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Ingroup, Outgroup Relations with Indians in Australia

By Indira S. Somani

A cohort of Indians in Australia (10 couples who migrated to Australia from India between 1990 to 2000) identified with the Indian programming on Australian television. Their onscreen media exposure was mainly a result of watching characters, who looked like them and reinforced their Indian culture and identity. These were favorable ingroup portrayals of themselves (Mastro, 2010). These Indians were also active media users, who used television to help them socially identify with an ingroup, because they could not identify with their surrounding culture in Australia. As a result, this cohort was not interested in being marginalized, but maintaining their cultural identity.

Introduction

The social relationships developed by people of different cultures have been influenced by their group identification (Neuliep, 2009). The nature of group membership, group behavior and group communication has differed across cultures (Neuliep, 2009). Many use media, such as television, to stay connected to their homeland and define their group membership (Yang, *et al.*, 2004).

Australia is a country of many different cultures like the U.S. Despite Australia's efforts to embrace multiculturalism, a cohort of Indians has resorted to Indian programming imported via the satellite dish to reaffirm their identity. These Indians have watched Indian television and have been critical of the Indian programs. This study used social identity theory, specifically the concepts of ingroup/outgroup communication, to understand how Indian programming reinforced their ethnic identity or created ethnic identities these individuals did not find relatable.

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Literature Review

Australia is a country whose government chooses to support the development of ethnic media using the integrationist model (Matsaganis, *et al.*, 2011). By following this model the country's government believes that it will encourage the integration of minorities into mainstream society (Matsaganis, *et. al.*, 2011). The first community radio stations in Australia went on the air in 1975, and some of these stations broadcast programs in non-indigenous foreign languages (Matsaganis, *et. al.*, 2011). After that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) created new stations targeting underserved indigenous and immigrant communities. Until then, ABC had shown no interest in community radio (Matsaganis, *et. al.*, 2011). That same year, another community radio station in Melbourne broadcast programs for and by some of the city's many ethnic and cultural communities, e.g., of Chinese, Greek, Cypriot and Italian-origin (Browne, 2005). Parliament supported the new radio services as it realized that the Australian population was becoming increasingly diverse, and the new service was a useful way to get information to non-English speakers (Matsaganis, *et. al.*, 2011).

In 1978, the Galbally Report was released recommending ethnic television. As a result, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) television was formed. Once SBS was formed, this put pressure on Australia's commercial broadcasting sector to increase cultural diversity with its television programming.

Australia's Multicultural Project

In 1989 the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia was released and received bipartisan support throughout the Labor Party's term (May, 2003). In 1996 the Liberal Party reaffirmed its commitment to multiculturalism, despite the change in government (May, 2003). The Agenda is concerned with the social well-

being, education and economic security, while it tries to increase the multicultural citizenship of Australia (May, 2003). The Agenda has been the driver for cultural diversity in Australia. In the late 1990s, the Australian Broadcasting Authority commissioned the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to include questions about media use by newly arrived immigrants (May, 2003). With a sample size of over 5000 immigrants, the survey found that commercial television was the most frequently used media by respondents. Asian and Middle Eastern migrants watched television more often than European immigrants. In the survey, 30% of ethnic groups felt commercial television did not accurately reflect them, while 37% of ethnic groups felt their portrayal on television was accurate. The remaining 33% was undecided (ABA, 2000, p. 13-15).

However despite these findings, the content analyses of the television drama programs from researchers in the 1990s (Goodall, *et al.*, 1990; Bell, 1993; Nugent, *et al.*, 1993) found few instances of actors from culturally diverse backgrounds or multicultural themes in the stories (May, 2003). The book, *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media* (Jakubowicz, *et al.*, 1994), is about Australia's cultural diversity in print and broadcast media, news, advertising, the SBS and children's television over a four-year period (1990-1994). The authors of this book argued that mainstream Australian media was essentially discriminatory and Anglocentric.

Furthermore, since about 1960, Australia's media and culture has been influenced by both American and British popular culture (Craig, 2004). For example, since Australia has a smaller audience base, it is unable to compete with the high-quality production values of U.S. television programs (McPhail, 2006). As a result, Australia imports U.S. feature films and television programs for its audiences to fill the broadcast time slots and maximize their revenues (McPhail, 2006). In addition, the domestic productions from Australia increasingly look like U.S. programming (McPhail, 2006). There are cultural differences when other countries tend to produce adaptations of programs based on U.S. models (McPhail, 2006). The most significant difference is the way in which other countries view culture, i.e. from a non-economic perspective (McPhail, 2006). "For them, films, DVDs, radio, music, CDs and other media products are

an expression of their historical roots, current culture and future destiny" (McPhail, 2006, p. 126).

Australia now has two public broadcasters, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service, as well as a number of commercial television networks (Wang, 2010). Newspapers have a high circulation rate throughout the country, such as *The Australian and Australian Financial Review*, two of Australia's major national daily newspapers (Wang, 2010).

Indian Television

In India, television arrived in 1959, and even at that time it was only in a few selected homes (Ray & Jacka, 1996). It began broadcasting with a single channel called Doordarshan, and the weekly programs transmitted over a 10-kilometer radius. Doordarshan is the state-owned and operated channel, which began on September 15, 1959 (Kapoor, *et al.*, 1991).

Over the years as programming developed for Doordarshan, the channel enlisted independent actors, producers, directors and technicians to produce programming, which led to four extremely popular soap operas, "Hum Log," "Buniyad," "Ramayan" and "Mahabharat." These soap operas changed programming dramatically on Doordarshan. These mythological epics that became serials on television "perpetuated the traditional and submissive woman's role and consistently had high viewership and commanded the highest of advertising revenues" (Karan, 2008, p. 97).

"Hum Log," began in 1984 and was the longest running soap opera on Doordarshan TV. "Hum Log" means "We the People," and was part educational and part entertainment. The story of "Hum Log" centered around the everyday activities of a North Indian extended family. Each episode focused on the conflicts and tensions in relationships between the parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, and siblings and cousins. "Hum Log" was also centered around the cultural tensions of tradition and modernity in everyday life in India (Kumar, 2006).

From 1986 to 1987 the soap opera called "Buniyad" aired, which focused on the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. By

1987 "Ramayan," a Hindu epic, was broadcast, which evoked outstanding emotional response from audiences around the country. The "Mahabharat," another Hindu epic, was first broadcast between 1989 and 1990 and outscored the astronomical figures attained by "Ramayan." "The mythological epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata and the historical tales talk[ed] about the virtues of the ideal woman devoted to her husband, who would toil tirelessly for the household, attend[ed] to the needs of the family, and at some point in time, even depart[ed] from the world sitting on the funeral pyre of the husband" (Karan, 2008, p. 97).

As more families owned televisions, commercial television services began to emerge in 1976 (Kapoor, *et al.*, 1991). By 1988 there were 220 television transmitters across India, which led to more programming (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). By 1991 STAR TV (Satellite Television Asian Region) was available in India through the DTH (direct to home) platform for private satellite television use. In contrast to Doordarshan, STAR offered programming, which included American soaps operas like "Dynasty" and "The Bold and the Beautiful" (Kumar, 2006). STAR also became popular among the affluent sections of the English speaking Indian population (Kumar, 2006). Between 1995 and 2007, India experienced the rise of more than 300 satellite networks. More than 50 of these were 24-hour satellite news channels, broadcasting news in 11 different languages (Mehta, 2008).

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel (1978) defines social identity theory when one defines oneself based on group membership and the emotional attachments associated with that membership.

Social identity develops as a process where people not only self-categorize themselves, but the people around them as well (Luther, *et al.*, 2012). One way individuals make groups meaningful is by identifying with a group, because they see themselves as members of that group, i.e. they see the group as a meaningful part of who they are (Giles, *et al.*, 2010). This is called an ingroup, a group individuals think they belong to, and

outgroups are groups individuals do not think they belong to (Giles, *et al.*, 2010).

Social identity theory also says individuals identify with groups because they view those groups positively (Tajfel, 1978). "People are motivated and desire to maintain a positive social identity, and their perceptions and relationships with members of their ingroups and outgroups are shaped by this desire" (Giles, *et al.*, 2010, p. 5). Ingroups also have a level of social status in society, and individuals also derive their social identity based on the status of an ingroup (Giles, *et al.*, 2010). Therefore when individuals make comparisons about belonging to certain ingroups and not belonging to certain outgroups, they make these comparisons based on what makes them feel good (Tajfel, 1978).

Ethnicity can also communicate one's specific social identity (Verkuyten, 2010). For example, individuals negotiate their ethnic identities in relation to ingroup members by using language and cultural practices (Verkuyten, 2010). Language often defines ethnic group membership and ethnic interests (Verkuyten, 2010). Herbert Gans (1979) coined the term symbolic ethnicity, which means the process of acculturation and assimilation among the descendants of immigrants to renew their interest in their ethnic identity. These descendants of immigrants felt nostalgic to their ethnic culture, i.e. ethnic consumer goods, festivals, holidays and ethnic media (Verkuyten, 2010). As a result, ethnic identity is fundamentally shaped by social interaction, cultural practice and communication with members of the ingroup that belongs to the respective ethnicity (Verkuyten, 2010).

Mass communication can play a part in reinforcing identities, if individuals are exposed to information related to their identities (Luther *et al.*, 2012). Individuals use media, such as television, to manage their group identity needs (Mastro, 2010). Depending on the state of being of a particular group, media that reaffirms their identity, can be considered positive social identity and maintaining self-esteem (Mastro, 2010). Group identification impacts on viewers' television choices. Programs that positively feature ingroup characters are preferred by audience members who want to increase their group identification (Harwood, 1999a,b). The process is reciprocal when individuals

choose programs that depict ingroup characters reinforcing their group identification (Harwood, 1999a). Since group identification is a driving force in the selection of television programming, consumers prefer characters that are similar to themselves (Mastro, 2010).

For many racial and ethnic minorities, it can be challenging to find favorable ingroup portrayals (Mastro, 2010). As a result, racial and ethnic minorities' identity needs are managed through the selection and avoidance of media messages (Abrams & Giles, 2007; Mastro, 2010). When television programs are selected to meet group identity needs, the group's vitality is enhanced. But particular programs that do not preserve the group's identity are considered programs that diminish the vitality of the group (Mastro, 2010). Racial and ethnic minority audience members see negative depictions of their groups in traditional, mainstream media as damaging to the group's identity (Mastro, 2010). For majority group members, negative images of oppressed groups can produce stereotypical judgments of outgroup members (Mastro, 2010).

The cohort of Indians in this study developed their television watching habits and was exposed to television in India before they moved to Australia. In Australia, Indian television functioned as a tool to help them identify with their homeland as well as their cross-cultural adaptation process with their new host country. Even though these Indians watch Indian television, they were still critical of the Indian programs as it affected their social identity.

Participants and Methods

The author conducted in-depth interviews with Indians, who migrated to Australia from India between 1990-2000. All the interviewees were asked the same 47 questions, conducted between July 9 to 19, 2009 in Melbourne. The questions covered their life in Australia, when they first moved to the country, followed by a series of media-related questions. Participants were identified through a contact with the SAJA-Australia, the South Asian Journalists Association of Australia. After the SAJA-NY sent my query via email through the main listserve, members of

SAJA-Australia responded to my request, as well as members of SAJA in the U.S., who knew people in Australia that fit this particular demographic.

By conducting in-depth interviews from the same area in Australia, the author gained access to a cohort of individuals who had the same experience in one area of the country. Ten couples were selected for this study through snowball sampling. Each interview was conducted in the home of the couples, usually in the dining room, at a time that was convenient for them. By conducting the interviews in their homes, the researcher was able to observe the Indian culture established in each participants' home. For example, some participants had Indian artifacts on display, cooked Indian food at home, wore Indian clothes, etc. By becoming familiar with the interviewees' home-setting, the researcher was allowed "to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as the participants do" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 106).

All of the interviews were conducted in English. Each audio-taped interview lasted 45, 60 or 90 minutes. Each person was interviewed separately, meaning no husband and wife were interviewed together. The highest educational degree within this cohort was a Ph.D./MD, two had MBA's, nine had their master's degree, and the remaining eight all had bachelor's degree. All of the participants were of the Hindu religion, and they spoke a combination of Punjabi, Hindi and English at home. However, one couple occasionally spoke Marathi. The average age of participants was 47.

Eight couples had a family income from Australian $100,000 to $200,000 per year. One couple earned well over $200,000 per year. The other couple earned from $50,000 to $100,000 per year. Almost all of the participants were still gainfully employed. One person was retired, but the others had the following jobs: a management consultant (1), doctor (1), high school teacher (1), customer service representative (1), store manager (1), real estate agent (1), engineer (1) and child-care provider (1), government employees (2), IT consultants (5) and store owners of Dunkin Donuts (2). One couple included a board member for one of Australia's famous retail chains and his spouse was a housewife.

Four couples had adult children; the remaining six couples had younger children.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), in-depth interviews can be a methodological tool for exploring the experience and perspective of the participants. In 20 in-depth interviews conducted, the researcher discovered patterns in the participants' answers that appeared to be themes for analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this study, face-to-face interviews, the dominant interview technique in qualitative research, holds several advantages such as "increased access to participants, lack of noise disturbance and distraction, flexibility for both interviewer and interviewee" to respond to each other to develop a conversation (Rosas-Moreno, 2011, p. 51; Opdenakker, 2006; Bampton & Cowton, 2002).

While 20 in-depth interviews may not seem like enough for a study, small sample sizes have been recommended "to extract subjectivity from the qualitative approach and increase trustworthiness of findings" (Rosas-Moreno, 2011, p. 51; D'Angelo, 2010). Dodson (2010) said that rich data could be derived from as few as four sources. For example, Rosas-Moreno (2011) conducted seven complete in-depth interviews through email with Brazilian journalist respondents selected through a purposive snowball sampling technique and gathered answers for discursive analysis.

The interviews were divided in several parts. "Early Stages" included questions that focused on what kind of media these participants were exposed to when they first migrated to Australia. "Coming to Australia" included questions about any involvement with the Indian community when they first came to Australia. "Renting Hindi Movies in Australia" included questions about why they first started renting movies when the VCR was available. "Indian Television" included questions that focused on why they watched Indian programs via the satellite dish. "Images on Indian Television" included questions about maintaining a cultural connection to India. The participants were then asked about the kinds of "images of India [they had seen] on Australian television," their "Connection to Culture" and how satellite television played a role in that.

The most important questions came from the sections called "Indian Television" and "Connection to Culture." Sample questions include: "what do you think attracts you to this type of Indian programming, especially after living in this country so long?" "Do you feel a greater connection to India by watching these programs, why or why not?" "How does watching Indian television influence your cultural practices?" "How important is it for you to maintain a connection to your culture?" "What kind of improvement is needed with Indian television programs?" In this study of Indians in Australia, the participants were from a higher socio-economic background. Therefore, those who were interviewed were in a unique position for these research inquiries, because they could afford Indian programming via satellite TV (Maquire, 2008). Each participant was also given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

Results and Discussion

Between 1990 and 2000, this cohort of Indians moved to Australia, mostly Melbourne at first, for better career opportunities. They were all married and came with their spouses, or their spouses and families joined them later. They had developed a habit of watching television in India, but once they arrived in Australia, they watched Australian television. Eventually Indian programs became available on the satellite dish, and they changed their television viewing habits to watching Indian programs. The following section describes some of the reasons why these participants watched Indian television, and why it made them feel or did not make them feel connected to their Indian identity.

Ingroup Identity

Ingroup identity is defined by a group of individuals who think they belong to a specific group, because they see themselves positively as members of that group (Tajfel, 1978). In this study, the participants identified with specific aspects of Indian television, because it made them feel good, such as the language spoken in the programs, the real-time news, which made visits to

India easier, the talent among people from less fortunate circumstances and the family values developed in the drama programs.

Language. Priya Jain, a 70-year-old federal government worker, who migrated to Australia in 1994, said:

> The language is an attraction and there is music and dance. There is some level of color, you know color, and it is more in your face. We are used to be[ing] Indian [and] have everything in your face, so it is more that. Whereas Australian drama means that you have to be an integral part of that culture to really enjoy it.

In this quote Jain described how listening to Indian language, music and dance made her feel as though she was part of an ingroup with her social identity. Verkuyten (2010) depicted how individuals use language and cultural practices to negotiate their ethnic identity. In this example, Jain identified with her native language that airs on Indian television programs, which in turn reinforced her Indian identity. Furthermore, Jain explained how she felt she needed to be an "integral" part of the Australian culture to identify with its television programs.

Other participants felt a sense of nostalgia when they watched Indian programs. As noted earlier, Gans (1979) described symbolic ethnicity as a way for immigrants to renew their ethnic identity. Manish Haleja, a 53-year-old real estate broker with a degree in engineering, said:

> I think looking at Indian television just gives you a lot of sense of belief that yes, you are part of India it does come back in your mind that you are not, even though you are away from India.

Asha Bajaj, a 33-year-old IT consultant, said "Because we grew up watching you know Hindi or you know the Hindi or Punjabi programs, Hindi mainly, so I think that is what it is, it just brings back memory." In these examples, both Haleja and Bajaj felt nostalgic for their ethnic culture (Verkuyten, 2010). By watching Indian television, they witnessed their culture and

native language, which reminded them of their ingroup, or Indian ethnic identity.

Latest News. By watching the Indian news, these participants depicted ingroup characters or stories about Indian people in India that reinforced their group identification. The news also gave them a chance to witness the changes taking place in the country, so the participants could stay current on how India was developing. Priti Sharma, a 39-year-old high school teacher, said, "NDTV, that's a good channel where they show news all day 24/7, so yeah you know what's happening in India." Dharini Soni, a 40-year-old homemaker with an MBA, said:

> NDTV, at least portrays the way things are, the way things are happening you know. From this Australian news, you only hear when something big happens [in India] or something out of the way happens, where as NDTV is telling you day to day, so that is good.

In these examples, Soni and Sharma enjoyed watching Indian television because it served multiple purposes. By watching NDTV, New Delhi Television, regularly, Soni and Sharma stayed informed as to what was happening in India on a day-to-day basis. By watching NDTV, Soni and Sharma also managed group identity needs (Mastro, 2010). In this case, Indian programming featured Indian characters or ingroup members of a specific ethnicity. As a result, watching Indian television reinforced Soni and Sharma's own Indian ethnic identities, because they preferred watching characters similar to themselves (Mastro, 2010). But these individuals actively selected Indian news over Australian news because by staying connected to their homeland this reinforced their social identity.

Family Values. Some of the family-oriented programs allowed these Indian participants to comfortably watch programs with their children. By watching these Indian programs, these individuals were exposed to information related to their identities (Luther *et al.*, 2012). Soni said, "We do watch the dance

and music ones. Yeah, so when the Indian idol starts, because we just, I think we are a family, we all like music and dance." Sharma said, "Amber Dhara, that was a lovely show. It actually talked about family values, how parents gave values to kids and that kind of stuff, and that I encouraged my daughter to watch as well."

Both Soni and Sharma selected programs that preserved their Indian identity and reinforced their group identification with their children. In this case, group identification motivated their selection of Indian television programs. These two mothers were not just interested in watching Indian television, but they wanted to watch programs that had a positive depiction of the group's identity, or a positive message that could enhance the self-esteem of their children.

Some of the family-oriented programs showcased the latest talent in India. Rakhi Banerjee, a 36-year-old computer consultant, said:

> I love to see the talent in India and the way it's been brought up which is really good for some of the people, who are not very well educated, who are not very wealthy enough to bring themselves to that level [higher socio-economic level].

This example was another way a specific Indian television program reinforced group identification. Banerjee chose to watch an Indian talent show that focused on contestants of a lower class. As India is a developing country, this participant was used to seeing lower-class individuals in the country. The contestants were given an opportunity to participate in a talent show where their own talent could change their socio-economic circumstances. Watching this program made Banerjee feel positive about her social identity, not just because she was watching people of her ethnic background, but because she was watching lower-class individuals having an opportunity to change their socio-economic circumstances. Banerjee felt positive about her social identity and her ingroup identification, because she saw a positive impact among other members of her ingroup.

Outgroup Identity

Outgroup identity is when individuals do not think they belong to that group. As people are motivated to maintain a positive social identity, outgroups often refer to groups that do not maintain the individuals, self-esteem or social identity (Tajfel, 1978).

Women in a Derogatory Manner. In this study, many of the participants talked about how the images of women in the serials were not portrayed in a positive manner. Mrs. Soni said:

> [A] lot of the soaps they would show, like I said about, women being just ordered around and being ill-treated. If it is going to show any of that I would just get it put off, or I would just turn I rather not watch anything than watch that like I just sit and listen to music.

In this example, Soni could not relate to the female characters on the screen. The way the women were treated in the serial did not reinforce her ethnic identity. In India, the woman or the mother occupies the central position of decision-making in the family and community. However, this does not imply that women dominate their male counter-parts in the family household. Since this program did not positively feature Indian women and did not reinforce Soni's group identification, she preferred to turn the television off and listen to music. As a result, this Indian's identity needs were managed through the avoidance of media messages (Abrams & Giles, 2007; Mastro, 2010). Mrs. Bajaj said:

> They either get a bad daughter-in-law or mother-in-law or a bad relative and I just feel it is not important for a story line to have one of those. So and, you know, sometimes it is a good serial, you got a good mother-in-law and a good daughter-in-law, but suddenly something happens and the mother-in-law flips around and there is no communication in these soaps. And you just feel they are ridiculous, and I think these are the things they got to improve on.

Ravi Banerjee, a 43-year-old IT consultant with a master's degree, said:

> The women are not portrayed in the right manner there. It is not realistic, it is very artificial whatever they show on that, so either they show women are totally downtrodden or women are totally, you know, devilish.

In both of these examples, Bajaj and Banerjee did not relate to the female characters on the screen. Bajaj referred to two female characters, the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law portrayed negatively in a serial. By describing the interaction that took place on screen between these two characters the serial perpetuated the stereotype that women cannot get along. Banerjee described how women were oppressed and then exemplified evil behavior. As a consumer she preferred to watch characters similar to how she viewed women in India (Mastro, 2010). But the negative depiction of women on screen did not perpetuate her group identity. Both of these participants discussed how the programs did not preserve their group identity, because the media messages did not reinforce their group identity, creating an outgroup.

Clothes. Many immigrants have felt nostalgic for their ethnic culture. For example, these Indians have longed to see on television the consumer goods that remind them of India, such as food, clothes, festivals and more (Verkuyten, 2010). But when Indian characters were portrayed in a manner that was not reinforcing their ethnic identity, they felt as though they did not belong to that group. Mrs. Jain said:

> The new news readers are never in the salwar-kameez, they are never in the sari, they are always in western clothes and some of them are horrendous. In fact they should not be in western clothes at all, because their bodies are not cut off for western clothes. And they are still wearing western clothes, they have no idea, they still wearing, awkward western clothes.

Jain identified with Indian women wearing specific Indian clothes such as a salwar-kameez (long top, usually to the knees with matching tight pants and a long scarf wrapped around the neck and shoulders), or a sari (six yards of cloth wrapped in a certain way with a blouse piece). She did not identify with Indian women in western clothes, and she said the Indian anchors looked awkward in western clothes. In this example, the ethnic identity of this Indian was not reinforced by what the Indian anchor was wearing on set. As a result, this audience member felt she did not belong to that group, because her ethnic culture was not reinforced on screen. Mrs. Bajaj said:

> When we go to Delhi and sometimes I ask my cousins and family, I tell them that okay, do you actually see people like these [women in westernized clothes in the serials]. I mean I have got to see people, got to see girls, who were actually wearing this [westernized clothes], because I mean it is so common. Like even a normal actress in a Hindi film does not actually, you know [wear those kind of clothes]. It is all pretty westernized.

Bajaj did not believe that women in Delhi dressed in westernized attire as they were depicted on television. She also said she never saw a Hindi film actress in westernized attire. Bajaj watched Indian television, because it positively featured ingroup characters. But in this example, she could not identify with the Indian women on screen because of the attire worn by the female characters. As a result, she did not think she belonged to that group.

Mrs. Banerjee said, "So much of exposure of bodies by the females was never there before, like when we were children and we used to watch the Hindi movies we never saw this, the heroines were really decently dressed." Banerjee felt nostalgic for the ethnic culture from her childhood. She remembered Indian women wearing clothes that were not revealing their body parts. In this example, Banerjee's ethnic identity was not reinforced by what she saw the Indian women were wearing on the television screen. She saw characters on the television screen that were different to her vision of an Indian woman and did not think she belonged to that group.

Extramarital Affairs. Extramarital affairs were seen as western behavior by this cohort. When participants saw this kind of behavior on television they thought it negatively portrayed their ethnic identity. Yatish Joshi, a 46-year-old engineer, said:

> I think across the whole range of family soap operas, extramarital affairs are being shown as an accepted norm and like nothing wrong with that. Now that is I think a clearly pro-western trend, things like that and everybody accepts that somehow. You know in the framework of the soap operas nobody raises an eyebrow when these things are shown. I think they have really changed now in television. In the Doordarshan days it was a big "no," nobody would mention or even, you know show it on TV.

Joshi saw a negative depiction of his ethnic group in the Indian mainstream media and thought it was damaging to the group's identity. Joshi believed portraying extramarital affairs among Indians did not actively represent his ethnic group. Joshi thought the act of having an extramarital affair belonged to another culture, the Western culture. Joshi was also nostalgic for Doordarshan's programming, India's state-owned and operated channel that featured traditional Indian culture. Joshi thought Doordarshan would never show an extramarital affair. He believed Doordarshan reinforced his ethnic identity, while the current Indian serials created characters of an outgroup.

Pitamber Sharma, a 43-year-old government worker, said:

> When you see in the serials when they specially show that married couple is having extramarital affairs and that is something which really bothers me for that is not how we have grown and that is the way the Indian society is actually turning to be in reality as well for I was shocked to see what they show on the TV is actually going in the real life of so many people. So that is really shocking and I quite don't advocate them showing such things on the TV, because that is what people see as their role models and that is what people want to do in real life.

Sharma also did not agree with extramarital affairs portrayed among Indians on Indian television. But Sharma did not think it was unrealistic to show that this type of behavior existed in Indian culture. Sharma just did not want extramarital affairs shown on Indian programs, because it did not reinforce his ethnic identity. He wanted programs that positively featured his ethnic group, so other members of his group could view the characters as role models.

Nostalgia. Indians also watched Indian television because they felt nostalgic for their ethnic culture. But at least one participant in this study articulated specific television programs he identified with that aired on Doordarshan before they migrated to Australia. Mr. Sharma said:

> There were some nice serials, which were directed and everybody would be glued to the TV. And few of them I can name: 'Buniyad', was one of them, 'Mahabharat' was another, and 'Ramayan' was another one. So no matter how or what you were doing you would postpone it for another, later moment, to be able to watch those serials. But it is just that the quality of the serials which have been produced now do not have that sort of magnetism so that you are really attracted into watching it.

Sharma migrated to Australia in 1993, but before he arrived he watched three famous serials, "Buniyad, Ramayan, and Mahabharat" in India. "Buniyad" was about the 1947 partition between India and Pakistan. The "Ramayan" and "Mahabharat" were both mythological epics. Sharma's group identification was reinforced with those programs, because these serials came from the Hindu religion. He could identify with those serials because of his own religious and cultural background. However, Sharma did not identify with the serials that were produced now. The current serials did not feature ingroup characteristics in the same way as the serials he watched in India. Sharma described how he was not attracted to watching current serials on Indian television because they did not preserve the group's identity.

"Saas-Bahu" (Mother-in-Law vs. Daughter-in-Law). Group identification motivated many individuals to choose specific television programs, because consumers preferred characters similar to themselves (Mastro, 2010). However, some of the Indian serials showed scenes of Indian families that did not enhance their group vitality. Mona Haleja, a 51-year-old store manager, said:

> I remember when I was a child we use to watch all these programs on art and craft or some, you know, but now this is all family serials full of fights. And I do not enjoy that at all and they leave some impact on your mind. That is what I tell mom-in-law not to watch too much of serials, because in every serial there is fighting between you know devrani, jethani or mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, this that. They leave some impact on you, though we are mature enough not to get into that at that stage.

Mrs. Soni also saw negative depictions of her ingroup:

> The whole 'Saas Bahu' [mother-in-law vs. daughter-in-law] that went on for so long. It happened, but some of it, a lot of it, was just over the top like it doesn't happen in reality, and they don't need to show. I would get frustrated with, you know, and women were shown either, they were shown that they would shut up, you know, they would let people walk all over them.

Mrs. Sharma also got tired of seeing how women were portrayed in the family scenes:

> I used to watch those TV soaps, you know, and I found I was very disillusioned with them, you know, the same old mother-in-law, daughter-in-law. There had to be someone in the house, who was the baddie [bad person] and all that stuff, and it was very disgusting.

Haleja, Soni and Sharma were disenchanted by what they saw with the Indian serials. Many of the participants in this study came from extended families in India, also known as the joint-family system. In this structure, the sons lived with their parents, even after marriage. Therefore, all the sons, daughter-in-laws and their children lived with the parents of the sons. In this structure, the mother-in-law was the primary decision-maker in the family. However, the Indian serials watched by these Indians thought the negative relationships portrayed between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law damaged the group's identity. Soni said, "It happened, but some of it, a lot of it, was just over the top like it doesn't happen in reality." By this, she meant that it was not unusual to experience tension between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in a joint family structure. However, the serials seemed to exaggerate the negative relationship between these characters. As a result, these negative images produced stereotypical judgments, such as the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law did not get along in the joint family structure. The Indians in this study could not relate to the depiction of family tension between characters on screen.

Conclusion

This cohort of Indians in Australia started watching television in India before they migrated to Australia. Once they moved to Australia they eventually started watching Indian television via the satellite dish.

This cohort of Indians could identify with the Indian programming on television. These early images came from Doordarshan, the state-owned and operated channel. For this cohort, their onscreen media exposure was mainly a result of watching characters that looked like them and reinforced Indian culture. These were favorable ingroup portrayals of themselves (Mastro, 2010).

Social identity theory helped people identify with the groups they felt they belong to, to view themselves positively (Mastro, 2010). For these Indians watching television that enhanced their identity made them feel good about themselves. When individuals feel good about the groups they belonged to, it provides them with self-esteem.

These Indians were also active media users. They actively used television to help them socially identify with an ingroup, because they could not identify with their surrounding culture, Australia.

The contribution of this research brings greater understanding to the process of adaptation. By trying to exist in a new society, these Indians watched Indian programming to reinforce their own cultural identity. This cohort was not interested in being marginalized, but maintaining their cultural identity. Television became a tool in their cross-cultural adaptation process to Australia.

Importance of the Study

This study is important because Australia is a younger country than the U.S. The information from this study tells us that despite what efforts have been made to improve minority representation on mainstream television, one specific generation of Indians still watch television imported from their homeland. Furthermore, this generation is hyper-critical of what they see in Indian television. Therefore future generations would equally feel disconnected to both the mainstream media of their new host country as well as the media from their home country, putting their own cultural identity into question.

However, the diverse portrayal of groups allows researchers to learn more about group variability (Harwood & Anderson, 2001; Hewstone & Hamberger, 2000). The way ethnic identity is portrayed on television can vary for ingroup members (Harwood & Roy, 2005). Entertainment remains the most common reason for media use. The influence of media messages on group membership provides a foundation to examine such issues in future media environments.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations revolved around the specific cohort used in the study. One may argue that 10 couples were too small a sample size. But as noted in the methodology section, rich data was extracted from this cohort. This cohort also migrated to

Australia between 1990-2000 and had already watched television in India before arriving in Australia. Therefore, it cannot be generalized that other Indians who migrated to Australia during the 1960s had the same experience. Those Indians would not have been exposed to television prior to arriving in Australia and would therefore have a different view of the role of television with their social identity.

This cohort is from a particular part of Australia, the Melbourne area. These participants were all willing to do the study. Using the snowball sampling method and referral system, 10 couples who were willing to talk for an hour or hour and half about their television viewing habits were selected. Because random sampling was not used, the author did not encounter any couples unwilling to do the interview in their home. In addition, the participants came from a specific socio-economic background that ranged from $50,000 to more than $200,000 Australian dollars per year. As a result, this annual income allowed these participants to afford a satellite dish and a wide variety of programming. Therefore this study may not be applicable to Indians of a lower socio-economic background.

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