A Study on the Preference for Tamil Dubbed Hindi Serials among Home Makers in Salem

Dr. M Anuradha

Abstract— Television has brought a lot of changes in the daily life of people especially the middle class and lower middle class segment of India. They have rearranged their routine in accordance with their popular television programs. Cooking schedules are prepared so as not to miss the serials and homework is completed before their favorite shows. Eating habits also have changed to a great extent. In addition, television shows play an important role in introducing new trends in life styles, especially artefacts. These new hair styles, dresses, make up etc., become so popular that after the success of a serial, its fashion effects are visible on the people. Perhaps most affected of all areas of television viewing are the cultural changes that have come about over the years.

There have been long debates on the influence of other cultures, especially the ones from the west, on the lifestyle of indigenous cultures. Currently there is another kind of imperialism within our country – the influence of Hindi soaps over regional serials. The number of original serials in all the four states of South India has come down and the local serial industry is rapidly losing its foothold due to this kind of dubbed serials. In this context, the present study tries to find out the reasons for the audience switchover form Tamil serials to Hindi dubbed soaps. The main objective of the study is to identify the elements in the dubbed soaps that attract the Tamil audience and the underlying cultural implications.

The research design encompasses a survey among 508 home makers in Salem district. House wives who are regular audience for mega serials constitute the population. A structured questionnaire with closed ended statements was used to collect data and quantitative statistical procedures were applied. The dubbed serials on the other hand, were analyzed to find out the embedded cultural components. The study is based on Uses and Gratification theory: it examine the gratifications that are sought from the content of the dubbed serials which are perceived to be missing in the Tamil serials.

Index Terms— Dubbed serials, Hindi soaps, cultural imperialism, gratification.

Dr. M Anuradha, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Periyar University, India, PH-9790016780, Email: anumadav.jmc@gmail.com.

Introduction

Television has brought about wide-ranging effects on societies all around the world. It has influenced a lot of changes in the daily life of people especially the middle class and lower middle class segment of India. They have rearranged their routine in accordance with their popular television programs. Cooking schedules are prepared so as not to miss the serials and homework is completed before their favorite shows. Eating habits also have changed to a great extent. Dining table has moved to the hall or where the television is present. Much noticeable change is in bed-timings. Early to bed and early to rise proverb has lost its charm. In most cases it is an interesting TV drama, reality show or a cricket match that do not allow family members or friends to go out for entertainment. Though television appears to be harmless entertainment, television viewing removes us from the physical reality of our current lives.

In addition, television shows play an important role in introducing new trends in life styles, especially artefacts. TV plays and shows have concentrated over the years in introducing new and trendy dresses, new hair styles, make up and even body gestures which very quickly gain currency; and after any popular show or a serial its fashion effects are easily seen on the people. Labib (2001) stated that Hindi movies and serials have impact on fashion, clothing and fast food consumption. Perhaps most affected of all areas due to watching TV are the cultural changes that have come about over the years. There have been long debates on the influence of other cultures, especially the ones from the west, on the lifestyle of indigenous cultures. Currently there is another kind of imperialism within our country – the influence of Hindi soaps over regional serials. The number of original serials in all the four states of South India has come down and the local serial industry is rapidly losing its foothold due to this kind of dubbed serials. In this context, the present study tries to find out the reasons for the audience switchover form Tamil serials to Hindi dubbed soaps. The main objective of the study is to identify the elements in the dubbed soaps that attract the Tamil audience and the underlying cultural implications.

Dubbed Serials

Remake of mega serials is not a new phenomenon in the Tamil television industry. Another form of remake and still an easier one is the dubbing of successful programmes that ensure profit and high earns in most cases. Tamil viewers are used to this Tamil dubbed Hind serials way back from the year 1987 even before satellite television entered their houses. They were ardent viewers of dubbed versions of mega serials like Junoon, Swabhiman Shanthi apart from Ramayan and and Mahabharath. In fact, the impact of those serials was such that Junoon Tamil became a slang, popular in those days among Doordarshan viewers. After almost 25 years, again there has been a sprout in the number of Hindi serials occupying considerable time in Tamil satellite channels. A significant number of serials on Tamil channels are now dubbed from Hindi.

The major contributing factor to this latest development could be traced back to the launch of a number of General Entertainment Channels (GEC) during the past decade. Polimer TV, Zee Tamil, Mega TV, Vasanth TV, Captain TV and Kalaignar TV were started during this period which had to compete with well-established channels like Sun TV, Star Vijay, Raj TV and Jaya TV. The challenge was not only in terms of content; but also with reference to their form and presentation. They had to position themselves differently from the well-known channels.

With most production houses like Radaan, SaReGaMa etc., already having fixed time slots in specific channels, committed to making years-long mega serials, the newer channels had to find a way out; and they found it in the form dubbing studios. They purchased Hindi mega serials for low prices and dubbed them. This cut down the production cost, time and effort to a considerable percentage. Sudhakar Pallamala, ex-president of the All India Television Federation, says that the number of original serials have come down. Dubbing is cheaper and the returns are almost similar. Just two dubbing artistes dub for all the characters. He questions why someone would spend Rs 2 lakh and make Rs 3 lakh on an original serial while they can spend about Rs 25,000 on dubbing a serial and make similar money.

This trend further picked up momentum with channels like Zee Tamil and Star Vijay following. These large networks which operate in different regions with a pool of tested, proved and success guaranteed content already available in different languages, utilized them. Naturally new Tamil GECs approached other national channels that do not operate in TamilNadu for dubbing rights of serials. Thus it was the commercial indent of channels and fight for TRPs (Television Rating Points) that drove the Tamil channels towards dubbed soaps.

Now there is no shortage of dubbed serials not only in Tamil but in Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam television industry. Devoted serial viewers do not even notice that the show they are watching has been dubbed. They realize its non-Tamil origin only when an actress turns up in a sari draped in a typically North Indian style. Potential target audience for these serials are homemakers and often they are blamed for getting addicted to the serials. The continuous quantitative increase and widespread presence of dubbed serials in satellite channels, has increased the exposure of a different culture to the Tamil audience. This has exposed the Tamil viewer to content which helps in spreading and promoting the ideas and values of other societies.

This in turn could have an effect insofar as changing the traditions, values and ideas because mass media have an enormous effect, which is not, confined to penetrating political boundaries and security barriers, but goes beyond cultural boundaries and intervening in psychological characteristics, and forming beliefs. Hence it becomes necessary to know the impact of the series on the Tamil audience, and the extent of their influence. The current study problem tries to find out whether there is a shift in the viewership of Tamil mega serials and if yes, the reasons for it. It also intends to identify and measure the cultural components that have an influence on the viewers. **Objectives**

- •To find out if there is a shift in viewership of Tamil mega serials from Tamil to dubbed serials.
- •To examine the reasons for switching over to dubbed serials if there is a shift.
- •To identify the reasons for the preference of dubbed serials.

•To study the causes for decline in the viewership of Tamil serials among home makers.

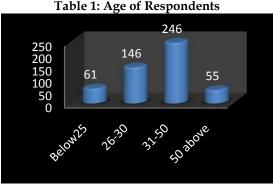
Methodology

The research design encompassed a survey among 508 home makers in Salem followed by Focus Group discussion. Survey was conducted among the women in the five villages around Periyar University, Salem, TamilNadu. It was followed by focus group discussion with 25 respondents in each village. All women who were regular serial viewers in the selected villages constituted the population. Convenience sampling technique was used; those women who were present during the time of data collection formed the sample. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions. Similarly, for focus group discussion, women who were more articulate were selected. The topic was introduced by the researcher and the women were allowed to discuss it amongst themselves. The researcher mediated whenever necessary and recorded the observations. The dubbed serials on the other hand, were analysed to find out the embedded cultural components.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Profile

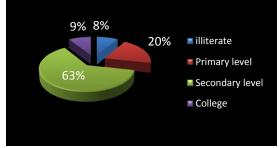
• Age of respondents fell into four categories – below 25, between 26 and 30, 31 to 50, 50 and above. The age group below 25 comprised of 61(12%) girls. Women aged between 26 and 30 constituted 28.74% of the sample. Majority (48.43%) of women belonged to the age group of 31-50. Women above 50 years of age were 10.83% out of the total percentage.



• With reference to education, more than half the number (62.5%) of respondents were educated only up to secondary level. Almost 20% of them had primary education or they were drop outs. Only 9% of the girls have completed college education while some of them had discontinued in the second or third year. However the illiterate

percentage was low (8.5%); that too it was observed among the age group of 50 and above.

 Table 2: Educational Level of Respondents



• Regarding marital status, all the respondents were married because they formed the population. More than three fourth (79%) of the families were nuclear families with only 21% living in joint family system.

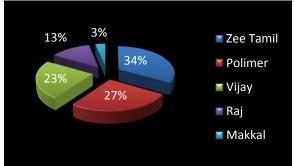
• But whether nuclear or joint families, their routine was almost the same. Women in both types of system finished all their household work in the morning, sent their children to school, helped their husband in their work and settled down for television.

Serial Viewing

• Invariably all the respondents sat in front of the television between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm irrespective of their work. From that time on wards they kept changing the channels according to their preference for serials till 3.00pm. In between, they had lunch in front of the television.

• During the period of study, five Tamil channels-Zee Tamil, Polimer, Vijay, Raj and Makkal TV broadcast 10,8,7,4 and 1 dubbed serials respectively. Overall, there were 30 dubbed serials going on simultaneously in these Tamil channels. Other television channels like Sun, Kalainar, Jaya, Captain and Vasanth Tv did not broadcast any dubbed serial during the period of study.

Table 3: Dubbed Serials Telecast in Tamil Channels



IJSER © 2017 http://www.ijser.org • Major outcome of the study was that majority of the respondents (67%) preferred Tamil dubbed Hindi serials while only 33% of them liked to watch Tamil serials though both groups watched both kinds of serials.

• A considerable 49% of them had shifted to dubbed serials who were watching Tamil mega serials earlier.

• Among those who have moved over to dubbed serials, around 10% said that they watched the dubbed serials for more than 3 years. Another 22% had been watching these serials between 1-2 years. The remaining majority (35%) were ardent viewers for dubbed serials for more than two years. This indicated a bigger shift in the past one to two years towards the dubbed serials.

Dubbed Serials

• Tamil dubbed Hindi serials were popular among both young girls, middle aged and old women. They eagerly awaited to watch the serials.

• They liked it so much that of late, they have started watching the Hindi version of it in other channels like Star plus.

• Some of them stated that they could understand the language to certain extent. A few of them even knew some words in Hindi.

• If in case they miss an episode, 80% of the viewers waited for the re-telecast and watched it. Around 20% of them asked others to find out what happened on that day's episode and a negligible .8% watch that through internet.

• In terms of viewership, Polimer ranked first among all the channels. More than half the number of respondents (51.94%) preferred Polimer. Star Vijay ranked second with 21.26% of viewership.

• Though Zee Tamil broadcast more number (10) of dubbed serials, it was not the most favorite channel of the respondents. It was ranked third with 15.12% of viewers watching its programmes. The major reason behind this is that the respondents did not consider this as a Tamil channel. An interesting aspect with regard to Zee Tamil channel is that when a new dubbed serial is advertised, some of the respondents watch a few episodes and then decide whether to continue or not. This was not the case with other Tamil channels.

• Makkal Tv stood fourth with 6% audience. Raj Tv was the least preferred channel with only 5.68% of viewers. The audience for Makkal Tv was higher than Raj Tv mainly due to the dubbed serial Needhane Enn Ponn Vasandham. Apart from this serial, the viewers did not have much to talk about Makkal Tv.

Table 4 Viewer ship for Dubbed Serials



• All the serials in Raj Tv-Sindhu Biravi, Nilave Malare and Kauravam were popular among the respondents. But due to the heavy advertising in Raj Tv, viewers rated Makkal Tv better than Raj though they watched all the dubbed serials on Raj Tv.

Reasons for Preference

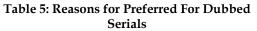
• With reference to the reasons for switching over to dubbed serials, the respondents quoted strong value system as the primary reason. They said that those serials reinforced the faith in joint family system and respect for elders which made them engrossed in the serials.

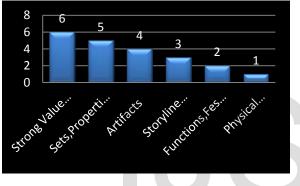
• Secondly, many women were attracted by the sets, properties and locations where the serials were shot. They were really taken over by the look of palatial houses, the North Indian style of architecture, decorations and so on.

• Third significant factor, at the same time more influential variable, in terms of changing the behavior of the respondents, was the artefacts. All the women, irrespective of their age were fascinated by the kind of sarees and jewellery that women in the serials wore. It was interesting to note that many respondents even bought those kinds of sarees and jewellery. In fact, of late, their way of wearing sarees itself has changed due to the influence of these serials.

• Fourth contributing factor for the shift was the plot and narration of the dubbed serials. Quite a number of respondents believed that the storyline, structure and treatment of the dubbed serials were different from Tamil serials and they were relatively interesting. In spite of them being slow paced, they felt that the twists were pretty good and they relished it. • Another aspect they thoroughly enjoyed and the fifth reason for their preference was the portrayal of functions, festivals and other rituals practiced by the characters in the serials. The main reason for their liking is that those practices were new to the Tamil audience. Instead of watching the same functions and festivals of TamilNadu, they found it intriguing to watch their way of celebrations.

• Finally many of the respondents were attracted by the fair complexion of the characters on the small screen. They stated that the body language and gestures were welcome change among the stereo-typed acting of characters in Tamil serials.





Reasons for Switching Over

• In terms of explanations for switching over to dubbed serials, the respondents stated that Tamil serials followed the same kind of story line which was very monotonous. They felt that they could easily guess what would follow next.

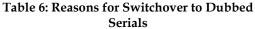
• Moreover they said that some of the scenes were repeated not only in a different serial; but within the same serial.

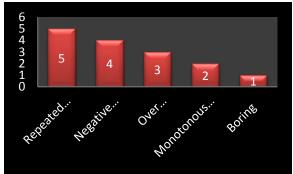
• Similarly they felt that the sentiments in Tamil serials were too much. Though both Hindi as well as Tamil mega serials are melodramas and the main stories revolve around family intrigues, Tamil serials, according to them, lack imagination and creativity.

• Major complaint they had about Tamil serials was the characterization. Most of them felt that there were too many negative characters. This was not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of quality. Especially the portrayal of women characters in many Tamil serials they said, was degraded women.

• Many mega serials both Tamil and dubbed ones are centred on women. But in Tamil serials

in many cases, even the important characters are portrayed very badly while in dubbed serials women are depicted with more values and dignity.





Conclusion

To conclude, it could be stated that definitely Tamil audience is divided with one half watching their regular dose of Tamil mega serials while the other half moved towards the dubbed serials. One aspect that has not changed is the addiction towards mega serials especially among home makers mainly because they are idle during that part of the day mostly with no one at home or with the mother-in-law or an older person who also enjoys watching these soaps. It is interesting to note that many senior citizens especially men are devoted audience of certain dubbed serials.

Though the language in dubbed serials are very slow paced, artificial and used for the sake of lipsync, Tamil television audience not only seems to have used to it; but also has accepted it mainly because of the cultural components in it. They find a number of qualities like the value of joint family system, veneration to elders etc., promoting our cultural practices in our day-to-day live in these dubbed serials. Starting from the traditional way of dressing to the role of women in a family system, everything is portrayed in a positive manner which is not only different but also appealing to the Tamil audience. Thus it is clear that the cultural components in these serials attract the Tamil viewers more than anything else. Television industry always operating with a commercial intent has found this pulse and utilized it to the maximum through cultural commodification.

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