Abstract

This dissertation examines the presence or absence of a 'shift' in female characters of Pakistani dramas. From the golden age of PTV to the era of private channels, female characters are said to have transformed from strong survivors to meek victims. By defining terms such as strong and weak female characters, I have established the basis of judging this shift. Moreover, by looking at cultural factors, political and social environments and commercial viability, I have explored some of the possible reasons for this 'shift'. Our media is often criticized for its portrayal of women in current dramas and that is where the significance of this research lies. The research has been carried out through two major research strategies, 1. Qualitative analysis of the opinions of the people involved in the industry; 2. Analysis of the female characters of a drama from 1985 and a drama from 2011. A small part of primary research is also conversations conducted on blogs. In order to understand the shift in its greater context, case studies of similar instances in countries that share social or political histories with Pakistan are also considered. This dissertation challenges the strength of characters in old dramas and the stereotypes present in the new ones while simultaneously looking at positive points in both.