

## EXPLORING GENDER REPRESENTATION IN PAKISTANI AND TURKISH DRAMAS: A COMPARATIVE CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*The present study examines the representation of female characters in Pakistani and Turkish dramas. This is a comparative study of both Pakistani and Turkish societies. Looking back on previous studies, it is clear that these studies have focused on examining the hidden ideology, power relations, stereotypes, and gender inequality in dramas. The present study analyzes the language of leading characters from selected Pakistani and Turkish dramas to investigate the projection of women. The study is qualitative in nature and the dialogues are selected through purposive sampling method. The selected dramas have been analyzed using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Fairclough's three-dimensional model has been used for analyzing the text of the dramas which includes textual, discursive, and social analyses. That analysis reveals the hidden ideologies of dramas. The dramas have been chosen from Pakistani channels HUM TV and Urdu 1. This research is important in understanding women's representation in Pakistani and Turkish dramas on social, cultural and ethical dimensions.*

**Keywords:** *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Gender Representation, Dramas, Discourse, Fairclough.*

### Introduction

Gender is a social construct that affects both men and women. Gender representation in dramas is often studied in terms of women's representation because women have historically been underrepresented and misrepresented in the media. It is a socially constructed concept, not solely based on biological differences (Çankaya, 2013). Gender roles are actively performed through actions and behaviors, rather than being innate traits (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Societal expectations and gender ideology shape these roles, sometimes subtly reinforcing stereotypes (Lazar, 2000). Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity emphasizes that gender is constructed through repeated actions and language (1990). Representation is the process of conveying meanings through language, symbols, and gestures. It plays a significant role in shaping and challenging cultural values, reflecting shared beliefs and norms within a society (Hall, 1997). Language serves as a fundamental tool for expressing and exchanging cultural values and traditions among society members (Hall, 1997).

In the context of understanding gender representation and its impact on society, discourse, defined as written or spoken communication, plays a pivotal role. It serves as a fundamental means through which societal perceptions of gender are shaped (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). Within this framework, socialization is a key mechanism that guides individuals toward appropriate behavior within society, and these behavioral norms are communicated through

various forms of discourse (Collin Dictionaries, 2022). In a nutshell, discourse represents an organized and purposeful use of language to convey ideas and knowledge during communication, whether in written or spoken form, and it carries a complete message (Oka, 1994).

### **Language, Discourse, and Society: CDA's Historical Roots and Societal Impact**

Language plays a multifaceted role in society, shaping our identities, influencing our judgments, and reflecting power dynamics (Bayram, 2010; Halliday, 1978). It is not merely a tool for communication but also a fundamental aspect of social and cognitive development. Discourse, a form of social practice, shapes social realities, knowledge, and identities, establishing groups, their roles, and positions in society (Fairclough, 2001; Hall, 1997). Media discourse, in particular, serves as a powerful means for constructing and influencing ideologies and social realities (Gee, 2005; Vahid & Esmae'li, 2012).

According to Fairclough (1989), discourse goes beyond mere communication; he extends its definition by describing it as "a specific form of social practice" in which power and ideology play pivotal roles and interact with each other. As it is emphasized by Fairclough (1989), the main intention of CDA is to reveal all those elements hidden in texts caused by power relations. It focuses on the ambiguous relation between discourse and societal formations with free interpretation and discussion. Moreover, Wodak (1999) feels that the reach of CDA is such that it exposes the sources of power that lie behind the visible way we communicate and the hold we have on channeling of information as the very projection of power accuracies in society. The objective of CDA is achievable as it is a socially-minded and powerful type of social theory because it tries to determine the causes and impacts of specific forms of discourse and criticize the social, cultural or political injustices that they promote (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Media is an important aspect of the society as it is both an information, a knowledge and an entertainment source. They do affect how women are perceived and their status through the media and more particularly television (Hall, 1997). This paper has analyzed how gender has been represented in both Pakistani and the Turkish dramas and specifically on how both men and women are represented. To understand the language of the main characters of chosen Pakistani and Turkish dramas, the analysis is provided on the language used by the persons who are the leading characters. The paper unveils the latent ideologies of plays and the role the ideologies play in building gender roles.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine and compare the representation of women in Pakistani and Turkish television dramas, identifying both differences and similarities.
2. To analyse how the language used by leading characters in selected Pakistani and Turkish dramas influences young viewers' attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles and gender equality.
3. To identify and interpret the dominant discourses and ideologies embedded in the representation of women in these dramas, and to explore how these reflect or challenge broader cultural norms and societal values in Pakistan and Turkey.
4. To assess the implications of women's representation in Pakistani and Turkish dramas for their empowerment, agency, and social advancement within their respective societies.

### **Research Questions**

1. How is the representation of women in Pakistani and Turkish dramas different and similar?

2. How does the language used by leading characters in these dramas impact the attitudes and beliefs of young viewers in Pakistan and Turkey regarding gender equality?
3. What are the dominant discourses and ideologies surrounding the representation of women in these dramas, and how do they relate to broader cultural norms and values in Pakistani and Turkish societies?
4. What are the implications of the representation of women in Pakistani and Turkish dramas for the empowerment and advancement of women in these societies?

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its examination of gender representation in Pakistani and Turkish dramas, revealing the changing roles of women in patriarchal societies. Pakistan and Turkey have traditionally been patriarchal, but societal shifts have reshaped the portrayal of women. In Pakistan, the representation of women in dramas has shifted from obedient and submissive characters to independent and strong women, challenging old stereotypes. In Turkey, gender roles have evolved with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Women's rights have improved in politics, economics, and society. Globalization and technology have further challenged traditional gender norms, although there is still work to be done (Çankaya, 2013). This research is important as it challenges outdated gender norms and promotes a more equitable representation of gender especially women in society.

### **Literature Review**

Pakistan is a male-dominated society, despite Islamic teachings of equality. The portrayal of women in Pakistani television dramas has evolved and influenced by socio-political factors. Media often objectifies women, focusing on their physical appearance (Huda et al., 2015; Abbas, 2018; Lin, 1998; Ashfaq et al., 2018; Fredrickson, 1997). Turkey is historically patriarchal, with men dominating various aspects of life and limited women's rights. Advancements in women's status have been observed since the formation of the Republic in 1923, guided by Western influences. The traditional norms are challenged through globalization, media, and technology (Çankaya, 2013).

Turkish dramas are popular for blending Eastern and Western cultures and addressing local societal issues, especially domestic and marital challenges. Different perspectives exist regarding their impact on Pakistani youth, generating both criticisms and praise (Rehan & Raza, 2017; Naz and Iraqi, 2017; Zafar, Arafat, and Sial, 2017; Shahbaz Aslam et al., 2015; Rehan and Shafiq, 2020; Farooqui and Khan, 2020; Magsi, Buriro, and Ghanghro, 2021).

### **Dramas; A Blend of Information and Entertainment**

Pakistani television dramas can be described as a source of information and entertainment, where the user can escape some bitter experiences in the society (Zeb, Khan & Ajmal, 2021). The representations of women in Pakistani dramas have been discussed in literature and how such stereotypes of genders are perpetuated and how the positivity needs to be introduced to the representation (Rasool et al., 2022; Chaudhry, Ali & Aslam, 2021; Khan, 2021).

Women presented in a negative fashion, in the support of gender imbalance and social expectations (Rasool et al., 2022). The male heroes played predominantly by the female actors had a clear focus on the submissive behavior of females, which was further advancing the patriarchal ideals (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018). Men mostly appear dominant and superior to women, and in most cases, women lack an opportunity to empower themselves (Ahmed & Wahab, 2019). Impact of foreign cultures, namely Turkish dramas involved particularly on the Pakistani society that gained concern towards the conflicts with traditional norms (Rehan & Raza, 2017; Farooqui

& Khan, 2020). There is a lot of evidence which show that Pakistani TV dramas tend to promote gender stereotypes and in that sense the women are meant to serve conventional roles and the men are given the dominant role. Gender stereotypes are implemented as well in Pakistani TV dramas because of the depiction of women who are the ones that are mostly in the traditional roles and men who are classified as dominant. In spite of the fact that gender stereotyping is a common factor in Pakistani TV dramas, there are few dramas that have been criticizing the norms and portraying women in a more multifaceted and genuine manner. Unlike Pakistani dramas, the Turkish drama studies explain their effect on the norms of the society residing there and the role of dramas in influencing the western values of the Pakistani audience.

### **Feminist and Marxist Perspectives**

Feminist theory highlights the need for challenging patriarchal ideologies perpetuated through media (Verta, Nancy & Leila, 2009). Marxist feminist theory emphasizes the economic exploitation of women and media's role in maintaining class distinctions (Kim, 2008). Marxist feminist theory emphasizes the role of media in maintaining class distinctions by reproducing and promoting dominant ideologies that benefit the ruling class. It is concluded that Pakistani TV dramas continue to reinforce gender stereotypes, limiting women's portrayal to traditional roles. The influence of foreign cultures, particularly Turkish dramas, raises questions about the impact on local societal norms. There is a pressing need for more diverse and positive representations of women in Pakistani television dramas, challenging gender norms and promoting equality.

### **Historical Roots of CDA & Its Societal Impact**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), rooted in critical linguistics and drawing upon critical theory, systemic functional linguistics, and the works of Foucault, Gramsci, Althusser, Marx, Bourdieu, Habermas, and Halliday, emerged from the University of East Anglia in the late 1970s, focusing on the intertwined nature of language, power, and ideology (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Ager, 1992; Rasmussen, 1996; North, 2014).

CDA scholars, including Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, and Ruth Wodak, actively investigate media discourse to uncover hidden realities and critique societal injustices perpetuated by language (e.g., racism, sexism, discrimination) (Van Dijk, 1988a, 1988b, 1991, 2005; Fairclough, 1995, 1998, 2003; Wodak, 1996, 1999; Wodak and Chilton, 2005). CDA serves as a reflective form of social theory, exploring the links between texts and societal processes (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on the hidden ideologies and power relations that shape and are shaped by discourse, revealing concealed realities and critiquing their social, cultural, and political implications (Fairclough, 1995). CDA has contributed considerably to the analysis of discourse in media and this has opened the door to critical analysis of how media communicates with the help of language (Carvalho, 2008).

By the dictates of Van Dijk (2006), ideology is what such a group thinks about the world, of the self, and of its place in relation to the collectives such as the state. The electronic media effectively, especially the television, is a strong medium of communication with the worldwide coverage. This media is also usually used by the states to propagate their preferred ideologies. In the analysis of the discourse in the media, Fairclough (1992) proposes three-dimensional model, which studies textual, discursive and socio-cultural performances of television dramas (Van Dijk, 2006; Fairclough, 1992). This research paper addresses a research gap- it is a comparative analysis of the women representation in the Pakistani and Turkish dramas. It adopts a critical

discourse analysis strategy of exploring the representation of gender roles and relationships in large sample of popular dramas in the two countries.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Paradigm and Approach**

In this research, the employed research paradigm is qualitative where it follows a descriptive qualitative approach in addressing the depiction of women in the chosen Pakistani and Turkish television dramas. According to Creswell (1994), qualitative approach is able to examine subjective meaning in depth since they entail the practical versus evidence-based investigation of the ways in which language and discourse are used in constructing and reinforcing gender ideologies. The strategy used is especially appropriate in media and discourse analysis because depth of interpretation and context are vital.

#### **Analytical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis**

The primary theoretical and analytical framework guiding this research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Drawing on the work of Norman Fairclough (1989, 1995), the study utilizes his three-dimensional model of CDA, which analyses texts at three interrelated levels:

1. **Textual Analysis (Description)** focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion within dialogues.
2. **Discursive Practice (Interpretation)** examining how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed within social contexts.
3. **Social Practice (Explanation)** linking discourse to broader social, political, and cultural ideologies.

Fairclough paradigm works especially well in unmasking the language or discourse in a media content as a way of keeping or rebelling against power relations. In the research, CDA will be used to examine rhetoric of Pakistani and Turkish dramas how dialogues reproduce or challenge gendered norms, values, and roles.

#### **Sampling and Data Selection**

Three television dramas, two--in Pakistan (Zindagi Gulzar Hai and Shehr-e-Zaat) and two in Turkey (Ishq-e-Mamnu and Yasak Elma), are selected and investigated by the study. These plays were chosen using purposive sampling criteria of the popularity, critical reviews, and strong female characters in the society to navigate through the pressure. Particular discourses in these dramas were selected that performed gender roles, identity conflicts, materialistic pursuit or spiritual introspection and thus could be taken as information-rich data sources of critical discourse analysis.

The selection is based on cultural diversity in that, there are representations of women that is traditional to modern; materialist to spiritual, and conservative to liberal. The selected plays also cover different strata of society and character development, which contributes to consideration of gender construction under the aspect of social stratification and ideology.

#### **Data Collection and Units of Analysis**

The major data to be used would be dialogues and monologues by the following major characters in the selected drama, the female and the male characters. These consist of emotive lines, argumentative dialogues and narcissistic remarks that expose gendered subjectivities. Transcribing and translation of data was done by hand to allow semantic accuracy of data to be applied in CDA.

The features explored on the selected part were the linguistic elements like vocabulary selection, mode, sentence construction, metaphors, and pronouns. Additional consideration was paid to the

relational values (social positioning), the experiential values (worldview and actions), and the expressive values (judgment and stance), according to the CDA framework by Fairclough.

### **Contextualization and Social Cultural Framing**

Besides considering the context of other socio-cultural context of the two countries was a defining consideration of the study. As explained in the background section of the study, both Pakistan and Turkey are the countries with the patriarchal background, yet they have the varying development to modernity. The Pakistani society is deeply infested with religious, as well as family ideology, but the Turkish society with its secularization and exposure to the west, offers hybrid gender models. Such contextualistic subtleties aided in interpreting the practices of the discourse and contextualising the findings in terms of applicable culture boundaries.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Pakistani Dramas: Zindagi Gulzar Hai**

Zindagi Gulzar Hai has several characters that show varying attitudes towards gender roles, social pressures and individual struggles. Formal language is displayed and emotionally literate words in Kashaf, the female protagonist. Accentuation of words such as, problem (masla), blessing (naimat) is rich in experience value and expression. She symbolizes the female character struggling to determine the meaning of her self-using metaphors and self-discoveries. Her language depicts frustration, duty, and understanding of appreciation of the good things in life. The introspection and the sense of agency is present in the prevalence of declarative sentences, and monologues.

Zarun meanwhile has a casual speaking style in that he possesses a privileged and secure position towards life. Such are his words as surprises, achievements, ups and downs etc. He is fluid in his interpretation of changes in life. His monologues are still fairly eloquent, however, they lack the touches of emotionality or symbolic feeling found in the monologue delivered by Kashaf, as well as the multifaceted of perception regarding gender and social hierarchy.

The character and tone of Sara are in a more relaxed and very affirmative, self-empowering vocabulary, statements like “آزادی” reputation of freedom (freedom). In her conversations, we find strained relations as she declares her right to be independent. She confronts gender norms, by giving stress to her decisions. Her conversations show that she had an awakening of resistance to female independence in society.

Farhan uses a formal language with the help of metaphors defining woman freedom as a threat. His words such as, freedom challenges male authority unveil a patriarchal conviction that goes deep. He builds the liberation of women into an interference of male ego and society, and bullies through the use of declarative sentences.

Another male character, which is Junaid, embraces traditional parent role. He uses words and phrases of accountability like information “کر کے جانے” (take permission before you go), which acts to enhance the concept of male control. He comments on his view in the form of dialogues which have a balance of the level of care versus conformity to society.

Ghazala is a female parent and she speaks casually and emotionally and makes use of terms, such as generation gap, “سوال کروں”, and “طعنے سنو” to discusses the generational and ideological traits of parenting. It is evidence of personal conflict with modern values in which she is empowered and pressurised into accepting norms in society.

A declarative and indicative mode influences the discourses between characters. In dialogue 1, there are several terms such as شوہر, آزادی, and فلک, which indicate that the conversation style is simple yet portrays ideological and gender stand-offs. In dialogue 2 we see out right criticism of

the girls in wordings, such as, شیلو and self-centred, which displays a deep-rooted prejudice in the society. The dialogue 3 that is related to the need to keep one spouse interested includes words like effort, بحبست and سیر which reveals the expectations on women in the relationships. In Dialogue 4, differences between emotional sensitivity and inquisitiveness between Salman and Falak come out through lines such as fascinate and لامحدود to characterize fine emotions in the romance discourse.

### Shehr-e-Zaat

*Shehr-e-Zaat*, is a story of Falak, a young artist in which she is transformed spiritually as well as psychologically. Similar to *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*, *Shehr-e-Zaat* employs the metaphorical and expressive language especially when it starts to doubt materialism and ego as Falak starts to wonder about them. Her dialogue usually consists of vocabulary that is sometimes introspective and emotionally charged. This change of discourse concerning superficial love to divinely reflective culminates in the shift of dependency in a relationship to spiritual authority. The characters of *Shehr-e-Zaat*, in turn, travel through the lands of individuality, gender issues, and personal development making use of the capacious language highlighting the discovery of self and identity.

### Turkish Dramas: Yasak Elma (Shajar-e-Mamnu)

The vocabulary of the *Yasak Elma* displays the obvious class awareness, gender relations, and hierarchies. Direct and forceful language is used to depict ambition, feelings of resistance and social beliefs.

Ender is a manipulative wealthy character and he uses language to bend people to his own will. Dialogue 1 شادی کا خیال نکال دو دماغ سے (Remove the thought of marriage out of your mind) demonstrates how she rejects the ideas of romance so strongly when power and financial gain are involved. She speaks in caricatured and imperative style, which makes her character self-centred and constructing social power.

The character played by Yildiz manifests emotional vulnerability and change. Her diction is considerably ambitious, and it is grounded on class struggle. Emotional detachment and cynicism in relationships is shown in Dialogue 2 "کر رہا تھا time pass میں صرف" (I was just passing time) reveals emotional detachment and cynicism in relationships. The Dialogue 3 میں ضرور امیر بنوں گی زینب (I will definitely become rich, Zainab) shows that she is in the need to socioeconomically ascend.

Zainab is a righteous character who is in opposition of Yildiz. The fact that she is concerned about the materialistic aspirations of Yildiz is conservative. The morality and emotional implications of the words and grammatical patterns used in her dialogues are emphasized.

One of the main characters Halit provides critiques on materialism. In Dialogue 4 and 5, "دولت چاہے جتنی ہو خوشی نہیں خرید سکتا کوئی" (No matter how much wealth is there, no one can buy happiness), Halit points out to the severance of material wealth and emotional satisfaction. His insistent claim acts like a plot device which opposes the capitalistic and patriarchal outlook.

The sub-structural uses of *Yasak Elma* include direct sentences mostly formulated using assertive and emotionally charged words. The textual forms are based on the point of view of the speaker to bind the audience to their respective views on morality or against them.

### Ishq-e-Mamnu (Forbidden Love)

The dynamics of romance, betrayal and societal norms are explored in *Ishq-e-Mamnu* by the characters in the film in emotionally charged and charged up conversation. The word choice and syntax demonstrate strife, remorse and opposition to expectations.

Bihter's character frequently expresses sorrow, conflict, and rebellion. Dialogue 1 “موم نے وہی کیا” (Mom did what she always does. She ruined my beautiful day) expresses familial conflict and emotional loss. Past tense and regretful tone show you how the language helps to express betrayal and the generational barrier.

Dialogue 2 “میں پچیس سال کی ہوں، لوگ پیٹھ پیچھے ہماری برائیاں کرتے ہیں” (I'm 25, and people speak ill of us behind our backs). My age 25 years, men speak badly about us behind our backs This highlight social policing and female stresses.

In Dialogue 3 “مجھے تم سے کچھ نہیں چاہیے، تم مجھے وہ زندگی نہیں دے سکتے ہو” (I want nothing from you. You can't give me the life I need) Bihter refuses to be dependent on material things and the sort of expectations laid on her by society. The open-handed tone discloses opposition and strength.

Dialogue 4 “مجھے تمہارا ساتھ رہنا اچھا لگتا تھا مگر اب میں کوئی ایڈونچر نہیں چاہتی ہوں” (I liked being with you, but now I don't want any adventure) is a statement that balances feelings of the past with the present understanding, which makes a sign of maturity and a loss of innocence. Current and negative forms have extreme agency.

Dialogue 5 “کیا آپ نے ان سے پیسے مانگے” (Did you ask them for money?) a question with references to financial dependence and gender issues. Words are given that bring out the combination of money, pride and love.

Through these conversations, women show their frustration with breakthrough, assertion, self-discovery, and they are frequently against the usual expectations. Language is emotional and is designed to express internal confusion and interpersonal failure.

### **Representations of Women: Similarities and Differences**

The depiction of women in Pakistani and Turkish dramas is similar in the sense that the main characters are powerful women, who struggle with the pressure on them, but they are different when it comes to how the said pressure is framed and solved. The Pakistani drama (=Zindagi Gulzar Hai, Shehr e Zaat) depicts women like Kashaf and Falak as thinking fighters where education, spirituality, and introspection can help to claim their will. The plot of their stories revolves around the way they break through the family and societal pressure not by opposing them, but by being clear on morality and personal improvement. Turkish dramas (Yasak Elma, Ishq e Mamnu), in turn, present us with the story of women, Ender, and Yildiz, and Bihter, who challenge external power relationships money, relationships, social status and instead of being overwhelmed by power of adults succumb to it and take it on. These heroes are more publicly rebellious: they want to get ahead in the world, or receive emotional satisfaction, some of the time by direct bargain, or worse, by blackmail.

The main similarity between the two traditions is that these traditions show women who respond to patriarchal limitations. Kashaf challenges gender expectations of home by competing in a scholarship; Bihter refuses to play the role of being socially expected to be in a continued romance; Yildiz helps herself out of poverty by leaving the safety of socially dictated domestic role. Thus, the expression of women is also the same way to clash but through different means, moral in self-reflection in Pakistan and social rebellion with arms in Turkey.

### **Language and Impact on Young Viewers**

The language spoken by these major characters plays a strong role in the creation of gender equality perceptions in young audiences. The fact that Pakistani dramas reinforce values of resilience, perseverance, and moral strength by the use of such formal, metaphorical, and philosophical diction as use of terms such as *masla* (problem) and *naimat* (blessing) accumulates

the values in the drama. Such language makes young women develop an understanding of empathy and helps them get internalized confidence and self-worth. The purposely slow delivery of the words of struggle and triumph with Kashaf is what attracts the audiences who want to see themselves as the aspiration following those cultural pillars.

Turkish soap operas are, however, more direct and emotional terms and aggressively vocal grammatical construction or words, such as I am going to be definitely rich or wealth does not bring joy that may satisfy the youths because of the access to the real sentimental tantrums and to the self-assertive rants. This kind of communication makes it normal when women are vocal about their ambition, worry, and frustration. Through showing vulnerability and making defiance voiced, it helps the young generations accept emotional honesty in the context within which they are to take a more active approach toward the social mobility.

The difference in language forms between the meditative and restrained in Pakistan and the expressive and direct in Turkey influences the process in which gender roles and aspirations are internalized by the audience. Pakistani youth represented the culture of patience and self-reliance whereas Turkish youth was encouraged to go against social norms and be more vocal.

### **Dominant Discourses and Societal Ideologies**

The Pakistani dramas tend to popularize discourses of spiritual strength, humility and moral purity. Descriptions of women are based on values referring to relationship such as family good name, marital faithfulness and social good. According to the ruling ideology, education, scrupulousness and good moral conscience are the empowering precepts of females. Although women combat the patriarchal expectations, they act in such a manner that supports the conventional ethical principles Kashaf upholding her self-esteem without causing social tensions in the family; Falak accomplishing a transformation of a superficial, vain individual into a spiritual woman.

The Turkish dramas by comparison dedicate discourses of material possession, emotional integrity and individualism. They criticize patriarchal materialism particularly in the line such as the fact that wealth cannot buy happiness but they still enable women characters to realize themselves by means of wealth, romance or manipulation. A powerful ideology follows the implication that autonomy in relations, control over resources and courage to break social norms can help one to become empowered. It is not the moral lever that Bihter refuses to be emotionally chained and Yildiz refuses to be involved in schemes and wants to be redeemed these are cases of individuals exhibiting individualism and social criticism.

Both the sets of dramas criticize patriarchal norms even though the frameworks in which they are developed are different. The Pakistani dramas achieve it internally within conventional structures giving the idea of reformation through moral revival. Turkish serials are critical in an external manner, and they urge women to interrogate, renegotiate, or rebel against repressive social norms. The two discourses therefore share some similarity on the theme of female agency but differ in approach, i.e., a strategy of moral elevation and outright resistance.

### **Implications for Female Empowerment and Advancement**

Real-life gender relations and empowerment within a given society are far-reaching consequences of drama representation forms in both works. At the messages in Pakistan would focus on self-reliance, spiritual grounding and perseverance can empower young women to ensure education, influx to pressure by family and develop emotional heft In Pakistan, the messages discussed self-reliance, spiritual grounding and perseverance would empower young women to pursue education, resist pressure by family and develop heft of emotions In Pakistan,

the messages stressed self-reliance, spiritual grounding and perseverance would enable young women to ensure education, influx to pressure of family and develop emotions heft The story by Kashaf, to give an example, strengthens the notion that a woman can be independent but still have the social respect. The spiritual change brought about to Falak is a positive suggestion of a different measurement of success other than the success in marriage or wealth. Such depictions can motivate the audience to think that they can become stronger by means of intellectual and moral development.

Nonetheless, the focus on the inner moral conflict as the main means of empowerment could be an obstacle in the representation of systematic social change. The changes in the norms are transformed so that women are taught to fit in and fight the system instead of fighting the norms. The presentation of women in active processes of renegotiating social order and challenging taboo relations provides a new example of female empowerment that is based on autonomy, emotional strength, and material agency which is depicted through the Turkish dramas. Normalizing patriarchal and economic hierarchy challenge, these plays give out a message to the young audience that change can be made possible by opposing or negotiating or finding interesting new ways to live in society. The arcs of Bihter and Yildiz can motivate the spectators to challenge the accepted hierarchies and live according to their own will.

Nonetheless, emphasis on the social mobility can also unintentionally leave the moral or ethical factors behind by supporting the belief in the power of wealth and romance as the main empowerment methods. The elements of women pursuing their benefits with the help of social structures exist in the Turkish dramas, and the identification of women restructuring and transforming themselves out of such system exist in Pakistani dramas.

### **Discussion**

When the reflection of the role of women in Pakistani and Turkish television dramas is approached in the light of critical discourse analysis (CDA), it is clear that this follows long patriarchal traditions of gender ideologies. The two groups of plays act as socio-cultural texts in which gender identities are negotiated in the language of characters, the dynamics of plot, and discursive placement. According to a theorization by Van Dijk (1997), and Fairclough (1989, 1995), CDA is used as the framework to define implicit ideologies and power relations that are carried by the use of language in specific ways which in this case pertain to the feminine identity that is constructed in the media. These depictions are not second-hand models of society, but rather direct contributors of the behavioural pattern in the minds of the society and specifically the young audiences regarding equality in gender as well as empowerment of women.

### **Representation of Women in Pakistani and Turkish Dramas**

Pakistani and Turkish series provide a diversified and predominantly contradictory image of the role of a woman, her duties and abilities. The character of female protagonists in Pakistani shows, such as *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* and *Shehr-e-Zaat*, is most often represented as a person, who gets empowered in the form of self-reflection, ethical development, and education. As in the case of *Kashaf*, she has to endure the pangs of emotional and spiritual struggle and finally derive strength through demonstrating her right to receive education and to be independent but within the fringes of the society. Falak develops towards spiritual consciousness in a similar way as she steps out of the world of vanity and superficiality in *Shehr-e-Zaat*. Such showings are reminiscent of what Fairclough (1989) marks as the usage of linguistic disposition in text to reflect social constructions especially how women are supposed to develop in terms of the space allocated to them in terms of their morality and family.

On the other hand, the modern Turkish series like *Yasak Elma* and *Ishq-e-Mamnu* show women as the creatures who are shaped by social and materialistic needs like wealth and status and relations with people and society. These women react to this move either through this external struggle instead of their internal change. This march to monetary freedom, marital relations, or even upward social ladder becomes inseparable as part of the plot line. This follows what Kim (2008) calls a Marxist feminist criticism that believes that the dependent status of women in the economic environment or the exploitation of female ambitions in a capitalist society is commonly conveyed in the news. The two settings have different ideological perceptions: in the former the Pakistani dramas concentrate power in the goodness and humbleness defiance; whereas in the latter the Turkish plays congest power as sentimental purity and confrontation of classes.

Although these differences are culturally established, they indicate various directions in the gender representation. Pakistani dramas tend to be directed by Islamic or traditional values and women reforming themselves along with the norms of the society (as stated by Huda & Ali, 2015; Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018). More individualistic forms of female empowerment are represented through morally compromising decisions in the Arabic world in Turkey, where the culture of gender is an unusually extreme concoction of secularism and tradition (Cankaya, 2013). Although they contain opposite approaches, the two kinds undermine the aspects of patriarchy, yet they contribute to certain stereotypes related to culture and class.

#### **Language Use and Its Impact on Young Viewers**

Media discourse and, more specifically, the discussions presented in dramas do not stay only on the screen. The language used in the media as CDA theorists such as Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (1997) argue is critical in creating ideologies of the society, as well as how people see the world. The Pakistani dramas are characterized by formal language which is metaphorical and reflective. Such terms as *na to be blessed* or, to solve a problem, *masla* (problem), are employed not only in descriptive but in ideological form, registering spiritual and moral signification. This kind of language corresponds to the position of Hall (1997) which assumes that language is a system of culture that allows interpreting meanings. In the case of the Pakistani youth, the focus on inner strength and patience and education can be used to strengthen old value patterns, but also provide positive role models, who become empowered through socially accepted means.

Conversely, the language used in the Turkish dramas is more explicit and openly emotional therefore putting emphasis on individual expression and emotionality. Characters in *Yasak Elma* and *Ishq-e-Mamnu* frequently articulate their desires, ambitions, and frustrations in unfiltered terms “تم مجھے وہ زندگی نہیں دے سکتے ہو” (I will definitely become rich), “میں ضرور امیر بنوں گی” (You can't give me the life I need) signalling autonomy and defiance. This is consistent with the view of Van Dijk (2006) according to which discourse has the potential to be manipulative in reproducing or disrupting power relationships. To young Turkish or even Pakistani audiences who consume Turkish material, the resistance could have become normal, and success may no longer be measured in moral or even family aspects but economically and emotionally liberation. The implication, however, is quite on the two-fold. According to Verta, Nancy, and Leila (2009), the media representations may empower or limit those who watch them especially the young women. Such positive images with women being in charge of things, making their wishes known and challenging societal value-sets may break these old ideas and widen the horizons of perceiving oneself. However, when exposed to negative or stereotypical messages, like women as objects of desire or status symbols, time and time again, then it is possible that this portrays

that women should fit within some particular may be aesthetic or relational skin to be appreciated or to get attention. Thus, the role of language in plays is of two sides; it may be a tool to raise consciousness or a mean of social conditioning.

### **Dominant Discourses and Cultural Ideologies**

Discursive structures on these plays show more macro ideologies and most of these are patriarchal. According to Rasool et al. (2022) and Chaudhry et al. (2021), in Pakistan, most of the content in televisions tends to repeat traditional gender roles in which males are leaders and females are followers. Strong willed or independent female characters are even demonized or accused of high levels of scrutiny. In even the most progressive drama *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*, the independence of Kashaf is contrasted at all times against her need to be accepted by her family and to be satisfied emotionally. This is a concept of Fairclough (2001) regarding interdiscursivity which states the way that most texts alternately take up and transcend conflicts between contradictory discourses, i.e., between modernity and tradition.

Turkish soaps although more liberal in dynamism are not devoid of contradictions of thought. According to Kim (2008), female ambition is represented as materialism, thus, can regenerate both capitalist and patriarchal ideologies, even in cases where it seems anticapitalism and anti-patriarchal at the surface. As an example, even though the fact that Bihter refuses to play traditional roles in love is liberating, her destruction through romantic relationships is subtle reminder that there is too much freedom of woman. This combination of empowerment and punishment is congruent with that of Lazar (2000) who argues that media is prone to depicting women at the same level that they embody triumph and control their conduct.

In addition, the focus of CDA on socio-cultural contexts (Fairclough, 1992) shows that Pakistani dramas express values of Islamic tradition, the honour of the family and the spiritual obligation, however, the Turkish ones express the elements of Western secular styles combined with lingering conservatism. It is the interaction of these ideologies that renders these dramas difficult. As an example, the discussions of Halit regarding the fact that affluence does not ensure a positive experience can be considered a moral criticism within the capitalist settings. In a similar way, the transformation of Falak is a critique of materialism, although in a model of gender spiritually based obligations.

### **Implications for Empowerment and Advancement of Women**

The possibility of these dramas to contribute or interfere with the empowerment of women largely lies in the way female characters are defined with reference to men, society and their will power. As Verta, Nancy & Leila (2009) claim, passivity and rely on the media create stereotypical image of a woman who is submissive, weak and mute. In dramas that follow this bold, inequality is reinforced. According to Ahmed & Wahab (2019) and Huda et al. (2015), women depicted in Pakistani media are often obedient, weak-emotionally, or martyrlike. This restricts the imagination of the people, who are to become aware of what women can be, in a society where media possess great normative power.

However, some dramas such as the *Shehr-e-Zaat* and *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* have also provided us with the account in which the female lead characters achieve empowerment by looking inward and becoming strong. Such depictions can recreate strength not as an act of revolt but intellectual and emotional havingness. The point is made that gender is performative: made up through the actions and speech (Butler 1990). Thus, introducing women who explain that they are not dependent, have a moral control and make conscious decisions can change the attitude of the population in the long-term perspective.

More confrontational models of empowerment are offered by the Turkish drama such as *Yasak Elma* or *Ishq-e-Mamnu*. Women do not only oppose tradition but also manipulation by both emotion and money. The narratives although have risk of glorifying the idea of materialism, they also demonstrate that women are agents of their own choices, and this aspect encourages the idea of empowerment to an audience previously exposed to gender norms that are more rigid. Rehan & Raza (2017) and Farooqui & Khan (2020) recognize the cultural impact of Turkish dramas in Pakistan on people as a process of complex negotiation of values where the local audience incorporates and re-processes foreign media products through their culture.

Nevertheless, empowerment of women becomes relative when they are considered to be powerful based on the only tested factor of beauty, wealth, or romantic success as warned by Kim (2008) and Fredrickson (1997). Structural change must be real and not merely that of representation. How the women are represented and what they can desire and accomplish must change. Marxist feminist perspective in telling us that as long as economic and ideological foundation of patriarchy is not confronted media could not provide any more than token empowerment.

### Conclusion

The overshadowing discourses and ideologies of representation of women in Pakistani and Turkish dramas are directly related to the overall cultural norms and values. The expectations on gender roles and perceptions on how a woman is represented through these norms and values influence the kind of perception as well as the perceptions of the woman in the two societies. Kim (2008) believes that Marxism feminism theory is one of the critical theories of understanding the issues between gender, class, and media. She argues the media has been operating to preserve the class distinctions because it re reproduces and disseminates the ideologies of dominance to the advantage of the ruling classes. She posits that the proposed gender and class issues of media tend to enforce stereotypes and status quo. As an example, Kim adds that women are usually depicted as passive, submissive and dependent on men whereas men are mostly portrayed as active, superior, and independent. Kim suggests that these images are used to perpetuate gender inequality and ensure that things stay the way they are.

These representations may be critically analyzed in order to determine how they facilitate or burst gender inequalities and power relations across the two societies. Pakistani as well as Turkish dramas could affect the growth and empowerment of women in these communities greatly through the means of the portrayal of those women in dramas. On the one hand, such portrayal of women as passive and submissive in the Pakistani dramas help to support traditional gender roles and the viewpoint that women must depend on men as their protectors and providers. This may restrict women with regard to empowerment or promotion as they can be discouraged to obtain education or enter professional careers. Also, when women are shown as victims of abuse or repression it might further stigmatize them and prevent them to protest injustice. Conversely, the fact that the female gender is presented as strong and independent in Turkish drama series can break the traditional gender roles and promote female empowerment and development. These kinds of depictions can act as role models to young ladies that encourage them to go to school and work and break the negative stereotypes around them.

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