

Role of Entertainment Education in Women Development: A case study of 'Adhafull,' 'Navrangi Re!' and 'Life Navrangi.'

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Abstract

Entertainment Education (EE) drama intentionally designs and executes a media message to fulfill entertainment and education purposes to increase audiences' knowledge and awareness about educational issues. It is a strategy for consciously crafting drama serials to increase audience knowledge about social issues, change their behavior, shift social norms, and create attitudes (Wang et al., 2020). EE dramas can help by providing a lens that not only involves women's specific gendered roles but broadcasts programs on male identity that address gender equality and express the relationship between men and women (Lapsansky & Chatterjee, 2013). With the help of storytelling techniques, EE drama spreads awareness about a social problem. Still, it is necessary to understand how EE dramas directly or indirectly support women's empowerment and social awareness and how they portray female characters in programs. There is a chance to improve women's status by appealing to audiences' behavior and providing information about women's social status. The study aims to explore how EE dramas have put forth women's development and social awareness by involving both men and women through storytelling techniques. This study analyzes the content of three entertainment–education dramas *Adhafull* (Half Full) (2016), *Navrangi Re!* (Nine to a Shade) (2019), and *Life Navrangi* (2022). The study traces the lineage of the arguments to the Entertainment-education programs, EE program, women empowerment, the portrayal of female characters, social awareness, and gender equality. This study assesses the research findings in changing behavior, and the results show that the portrayal of the female characters and direct information about the social issue (gender

inequality, domestic violence, health, and hygiene) is essential to motivate women to fight their battles against invisibility by getting inspired by role models and social awareness programs. The outcome explains that EE programs portray women as career-oriented, strong, choosing different career paths, and aware of health and sanitation. This study will spread consciousness in society on recognizing EE programs as a source of social awareness and women's development. The government and NGOs will have a new approach to launching new schemes for social issues by learning about EE drama and the characters' role in persuading an individual behavior.

Keywords- Entertainment Education, Women Development, Adhahfull, Navrangi Re!, Life Navrangi

Introduction

Entertainment Education (EE) drama is a strategy for intentionally crafting drama serials to increase audience knowledge about social issues, change their behavior, shift social norms, and create attitudes (Wang et al., 2020). It intentionally designs and executes a media message to fulfill entertainment and education purposes to increase audiences' knowledge and awareness about educational issues. It can show audiences how to live safely, healthily, and happily, along with entertainment (Singhal & Rogers, 2001). Dramas are highly effective in influencing social norms, promoting health changes, and shaping public opinions (Malik, 2019). Production of EE dramas favors in some way of women's development to elevate public consciousness about domestic violence and gender inequality and to protect women's rights (Yue et al., 2019). It can transform the ordinary life of women into a strong and empowered in a positive direction (Abbasi, 2019).

The service of social advancement, the fight against taboo issues in a patriarchal society, and modernity somewhere transform EE dramas into Feminist edutainment (FE)

dramas. FE uses dramatic styles to appeal to female audiences and educate them about the issue of gender inequality (Malik, 2022). These drama serials are crafted strategically as agenda setters to frame any social problem and shape public opinions (Malik, 2019). But the success of EE drama serials can be done by the motivation of the social learning theory of Albert Bandura. Social learning theory explains that individuals learn about new behaviors by observing their social environment, including behaviors represented in TV programs (Grady et al., 2021).

Based on the theory, we hypothesize that EE programs promote women's development by raising audiences' desires and growing new ones. We review the literature of the present study by examining the EE dramas that are fortunately changing into FE dramas because they cover parameters of women's empowerment. There is a chance to improve women's status by appealing to audiences' behavior and providing information about women's social status. Because achieving a social status is considered a fundamental human goal, and changing individual perception that will succeed in changing behavior and social status.

However, the present study revolves mainly around the three entertainment–education dramas *Adhafull* (Half Full) (2016), *Navrangi Re!* (Nine to a Shade) (2019), and *Life Navrangi* (2022). These three programs were created by BBC Media Action in India, focusing on gender stereotypes, women's economic empowerment, dignity work, health, water, sanitation, work dignity, and hygiene (India, n.d.). In this paper, an effort has been made to explore how EE dramas directly or indirectly support women's empowerment besides social awareness and how EE dramas portray female characters in programs and motivate both men and women to fight for women's rights through storytelling techniques. This article explains the importance of role models in Indian TV for women's empowerment.

Entertainment-Education Dramas

Human beings tend to learn by the observation of others, from both worlds, i.e., real and reel (media programs). They consciously and unconsciously observe others and their consequences. They like to copy and adopt behaviors based on what they acknowledge through observation and determination. Human beings are observational learners before the spread of technology and broadcast media, but these technologies expand the scope of examples for their exposure. Now, people can experience the life of people they never met in person (Grady et al., 2021).

Media use is not limited to delivering news content and entertaining audiences. Still, it also positively influences an individual's attitudes, social norms, behaviors, knowledge, and skill perception. Entertainment education (EE) deliberately instills educational information into entertainment messages. It is not a theory but an approach used to communicate the plans to bring social and behavioral changes in an individual. The first EE radio program was *The Archer* (1951), and the first television program was *Simplemente María* (1969). Miguel Sabido was the person who deconstructed the *Simplemente María* telenovel to understand its theoretical perspective. After that, he produced a series of six programs composed of Albert Bandura's social learning theory (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). EE is an innovative method of approaching target audiences through storytelling strategies that attract audiences for extended periods that involve partnerships with communities and social influencers for spreading meaningful conversation (Lutkenhaus et al., 2020).

In India, 'Hum Log' (1984) was the first entertainment education program that used the strategy of Miguel Sabido, which explained the changing behavior of an individual because of observed models. Characters play three significant roles, i.e., Positive, negative, and transitional role models, to persuade individuals' behavior. The theme of this educational program is promoting social behavior in favor of equal status of women, family planning/size,

and family harmony. This program was designed to get a high level of audience involvement, and this program's characters used conversational language that reflected the everyday speech of an individual. At the end of every episode, Ashok Kumar discussed the salient issue covered in the episode (Sood & Rogers, 2000).

After this, many Entertainment education programs were broadcasted in India using multimedia platforms. BBC media action (India) also stepped toward smashing gender inequality, improving health and sanitation issues, and building awareness by launching various creative communication projects in India.

EE Dramas and Women Empowerment

EE dramas are more advantageous than audio-visual materials. It's a narrative appeal for audiences to relate to and develop an emotional bond with the characters. In some way, audiences feel the character or are familiar with their situations and stories. Over time after watching and observing the characters of the programs, the audience also feels that they can do it in their life. According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, role models promote desirable social behavior (Sengupta et al., 2020).

In the past, female characters were portrayed because of their pretty faces as an instrument to move the plot forward as the inspiration/weakness of male characters. Still, they do not contribute much to the program's action. Nowadays, there is a focus on the female characters, their development, and portraying realities of Indian women. By showing females who can fight their battles, refuse to be labeled as weak, and act as agents of their destiny or social change. Showing meaningful characters in this patriarchal system provides needed inspiration and become empowered role models for an individual (Gupta, 2015).

Violence against women and girls is a global problem of human rights ruination. One of the three women in the world is beaten, raped, and experience abuse in her lifetime. Violence

is not just physical violence but includes emotional violence and abuses their partners commit (*Violence against Women*, 2021). EE dramas can help by providing a lens that not only involves women's specific gendered roles but broadcasts programs on male identity that address gender equality and express the relationship between men and women. Entertainment media aim to point out gender inequalities, cultural gender norms, and gendered description in programs which further may impact or put an effort to encourage women's equality. EE programs significantly influence gender norms by constructing male and female characters (Lapsansky & Chatterjee, 2013).

Method

This study conducted structured research over the internet to find a database of entertainment educational programs created by BBC media action in India using the term gender-based, stereotypes, women empowerment, and social empowerment. Three EE programs (Adhfull, Navrangi Re, and Life Navrangi) were selected using purposive sampling by highlighting gender-based stereotypes.

This study used a content analysis method to examine the Entertainment Education programs in context. We position the texts within an orbit of how role models help in women's empowerment and society's development. Thus, three EE programs that met the following criteria were selected: 1) they were identified in the literature and as successful and innovative; 2) they were women empowerment related; 3) they were "genuine" outreach programs designed to achieve empowerment of women, gender equality, fight against domestic violence, and Quality of healthcare for women. While the programs are different, they provide further insight into leveraging EE programs to facilitate women's development by portraying women's characters.

Review of the three selected EE programs

Story Plot of Adhafull (2016)

Adhafull was a UNICEF-funded program and broadcasted on Doordarshan and other platforms. It has 78 episodes designed to help young people know about the pains of growing adolescence, particularly gender issues. It was an insight that Indian adolescents were uneasy about carrying social expectations. These expectations enforced by neighbors, family, peers, teachers, and society shapes their life, ambition, relationship, and identities. This drama was a story of three adolescents (*Kitty, Tara, and Adrak*) who worked together as a detective to solve the mystery of crimes per week. For example, the trio joined forces to expose a con artist and challenged the kitty's parents' goals to arrange her marriage before the legal age.

This program spread consciousness among men and women that both have the right to get equal treatment and that there is no need for gender discrimination. For example- the same work, equal pay, and girls are allowed outside the house. Parents who watched Adhafull drama are more inclined towards their girl freedom. For example- they provide smartphones to their daughters. But at the same time, parents fear community critics if they see their daughter behaving in a non-traditional way in public. (Chatterjee et al., 2021).

This program highlighted society's major issues, i.e., underage marriage, sexual health, sex-selective abortions, gender-based violence, stereotyping of women, girls' education, financial independence, hygiene and sanitation, mental health, and drug and alcohol abuse. It motivates teenagers to challenge traditions that promote gender stereotypes and improve their lives (*Inspiring Young People through Drama and Discussion in India*, n.d.).

Story Plot of Navrangi Re! (2019)

Navrangi Re! (nine to a shade) is a 13 weeks longer program with a reach of 59.6 million viewers through three Viacom 18 channels and an online platform. It is famous equally among

men and women. This program talked about fecal sludge management (FSM). It is the narrative of an urban area, 'mohalla,' where different people live. These people always find a way to overcome the problems and trials of their life. This mohalla is a creative space to hold different socio-economic representatives, with different families and occupying different values on sanitation. The lead hero, *Vishwas*, is a struggling Tv journalist who loves *Chitrlekha*, a budding YouTuber known as #SimplySaloni. Both represent the contrasting approach to working for communities and launching a YouTube channel to make a difference in people's lives and tell real stories instead of fake news. She is an authoritarian, and he is a negotiator. The marriage of these two characters leads to a community transformation. Chitrlekha's father is a retired army man who does everything up to date in the right direction. So, they have a toilet with a proper septic tank.

Character *Motichoor* is a neighbor and a confectioner. He owns a toilet, but there is no septic tank, letting his waste out in open drains. *Rajrani*, a local don of the neighborhood who lives with her son, owns a palatial house with a toilet and septic tank but never a dislodged tank. Another character is *Naseer*, the tailor; he and his family use a community toilet controlled and owned by Rajrani. This program is not just talking about FSM but also about socio-cultural issues. It represents women in a strong position like Rajrani, who controls things and depicts Chitrlekha, a career-oriented woman. It informed people about the role of media and storytelling in fighting against public health crises. The characters of this program reflect 'values, self-image, real desires, sense of pride, dignity and a hope for a better life.' (Newton-Lewis, 2021). Navrangi Re! can shape the mind and actions of the audiences and increase cognitive understanding. It introduces new ways of working, role models for audiences, novel forms of decision-making, a frame of reference, and new norms that are acceptable to the audience in a subtle manner (Gambhir et al., 2022).

Story Plot of Life Navrangi (2022)

Life Navrangi (Colourful Life) is the second season of Navrangi Re!, which has seven episodes, and Youtube was the medium to release in India. It has the same characters as Vishwas and Saloni but navigates interesting issues of society along with fecal sludge management (FSM). They both expose relevant problems of society that deal with debt, difficulties about owning one's dream home, making a mark in the profession, and threats of a marriage falling apart. To encounter problems on different levels, they must act as a married couple for society, which addresses society's mindset in this era. Also, highlight aspects of FSM such as indiscriminate dumping of untreated filthy sludge that pollutes water, building the right septic tank without damaging corners, and avoiding dangerous cleaning.

The story of this drama is to educate people about the process of desludging manually and dumping in an open space which is a risk to the health system. This program highlighted the importance of women's hygiene and how they get affected more quickly than anyone else, and the whole family eventually gets infected. This drama highlights the shades of gender empowerment while portraying women of different age groups and dealing with issues single-handedly. The portrayal of female characters in the show has their voice and agency to fight against what is right. This serial aims to improve people's awareness, engagement, and understanding of the mentioned issues. It examines the non-traditional career options for females who want to live without losing or compromising their ideals. It was trying to build a strong position of female characters and break gender stereotypes. This drama also highlights the harmful impact of misinformation on society (*Storytelling for Impact*, 2022).

After analyzing these three EE programs, it is observable that mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public minds. Societal issues and problems can be criticized through entertainment in different patterns. The storyline and characters prepare audiences to recognize the concept and help them to engage in discussion with their families and peers.

Result

Reports strengthen the content of serial dramas like Adhahfull, Navrang Re, and Life Navrang, but it remains too hard to establish a direct cause and influence relationship between the variables. While all EE programs try to make the content on a particular social issue, these three dramas were particularly successful because their creative content is based on factual events and the portrayal of female characters on the stronghold. The serial drama aims to raise awareness about health, hygiene, sanitation, women's careers, and gender discrimination.

The findings point out that interpersonal communication about EE dramas can act as an instrument to encourage changing behavior among peers. Messages from EE have a greater impact by engaging in social interaction and interpersonal communication. It is an effective medium for creating pro-social change in society, considering the literacy rate in mind and acknowledging the socio-economic status of the majority. There is a need to create more EE dramas to improve and develop society and women.

Conclusion

The EE programs discussed in this study indicate makers' thoughts about the problems in Indian society. They think that gender discrimination is a significant concern in our society, and it is important to combine gender stereotypes with other issues. They reflect the change in women's societal roles by accepting their reality and finding their path to fight against social problems. Career, health, sanitation, decision-making, early-age marriage, education, etc., hinder women's equality. EE programs can be a powerful medium for a society that can directly affect people through entertainment. Adhahfull, Navrang re, and Life Navrang portray the Indian women that make their place in society beyond cultural boundaries. Women in the programs fight against patriarchy, fight their own battle, and lead their lives, which will be a promising character to influence women. New programs gain dominance through their innovative work

and medium and challenge societal issues. These programs try to improve society's overall condition with the improvement of women.

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