

TRAGEDY, JUSTICE AND POWER OF MONEY: ANALYZING POPULAR PAKISTANI DRAMAS WITH CULTIVATION THEORY

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Abstract

Dramas are one of the most powerful tools, for not only do they mirror our society but also play an instrumental role in shaping people's minds and opinions. They can give you hope, dreams, inspire you and sometimes even guide you. They are also the most affordable and vital source of entertainment. This study examines the effects of two Pakistani dramas, *Cheekh* from ARY Digital and *Khaani*, from GEO entertainment channel on audience attitudes and societal dynamics through a content analysis based on the Cultivation Theory. In this content analysis discusses two prime time tragedies dramas within the time frame of 2019. The tragedy-drama genre includes *Cheekh* and *Khaani*, which connect themes of justice, society conventions, and personal decisions into tense and suspenseful stories. Even though they all belong to the same general genre, every drama offers a different viewpoint when examining tragedy and its consequences. These dramas deprived its viewers of both these values. This study makes use of the Cultivation Theory to examine how the Pakistani dramas influences audience perceptions, societal attitudes, and the audience's cultivation of particular views. The study explores the heavy television dramas influence Pakistani society's understanding of justice, class dynamics, and gender roles, using Gerbner & Gross's cultivation theory.

INTRODUCTION

This content analysis looks into how Pakistani crime dramas "*Cheekh*" and "*Khaani*" portray justice, society norms, and personal struggles. These dramas, which run for 30 and 31 episodes, respectively, offer a rich narrative landscape for going deeper into the finer points of crime, power relationships, and the pursuit of justice. This study reveals themes, societal commentary, and the influence of personal decisions on the developing narratives through a comparative analysis. The period of time selected represents an important period in Pakistani drama production, characterized by stories that explore personal struggles, social complexity, and the complex relationships between murder, justice, and power. The serials came up with murder mystery, attempt to rape, male ego, lust, how a victim family from lower

class faces difficulties when they seek justice against a high-class family, how many hurdles a woman have to face if she raise her voice for justice in Pakistani society and how she gets justice. When someone raises such important and sensitive issues in their drama, of course more responsible content is expected. According to Gerbner & Gross's cultivation theory "High frequency viewers of television are more vulnerable to media messages and the belief that they are real and valid. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are effected by the Mean World Syndrome, the belief that the world is a far worse and dangerous place then it actually is. The plot centers on three friends, Nayab, Manat, and Haya, and explores their reactions from an attempted rape that results in Nayab's death. The study analyzes

important moments, character interactions, and thematic themes through content analysis to show how the drama may shape viewers' opinions and beliefs. The main character of "Khaani," played by Sana Javed, is the title character. When Sarim, Khaani's twin brother, meets an unfortunate death at the hands of Mir Hadi (played by Feroze Khan), In addition, the 31-episode television series "Khaani" skillfully twists a suspenseful story of love of while highlighting the pursuit of justice and revenge against the background of murder and societal expectations.

The analysis finds links with Cultivation Theory's structure, exploring into the unintended consequences of over exposure to content depicting societal difficulties. The research sheds light on how television storylines shape public attitudes, namely on justice, gender roles, and class dynamics in Pakistani culture, by analyzing the difficulties and underlying themes of the characters.

Literature review

Television dramas are powerful because they shape public perception in addition to reflecting society. Dramas have a significant and worthy influence on societal beliefs in Pakistan, particularly with regard to legal systems.

In Gerbner and Gross's 1976 cultivation theory, Individuals with more television viewing habits are more responsive to messages from the media. The strong portrayal of crime, injustice, and the struggles to get justice in these two dramas may have contributed to viewers' favorable perceptions of the subject. According to Butt (2012), this kind of content shows the media's preferences to draw attention towards class differences. The drama's content analysis highlights the difficulties faced by Nayab's lower class family in pursuit of justice against a powerful and wealthy adversary. In line with Leebek's (1985) assertion of the significant cultural impact of television dramas, the emphasis on Cheekh and khaani is consistent. Using content analysis, it is clear how this show's focus on touchy subjects such as sexual harassment, murder and justice influences society's attitudes and perceptions of these topics.

The study by Hussain and Bilal in 2018 examines how Pakistani television dramas socially shape crime and criminality. The study examines the stories of criminal

characters, their history, and the consequences of their actions. This report seeks to shed light on the ways in which such representations affect perceptions of criminality and justice systems.

This study is based on a study conducted by Hafeez and Saleem in 2017 on the influence of the media on legal perceptions. An analysis of the content might reveal how drama has enhanced or distorted the judicial system, which could have an impact on public confidence in the judiciary. For the analysis of drama, it is essential to understand narrative strategies given by Liebes and Katz in 1990. The dramatic storytelling techniques of the show can be revealed through content analysis, highlighting the difficulties faced by the characters in their quest for justice.

Theoretical framework

The Gerbner & Gross Cultivation theory says that high frequency viewers of TV are more susceptible to media messages and the belief that they're true. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are effected by the Mean World Syndrome, the belief that the world is a far worse and dangerous place than it actually is.

These dramas are not only cruel and pitiful, but also misguide the audience about institutes and law procedure in Pakistan. Musharafa Eman quoted in her All you Need to Know About: The Cultivation Theory that

The cultivation theory empathizes that television does not reflect what is happening in the outside world, but it presents an artificial world that focuses on certain issues depending on the will and interest of those controlling the media. Eventually, the accumulation of exposure to TV and the lack of direct experience in various issues, create an artificial world, which becomes more and more real to the recipients".(Maccawi, Hassan Emad, Laila Hassan El Sayed,n.d.p.165).

When viewers watch corrupt police officers crossing all limits for the sake of money, viewers believe in such institutions is destroyed.

Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976) media dependency theory stressed tripartite relationship of media-audience and society which relationship presented in following figure:

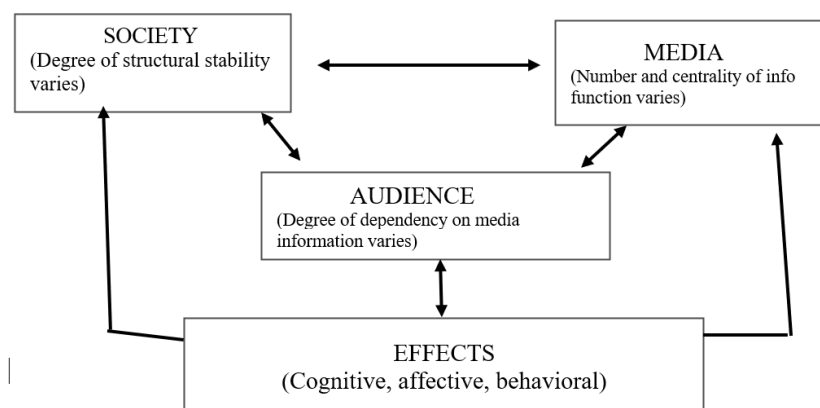


Fig 1.1 The tripartite relationship among media, audience and society.

The dependency theory model help us to understand the operation of cultivation described by Gerbner, when people are feeling with a great deal of ambiguity about some aspect of world such as a danger from crime their dependency on the media may be high and they may accept a definition of the situation that is presented from television that is they may accept a view of world as a mean place" (Ball-rokeach S.J.,M.L, Defleur (1976)A dependency model of mass media effects communication research.

Research methodology:

The main aim of this study is to perform a thorough content analysis of the ARY drama "Cheekh" with the purpose of identifying the themes and messages conveyed in the narrative Gerbner & Gross's Cultivation Theory was applied in a thorough content analysis of two Pakistani dramas, "Cheekh" and "Khaani," as part of the methodology used for this

study. A methodical and objective approach to analyzing the themes, stories, and character portrayals in the chosen dramas is content analysis.

Rational of the data

Cheekh is a crime drama series written by Zanjabeel Asim Shah, which focuses on issues of justice, class dynamics and the role of women in Pakistan. Khaani, directed by Anjum Shahzad, uses the character of Khaani to explore themes of justice, disappointment, and social conflict.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is a particular scene in each episode of both dramas, dialogue, character interactions and other narrative components. In order to find the core themes, this method allows for a thorough analysis of the content.

Rating of dramas

Table 1. Selection of Pakistani Television Dramas based on IMBD's Ratings

Name of Dramas	Year	Episodes	TV Channels	Rating
Cheekh	2019	30	ARY digital	<u>8.4/10</u>
Khaani	2018	31	GEO entertainment	<u>7.8/10</u>

Coding Categories

Predefined research questions and thematic areas of interest served as the foundation for the creation of the coding categories. These categories cover important ideas such as gender dynamics, corruption, injustice, class differences, and the possible effects of media portrayals on audience perceptions.

Application of Gerbner and Gross's Cultivation Theory

To comprehend how viewers' perceptions and worldviews are shaped by repeated exposure to television content, Gerbner & Gross's cultivation theory was utilized as a theoretical framework.

According to the theory, people who watch a lot of television are prone to developing beliefs that are consistent with the shows they watch, which can result in a warped sense of reality.

Determining the Themes

The goal of the content analysis was to pinpoint and group important themes in each drama, such as justice, disappointment, social issues, and gender roles.

Data interpretation

Data interpretation is the process of combining the findings to create a thorough understanding of the ways in which the themes that have been identified contribute to the overall story of these dramas and the possible effects on the perceptions of the audience.

Comparison between dramas

To identify similarities, differences, and unique effects of each drama on the audience, a comparative analysis between *Cheekh* and *khaani* has been carried out.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the entire research process, ethical considerations are crucial. Parts of ethical conduct include following copyright laws, handling sensitive content with care, and presenting findings objectively. This study intends to contribute to the larger conversation on the impact of media in Pakistani society by utilizing content analysis in conjunction with Gerbner & Gross's cultivation theory to offer insightful information about the thematic components of "*Cheekh*" and its possible ability to shape viewers' perceptions.

Content analysis of ARY drama *Cheekh*

(*Cheekh*; a drama to demotivate those who fight for what is right)

Nayab, a poor girl from a poor family, falls in love with her younger brother Wajhi, who is in lawship with wealthy people. On the day of Haya's engagement,

Nayab stays late at her place, and Wajhi attempts to rape her. Nayab slaps him and tries to murder him, leading to her death. To bring justice, Manat files a FIR against Wajhi, but her in-laws become awkward. Haya, her sister-in-law, and her elder brother-in-law Yawar stand by her brother, even though he knows Wajhi is guilty. Nayab's father stands for her daughter's justice, while her mother-in-law demands her husband withdraw the case and take some settlement money from the murderer family. Waji, a wealthy man, becomes the worst enemy of Haya and Nayab's father, harassing Manat's mother and mentally torturing her until she goes to a mental asylum and kills her unborn baby. He also influences professionals with his money, including police, lawyers, and doctors, for his benefit.

Drama from Victim "Nayab" perspective

Nayab's step mother, dissatisfied with her high class friendship, urged her to attend Haya's engagement function. However, her step mother warned her father against late night events, claiming it was unsafe. Nayab was murdered after a rape attempt.

Lesson: don't allow your daughters to make friend who are high in status, if you are poor stay away from rich people as according to drama "*Cheekh*" because of money they would harm you to at any extend but you can do nothing of them.

Drama from Victim's father "Nayab" perspective.

Nayab's father, the bread winner, is determined to be punished after his elder daughter's murder. His second wife tries to convince him to take settlement money, but Wajhi, a powerful man, offers him 5 million. Ramzan Ahmed refuses, leading to bullying, harassment, and a FIR. After losing his job and home, he is ordered to pay half a million for the punishment of using an ill daughter in a noble family. Zanjabeel Asim, a writer, highlights the struggle for justice and the consequences of a failed attempt to escape punishment.

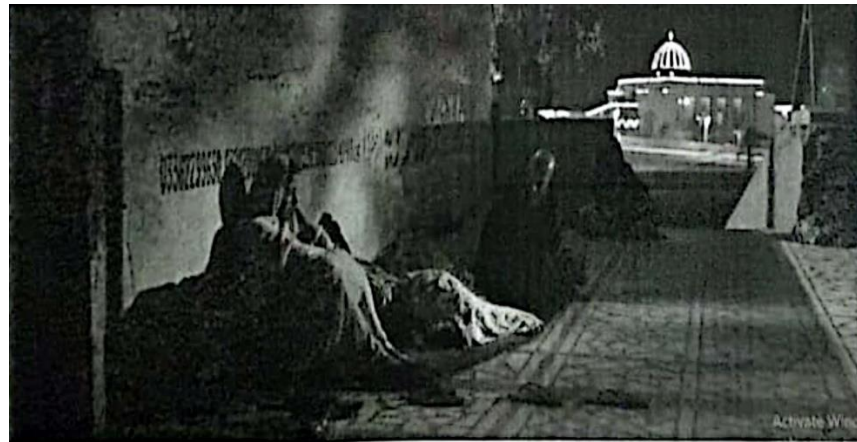


Fig 1.2 After he lost his house he have to stayed in shrine along his wife and two daughters

Dialogues:

Shamsad (Ramadan ahmed wife): do you have any realization we are on the road with our young daughters. I told you to not to go after rich people, now pay this neither fish nor fowl.

Lesson: if someone high in status do something wrong with you, then don't try to get justice because your all efforts are useless. During strive for justice you will be punished

Drama from Manat point of view:

The drama serial Cheekh by Zanjabeel Asim explores the challenges faced by women in Pakistan in pursuing justice for themselves or others. Manat, a

friend of a victim and sister in law of the culprit, is forced to intervene after her friend's death, resulting in the loss of her mother, unborn child, and husband. The story prompts viewers to question whether they want to be like Manat, who faced traumatic consequences for her actions.

Manat's brother-in-law (waji) makes her life hell by mentally tortured her and her mother. He locked up her mother in store room where due to suffocation she reached near to die. Lawyer of waji sent his goons to threaten Manat's mother, under pressure she agreed to give her statement against her own daughter in the court that her daughter is mentally sick and under treatment. After this statement judge ordered to send Manat to the mental hospital and her mother due to guilt dies.



Fig 1.3 At this stage when 24 episodes were on aired and Manat come on the funeral of her mother crying helplessly and begged to not send her back to mental hospital.

After making this serial so fearful who try to stand against injustice, don't know why Zanjabeel shown she also lost her husband which is only last hope and

relative of manat in Cheekh? Her mother and unborn child death wasn't enough to show her hurdles?

On the funeral of Shayan dialogues of Nayab (victim's step mother) is a big question mark on the impact of this serial.

Dialogue: God may ruin this case, this case taken so many lives, a brother killed another brother .I am worried how she (Manat) spend her life, a few days passed to her mother's death and now one more pain .i say that if God give daughter then he may give good luck.my elder daughter is not only poor but she is also very unlucky you might came to her engagement she fallen down from roof what should I say since she died our life became difficult.

Lesson:

This drama is not only cruel about female but also misguide audience about law enforcement institutes and procedure in Pakistan.

Bad impact of police officers

In Cheekh writer create very bad impact of police officers. As a Pakistani at some extend we all have reservations about police department.so I don't know why writer create more horror impact of police station she can show how to make FIR process easy or how to tackle corrupt police officer. But instead of this she shows that in Pakistan it's better to stay away from police station if you don't have money for bribe.

Zanjabeel shows the dark side of Thana culture and the power of SHOs to harass women, particularly FIR Manat. SHO Amir Khan took bribes and humiliated Manat by waiting her long at the police station, even going to 2am.

Public reaction on this drama

Shabeen khan wrote an article on drama cheekh published in Dawn.com JUL 19, 2019

"Cheekh is basically saying that women who seek justice will always suffer" and "26 episodes in, the only message Zanjabeel Asim's Cheekh has managed to give us is that if you are a woman in Pakistan, you cannot fight for your or anyone else's rights; that justice doesn't exist - and if you happen to somehow get it, you lose everything and everyone in the process."

Fuchsia magazine (fyoo shuh)

Rabia wrote in her article published in fuchsia magazine on August 16, 2019

"Cheekh Tortures Audience with Its Plot"

"I am not exaggerating if I state that the writer played with the emotions of the viewers in the worst possible way. Why do I say that and why do I feel so strongly? ...Hear me out."

Content Analysis of the Drama "Khaani" (a drama quest for justice)

The captivating story of Khaani, a Pakistani drama that launched on Geo Entertainment and was written and directed by Asma Nabeel and Anjum Shahzad, explores disappointment, societal struggles, and justice. The drama is divided into 31 episodes, each of which adds to the development of a multilayered plot and the portrayal of characters.

Khaani, a strong and independent woman, and Mir Hadi, a powerful and wealthy figure, are introduced at the start of the story. The story's central conflict is hinted at and established in the first few episodes, which also set up the social dynamics.



Fig1.4 Mir hadi shots khaani's twin brother sarim.

When Mir Hadi's careless deeds claim the life of Khaani's twin brother Sarim, the storyline takes a tragic turn. The drama skillfully portrays the struggle between a common person seeking justice and a powerful person used to getting away with crimes.

Justice

Khaani's quest for justice serves as the main subject of the narrative. The drama intricately depicts the challenges she faces as she explores the court system, societal expectations, and power manipulation, highlighting the challenges people confront in their pursuit of justice. Khaani illuminates larger social issues with a range of characters and subplots. The drama highlights systemic problems and societal injustices by showing in which the differences in legal system, elite can avoid consequences.

Struggle

Khaani challenge traditional gender conventions by portraying its protagonist as a symbol of the fight of women. Khaani's determination to seek justice for her brother defies social norms, illuminating how women's roles are evolving in trying circumstances. Strong emotions are evoked by scenes and language, especially as Khaani encounters numerous obstacles in her pursuit of justice.

Power of money

Khaani is a drama that explores the power of wealth and its influence on characters' lives. The antagonist, Mir Hadi, is a key figure who exploits financial influence to manipulate circumstances and sway justice.

His financial privilege shields him from accountability and allows him to control individuals and institutions. Khaani shows the societal imbalances perpetuated by the power of money, highlighting how economic disparities can breed corruption and hinder justice. The drama effectively incorporates disappointment as a thematic element to underscore societal injustices and explores the power dynamics associated with wealth, highlighting the far-reaching consequences of financial influence in shaping individual destinies and perpetuating systemic inequities.

Disappointment

Khaani, a character in the drama, experiences disappointment and personal losses, highlighting societal challenges and systemic injustices. The storyline challenges conventional expectations, creating a visceral connection with the audience. Khaani's experiences extend beyond Khaani, highlighting the broader societal norms and power dynamics.



Fig 1.5 khaani is shouting and crying because of disappointment

The drama explores the intricacies of courage in the face of misfortune, going deeper into the psychological effects of disappointment.

Dialogue: Mir Hadi: "Justice is just a front for the weak; power is the only source of truth."

Khaani: "No matter how strong my opponent is, I will not allow injustice to win. The scenes in the courtroom where Khaani and Mir Hadi are fighting the law. Khaani's painful interactions with her family and social norms.

To sum up, Khaani is a valuable resource for content analysis since it explores into issues of justice, societal struggles, and disappointment. The drama is an engaging case study for comprehending audience cultivation effects in the context of Pakistani television dramas because of the dialogues and scenes that add to the drama's impact.

Findings:

Injustice and Class Disparities

The content analysis investigates that injustice was as often as possible depicted, particularly in connection to class differences. In popular dramas of Pakistan of 2019 emphasized the troubles confronted by a lower-class family looking for justice against a powerful and well off upper-class family.

Gender Dynamics and Misrepresentation

Pakistani women are portrayed in popular dramas of Pakistan that highlights gender dynamics, often facing obstacles in advocating for justice, with notable misrepresentations of legal processes and law enforcement organizations.

Corruption and Influence

The drama showed corruption in the legal system, the police, and the medical field, among other societal institutions. The pursuit of justice was said to be hindered by the corrupting influence of wealth and power.

Influence on Viewer Perceptions

The findings suggest that these dramas might influence how viewers see the world when viewed through the prism of Gerbner & Gross's cultivation theory. Because the drama concentrates on the negative, it could mislead viewers to believe that injustice and corruption are commonplace in society.

Cultivation of Fear and Mistrust

The analysis revealed that the drama cultivated a feeling of mistrust and fear, especially with regard to

the effectiveness of the legal and justice systems. The way these institutions are portrayed in the drama may cause viewers to become more pessimistic about them.

Research questions:

1. How Pakistani dramas demotivate those who fight for what is right?
2. How much does "Cheekh" and "khaani" portray the difficulties faced by Pakistani lower-class families trying to get justice?
3. What aspects of Pakistani legal systems and procedures are misrepresented in "Cheekh," and what effect does this have on the way viewers perceive the legal system?
4. How might the content of these 2 dramas help cultivate particular attitudes and beliefs among its audience, particularly with regard to justice, corruption, and societal norms, in accordance with Gerbner & Gross's theory of cultivation? These research inquiries seek to provide a thorough examination of the drama's narrative and its possible influence on viewers' perceptions by exploring further into the thematic elements discovered through content analysis.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Pakistani popular dramas Cheekh and Khaani have a great influence on how society views them. These cultural mirrors explore deep-rooted social issues and add to Pakistan's current conversation about power, justice, and social expectations. A common theme in both dramas is the fight against wealth's corrupting influence and injustice. The achievement of justice is a positive element in Khaani, but it also emphasizes the difficulties and injustices the protagonist must deal with. It becomes clear that the power of money is a powerful force that subverts justice and upholds social injustices. Together, these plays offer a complex picture of society's intricacies, highlighting both the possibility for justice and the difficult obstacles people must overcome to achieve it.

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