

ABSTRACT

This study examined the viewers' perceptions of female portrayals on Doordarshan with specific reference to positive and negatives traits, reality orientation, social expectations role, women's issues and viewers' identification with portrayals. A second part of the study involved content description of Doordarshan programmes for the purposes of comparison with viewers' perceptions.

One hundred and eighty women and sixty men (N = 240) between the ages of 21-50 years from the city of Baroda formed the sample of this study, and 34 hours of Doordarshan programmes including to tele-serials, 3-5 episodes of each, one saturday, one sunday and one composite weekday's programmes excluding films related programmes, commercials and news were the sample for content description.

The independent variables included SES, age, gender, gender stereotype and self esteem of the respondents.

A five part interview schedule was used to elicit information regarding independent variables, television viewing patterns and perceptions of female portrayals. The data were subjected to correlation coefficient, analysis of variance, t-test and chi-squares. Parts of the data were presented in graphics using frequencies and percentages.

The major results indicated that (a) at least one hour Doordarshan viewing per day was common among the sample respondents and tele-series, Hindi news and film related programmes were popular preferences, (b) positive traits dominated in the perception of traits, (c) opinion was divided regarding reality of portrayals, (d) social expectations role perceptions of female portrayals were high, (e) majority of the respondents identified with androgynous female portrayals, (f) respondents perceived women's issues on Doordarshan but did not appreciate them much, (g) content description of Doordarshan female portrayals were found to be related to viewers' perceptions, (h) SES variables, gender, and gender stereotype were found to be significantly related to television viewing variables and perception variables, while age, self esteem and family variables were not found to be significant in this study.

The results indicated support for two theoretical positions considered; social expectations role of televised female portrayals and social learning and identification with female portrayals. This study did indicate certain trends in the cultivation of reality beliefs but further research is needed before wider interpretations can be drawn.