plays and dramas were not entertained.

Films came into existence since 1912. Men were the major audience, and the whole concept of watching a movie itself was considered a cheap act by the elite class. Television Industry boomed in 1990’s with a historical serial on Doordarshan. ‘Ramayana’ was treated as a morally educating serial. It presented an ideal son, wife, husband, brother etc.,

‘Ramayana’ by Ramanand Sagar was the first serial that won a lot of appreciation and popularity from the masses. It was a learning experience for the illiterates. Ramayana being an epic drew a lot of attention because people wanted to know the story line and the essence of Ramayana as it is attributed to the cultural aspects of the Indian life.

Ekta Kapoor ventured into this dynamic field with the serial ‘Hum Paanch’ which gained a lot of popularity as it was the only comedy on ZTV. The cable networks grew faster and the number of
channels increased, as women were commonly found in the four walls they were the larger audiences to view everything on the Television. Hence everything that was reproduced was based on the requirement of the viewers.

Ekta’s serials, focused on the day today issues, most of the family problems were chosen as the content, the dominance and the resistance at the kitchen, bonding between the brothers, sisters and the family members. Most of the issues were family related and would be very close to one’s life. Hence these serials arouse a lot of interest in the viewers; the serials are a mix of both the contemporary and the traditional culture. Most importantly all the serials are based in the backdrop of patriarchal society.


The content in the serials always addresses the major hegemonic pressure at the same time gives a lot of pleasure to the viewers, as the hegemonic pressures bow before the new cultural changes in a society. The language used in the serial is close to their heart, this language draws the viewer’s attention to the serials. A social construction of a
man, woman, son, husband, wife is based on biological, political, financial and cultural differences and its importance in the serials.

Most of the ‘K’ serials are social constructions of a woman, her family and her fight for dignity and equality. The serials present varieties of women, to be specific, both modern and traditional. The dress code, hair style, language are traditional as well modern. It resembles changes happening in the Indian metros. Every serial has two women standing opposite to each other with different social construction of each other.

One represents the glorious tradition and culture where as the other represents modernity and the upcoming cultural changes in the society and its life style. One is value based and the other is value less, the first one is financially dependent were as the later is independent capitally. The lady who is financially dependent lives with a joint family where as an independent lady lives all alone.

Construction of independent women is such that, they are self sufficient, smart, educated, bold, witty and good decision makers. This construction actually breaks the traditional image of a subordinate woman. A modern woman is independent to take her decision, and believes that change is the only trend and money is the only essentiality. This modern lady only believes in the survival of the fittest policy hence. She doesn’t epitomize ethics, values, tradition, and
culture. Such women are presented as villains in the episodes their dialogues and body language creates an image for them.

Construction of a typical Indian woman on screen is appreciated by the patriarchal society. A timid woman draped in a traditional regional sari, with a big bindi, beautifully done eye makeup, with bangles, anklets, traditional hangings, vermillion and Mangala sutra. She respects the elders of the family, abides by the decision of her elders, is financially dependent, nurtures children, serves the elderly, cooks variety of dishes, offers prayers to god, reads Ramayana and Bhagavat Gita to the family members.

Just as sage Manu says ‘karyeshu dasi, salaheshu mantri, shaneshu Vaisya, bhojashyu mata, roopeshu lakshmi,’ which means a wife must work like a maid, suggest like a minister, pleasure giving like a prostitute, feed like a mother and as beautiful as goddess Lakshmi. This social construction of a wife is reflected in a traditional woman in all the serials of Ekta Kapoor. ‘K’ serials are family serials and primetime soaps, which are viewed by the elders, ladies and the kids in the family. Women play a major role in the serials, roles of a mother-in-law; sister-in-law and brother-in-law are constructed based on the common social construction of the society. Construction of various relationships has been done as they are imitations of the real lives.
Women though represented as subordinates act smart; when it comes to their self respect and dignity, such social construction acts as an awakening to the women; who succumb to dire circumstances. These women often quote from Bhagavat Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharata. The main focus of the serial is family and how it is used to define women and her culture. Channels also offer programs to attract women but seem to directly address men or children. A family aspect of a serial attracts women viewers.

Women in the serials seem to be obsessed with family and its relationships made out of love and hatred as it happens in reality. She is busy defending her family from the conspirators and bent upon teaching the Indian values and its glory and its spirituality. She fights women, doting on her husband and acts as a savior of the family and its prestige. In a few episodes she accepts that, women are subordinates and need to be tamed and tuned as per the needs of the culture. She also tries to unravel the secrets of her family members and hides it, from the family members and faces the music with a smile on her face.

The social construction of a lead role is no less than a great women, who sacrifices, forgives and forgets and still lives with the family as a subordinate, as a viewer, she enjoys her status on screen as she is represented as the best, there are a few episodes were women find it unfair to bear the nonsense of the family members. Women in
‘K’ series represent a Kannada saying which means hell and heaven both are created by women, this world and the other world exists because of women.

Both the extremities of a woman are shown on screen, husband usually is a representation of a common dream: a person who loves his family, treats his in-laws as his parents and respects them equally; who loves her for what she is, respects her and treats her more like a friend than wife, understand her psyche and stand by her throughout. A husband should make appropriate decisions and should not be henpecked. A great amount of monologues and soliloquies are found in the serials.

Popular women from the serials usually act as brand ambassadors to set in certain social changes in the society, they also advertise the new serials, and awards ceremonies in their serials, the same models are used by other Industries to market their products on screen. The middle class women tend to shop saris and ornaments worn by the models in the serials. They imitate the Indian models and attend functions and ceremonies.

As Rachel Bowlby says the use of architecture and theatrical forms of lighting and display marketed the dreams of a home and furniture which lead to a lot of window shopping by the middle class Indians. Women love shopping to beautify themselves and their homes,
the serials increased the beauty of their interiors, for instance the wall colors used are bright and dashing, wind chimes in the windows, curtains, furniture, boost the spirits of a woman. Hence serials not only market the content but they also market several goods from the market.

The concept of ‘event management’ ‘Jodi makers’, marriage organizers are new means of earning money, by organizing events and planning marriages, these companies make the dream come true for a bride and the bridegroom. The functions are organized in a series and interesting manner. The decorations attract the attention of the viewers specially the ‘mantap’ where the marriage rituals commence.

Marriage is an important concept found in all the ‘K’ serials, the celebrations are done with great pomp and show; the costumes chosen are of high class and designer wear. Serials make every important event of life look beautiful. The belief in this relationship for Indian women is not just up to this life but goes further to the next seven lives.

The strategy of incorporating women’s interests within ‘Primetime Shows’ could work to establish an equality between women’s interests and those of men and children and it easily ensures women’s continued subordination within the home as well as outside it with acceptance.
Soap operas have been the latest mode of entertainment to all the viewers these days. They have publicized the use of modern technology. All the Indian kitchens in the serials have a mixer grinder, a fridge, a microwave, vegetable chopper; exhaust fan, ‘roti’ maker, ‘dosar’ maker, pressure cooker, electronic cooker. These are the few things that also represent the change in the kitchen, change in the kitchen cannot be considered as a normal change because it vividly indicates the change in the woman’s life.

The women of India have been forever under the strong clutches of the patriarchal regime throughout the pages of the history. There are several references to the male domination over the female. Woman is held responsible for various reasons and responsibilities, which are needed to be carried on. She is also considered as Shakti; which means a lady with divine power and strength to rule the world. Women in the family are also equally occupied with their personal as well as their professional life; women manage both home and office today only with the help of the technology.

After a hectic day at the office, women find solace; while they spend some time watching the idiot box, with too many channels and too many programs designed to cater all varieties of people, each and every person is different from the other. It is natural that their tastes
differ from each other hence, would watch different programs in different channels.

Women are from moon and men are from mars is a description given to speak about the nature of both men and women; generally men are practical and women are emotional, based on it, they watch different programs; men generally watch channels that, telecast news, sports and music, women usually watch soaps and reality shows and mysterious shows. It is not right to be judgmental about men and women’s liking; depending on the general assumptions and also on the observations made by the critics and the psychiatrists. Let’s consider that women are sentimental and like to watch shows that are sentimental.

The major concerns of the soaps have been based on the commonly perceived split between the public and the personal, between work and leisure, reason and emotion, action and contemplation. Soaps focus on the deeply entrenched values structure; which is based on the traditional oppositions of masculinity and feminism.

The essence of the soaps is the reflection on personal problems and the emphasis is on talk not on action, on slow development rather than the immediate response on delayed retribution rather than instant effects, soaps also have a lot of repetition of familiar characters and
stories but soaps more than other genres offer a particular type of repetition in which certain emotional situations are tested out through variations in age, character and social values.

Personal relationships are the main theme of the soaps; much of TV takes place in home setup or the leisure venues. Women are deemed to carry the responsibility for emotional relationships in our society; soaps rehearse to their female audience the process of handling personal relationships, and soaps usually revolve round women as a result soaps and women are the hot topic of the discussion.

Women In Ekta Kapoor Serials: Analysis. Women in ‘K’ series are a fusion of custom, tradition and modernity. They are a complete package of love, fear, hatred and a complete high drama. Women in ‘K’ series represent culture; all the cultured ladies in the soaps are decently decked in simple sari where as the ladies represent individuality in sari. They are decked in loud fancy saris and loud makeup.

‘K’ series represent two types of women, one represents modesty, chastity and selfless service and the other is vice versa. Every serial has a heroine and a villain and in most cases both are women. ‘K’ series has represented two faces of a woman. The first one being harmless, dedicated to serve the family, were as, the second one is a scary face of revenge, ego, hatred and mercilessness. A woman creates
as well destroys is the symbolic message conveyed to the viewers. ‘A woman is a woman’s enemy’ in all the serials of Ekta Kapoor

‘K’ serials reflect the importance of families and women in keeping the family bound together. In India most of them live in joint families with respect and frictions at a base level. They follow a hierarchy; the eldest in the family takes care of the rest and decides on behalf of the rest. In spite of the fact that, Indian society is a male dominated society, a lot of domination at the home front is by the women. They believe in exercising their power on their younger generations; which slowly results into disputes in the family. Mother-in-law of the family ‘rules the roost’ in all the ‘shows’. These serials have tried to break the tainted image of the mothers-in-law, they are partial, in secured, criticize and taunt their daughters-in-law to gain sadistic pleasure.

In reality mothers-in-law have been worst of nightmares, as they physically and mentally abuse and torture her for various insensible reasons. Most of the mothers-in-law don’t even let their daughters-in-law to speak a word or argue with them. They feel very in secured in each other’s company; these serials bring a wave of relief to both of them. ‘K’ series have tried to morally educate people to treat each other with humanity and dignity. They also have publicized the
woman’s right on screen and how she can ask the police to help her out in the worst situations as it is her right.

Mothers-in-law like Savita Thai, Savita Virani, etc are good at heart but they feel in secured and that is why they react so cunningly, both of them pass trivial comments on their daughters-in-law and conspire against them only to prove that they are right and their daughters-in-law wrong; which has been disproved on the screen. Most of the script of the ‘K’ series is based on the emotions that evolve in one’s heart and mind creating either happiness or spelling a curse on the family, ‘K’ series reflect the ‘Moha and Maya’ concept and how characters struggle to live up to the expectations of an important cultural attribute.

As a patriarchal society a lot of emotional imbalance is watched on the screens, all that is a taboo in real life is spicy on screen, marriages are often arranged but the courtship attracts a lot of attention, specially women get attracted to such episodes for they crave for love from their partners which often is not available as men are less expressive. ‘K’ series indirectly encourage patriarchy because a man always loves a cultured girl like Tulsi, Archana, Prerna, Kashish, Kusum etc.,

Extra emphasis is given to rituals, values, each serial is presented as a family to the viewers, there is irony in few serials like
‘Kyun Ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi’ as educated, independent women are projected as ladies with no ethics and they believe in winning the race either by hook or crook. Characters like Pallavi, Payal, Mandira, Piya, etc do not mind having a relationship with a committed man. They viciously drug and then seduce them and force them to get married to them as they are no chaste women. The serials represent the war between good and evil in our society.

Modern women in the serials neither know cooking nor know to manage the family; their modernity is reflected in the Western clothes, and are presented as very manipulative and witty. The heroines in the serials uphold the family tradition. They also sacrifice their personal joys and engage themselves in household chores. Tulsi, Archana, Parvathi, and other heroines do not argue with their elders unnecessarily and believe in contributing positively to the family.

All the ‘K’ series have picturized different roles of a woman and their dedication to take care of that relationship, as spinsters, the heroines of the ‘K’ series are updated and still believe in the Indian culture, they meet an entirely different person and fall in love and the courtship delivered on screen is enchanting. She remains true to her love and faces the world as a single mother with dignity.[ Prerna of ‘kasauti’] This episode is a pain reliever to several single mothers viewing the show, as the society doesn’t accept a ‘love child’ with
dignity. Women of all the ‘K’ series remain true to their love but men are not and the episodes project a new faith and confidence in them as each one fights and does not succumb to the situation as it happens in real life.

Her journey in this fight is usually alone, her family stands by her but asks her to accept and forgive. Her service seems to be a drama but very few members of her family understand her situation. In such episodes the questions posed by characters like Tulsi and Prerna are a tight slap on the patriarchy. Marriages and remarriages are very common in the 'K' series, in spite of it, being a new concept; people are only made aware of importance of companionship and widow remarriage.

As a married woman, she plays several roles, she turns out to be a very good wife, sister-in-law, co-sister, daughter-in-law but nobody realizes her importance and blames her for all the petty issues. Sisters-in-law, mothers-in-law and the co-sisters first of all do not accept the newly married daughter-in-law as a family hence tests her patience, time and again. Tulsi, Parvathi and Prerna had to go through a lot of suffering for a genuine acceptance by the family.

Husband-wife relationship is ideally presented to the viewers, as wives they support their husbands and take care of the whole family their likes and dislikes. She also solves the problems of her family
members and maintains a lot of secrecy to safeguard her relatives. In every relationship she proves that she is value based.

Presentation of mother through serials is appreciated in large scale because both Prerna and Tulsi tame their uncultured sons into cultured ones with, anger and love. Shobha, Kasak, Purvi are representations of a good upbringing. Tulsi, Archana, Prerna, Parvathi are recognized as good mothers and a few roles have received awards for playing the best roles.

The same heroines when turned mothers-in-law were very sweet and good to their daughters-in-law stood by them and supported them and never tortured them or commented on them. The lead heroines have played all the roles in a family and have done justice to each of the relationship they played.

Indian woman plays several roles in her real life and the same has been reflected in the reel life. woman and her various faces have been represented on screen, she still remains the cultural queen as she celebrates each and every festival and tells the importance of the festivals and the rituals involved in it.

Even though Indian society is male dominated, family is dominated by the women, expect for major decisions she decides everything within the four walls. All the ‘K’ serials revolve round women. Women are widely described and presented on screen. The
home makers of these serials also handle business deals and are successful business women with ethics and value based life.

END NOTE

2. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Simmel
4. Arnold Mathew; culture and Anarchy,
5. [Evolution of Indian culture, 1980]
6. [Leo Tolstoy, what is art essay]
7. [Frank Lioyd Wright, on architecture, nature and the human spirit. 1975]
8. [Walter Benjamin, the work of art in the mechanical reproduction, pg 214]
9. [Sarma Visnu: Pancatantra; translated by Rajan Chandra, verse142, pg56, Peguin Books Ltd India 1993]
10. [Sarma Visnu: Pancatantra; translated by Rajan Chandra, verse209, Peguin Books Ltd India 1993]
11. [Sarma Visnu: Pancatantra; translated by Rajan Chandra, verse208, Pg 83 Peguin Books Ltd India 1993]
12. [Sarma Visnu: Pancatantra; translated by Rajan Chandra, verse191, Pg 327, Peguin Books Ltd India 1993]
13. [Sarma Visnu: Pancatantra; translated by Rajan Chandra, verse189, Pg 327, Peguin Books Ltd India 1993]