

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN TAMIL TV SERIALS
A STUDY OF ITS RESONANCE ON WOMEN VIEWERS IN NORTH TAMILNADU

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CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This section deals with the major findings of the Survey and In-depth Interviews. The findings were attained from Percentile Analysis, Kendall's Tau b Analysis, Factor Analysis and ANOVA.

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Economic Status of Women

This factor dealt with whether women were shown as ‘owning wealth’ and economically independent or whether they were ‘dependent on male members of the family’.

5.1.1a Owning Wealth

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. It was found that 61% of urban viewers and 66% of rural viewers opined that women were shown as owning wealth.
2. It was found that 66% of Homemakers and 64% working women felt women were shown as owning wealth.
3. Light viewers (63%), medium viewers (64%) and high viewers (72%) opined that Tamil TV serials showed women as owning wealth.
4. The overall opinion of women viewers on the portrayal of women owning wealth in Tamil TV serials was above average (64%) response.

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that the resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 33%.
2. The interview results showed very low level of resonance.
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but not statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘owning wealth’ contributed towards below average resonance among women viewers.
4. The overall resonance was below average in the portrayal of women shown as ‘owning wealth’ among women viewers.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance among urban and rural women viewers in the portrayal of women ‘owning wealth’.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between the Occupational groups and Types of viewers.

5.1.1b Dependent for Money on Male Members of the Family

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. It was found that 52% of urban viewers and 42% of rural viewers felt women were shown as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’.
2. Homemakers (51%) and working women (43%) felt women were shown as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’.
3. Light viewers (44%), medium viewers (50%) and high viewers (49%) opined that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ in Tamil TV serials was average (47%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 33%.
2. The interview results revealed that there was average resonance among women viewers.
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but not statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ contributed towards the average level resonance among urban viewers.
5. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women shown as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ among women viewers.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance among urban and rural women viewers in the portrayal of women ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups and type of viewers.

5.1.2 Social Status of Women

This factor deals with how women were treated in their family and in society. Were they treated on par with men and how much freedom did they have in making their own decisions?

5.1.2a Treated on Par With Men

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There were 64% of the urban viewers and 63% of rural viewers who perceived that Tamil TV serials portrayed women as ‘being treated on par with men’.
2. Among the homemakers and working women, 66% of homemakers and 62% of working women were of this opinion.
3. Among the type of viewers based on the number of serials watched per day, 65% of the heavy viewers, 64% of light viewers and 63% of medium viewers felt that women were shown as ‘being treated on par with men’.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women ‘being treated on par with men’ in Tamil TV serials was above average (64%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that the resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 49%.
2. The interview results revealed that there was above average resonance among women viewers
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but not statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘being treated on par with men’ contributed to average resonance among rural viewers.

5. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women ‘being treated on par with men’ among women viewers.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between Rural and Urban viewers in the portrayal of women ‘being treated on par with men’.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups.
3. There was a significant difference in the resonance level between type of viewers. There was more resonance among light and medium viewers than heavy viewers.

5.1.2b Having Rights to Take Decisions in Personal Life

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There was 64% of urban viewers and 54% of rural viewers who perceived that women were shown as ‘having rights to take decisions in their personal lives’.
2. And 67% of the homemakers and 57% of working women felt women were shown as ‘having rights to take decisions in their personal lives’.
3. Among the types of viewers, 66% of high viewers, 60% of both the light viewers and medium viewers opined the same.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women ‘having rights to take decisions in personal life’ in Tamil TV serials was above average (61%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that the resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 49%.
2. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but statistically significant.
3. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘having rights to take decisions in personal life’ contributed to the average resonance among rural viewers.

4. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women ‘having rights to take decisions in personal life’.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between Rural and Urban viewers in the portrayal of women ‘having rights to take decisions in personal life’.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups.
3. There was significant difference in the resonance level between type of viewers. There was more resonance among heavy viewers than light and medium viewers.

5.1.2c Having Rights to Make Decisions in Family Matters

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There were 69% of urban viewers and 67% of rural viewers who opined that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’.
2. And 67% of homemakers and 69% of working women also felt this way.
3. Among the types of viewers, 75% of heavy viewers, 67% of light viewers and 65% of medium viewers agreed to this point.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’ in Tamil TV serials was above average (69%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 48%.
2. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but statistically significant.
3. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’ contributed to average resonance among rural viewers.
4. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between Rural and Urban viewers in the portrayal of women ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups and type of viewers.

5.1.3 Emotional Status of Women

This factor was considered with special reference to how women handled issues, especially during a crisis. Were they portrayed as ‘weak and helpless’ or as ‘bold and intelligent’?

5.1.3a Weak and Helpless during Crisis

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There were 38% of urban viewers and 37% of rural viewers who perceived that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘weak and helpless’ during crisis.
2. Among the homemakers and working women, 35% of homemakers and 39% of working women felt this way.
3. Among the type of viewers based on the number of serials watched per day, 39% of light viewers, 36% of both medium and heavy viewers felt that women were shown as ‘weak and helpless’ in Tamil TV serials.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless while managing any sort of crisis’ in Tamil TV serials was below average (38%).
5. And 38% of the viewers did not agree to the claim.

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 10%.
2. The interview results revealed that there was very low level of resonance among women viewers.
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but not statistically significant.

4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘weak and helpless’ contributed to the below average resonance among viewers.
5. The overall resonance was below average in the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless’ at the time of crisis.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between Rural and Urban viewers in the portrayal of women ‘weak and helpless’ at the time of crisis.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level among the homemakers and working women.
3. There was a significant difference in the resonance levels among the types of viewers and there were more resonance among medium viewers.

5.1.3b Bold and Intelligent during Crisis

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There were 73% of urban viewers and 75% of rural viewers who perceived that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘bold and intelligent’ during crisis.
2. Among the homemakers and working women, there were 74% of viewers from both the groups felt the same.
3. Among the type of viewers based on number of serials watched per day, the heavy viewers were the majority where 86% of them agreed. And 71% of light viewers and 72% of medium viewers felt the same.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent while managing any sort of crisis’ in Tamil TV serials was above average (74%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 28%.
2. The interview results revealed that there was above resonance among women viewers.

3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but not statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor 'bold and intelligent' contributed minimum towards the resonance among urban viewers and maximum among rural viewers.
5. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women as 'bold and intelligent' at the time of crisis.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was a significant difference in the resonance levels between Rural and Urban viewers.
2. There was no difference in the resonance level among the homemakers and working women.
3. There was a significant difference in the resonance levels among the types of viewers and there was more resonance among heavy viewers comparatively.

5.1.4 Characterization of Women

The final factor deals with whether women by and large were portrayed as 'objects of sexual desire' or as 'successful in the public domain'.

5.1.4a Objects of Sexual Desire

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. Urban viewers (15%) and rural viewers (10%) felt that women were shown as 'objects of sexual desire'.
2. Among the homemakers and working women, 14% of homemakers and 11% of working women felt this way.
3. Among the type of viewers based on number of serials watched per day, 13% of the light viewers, 12% of the medium viewers and 11% of the heavy viewers felt the same.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as 'objects of sexual desire' was below average (13%). The rest 73% of the viewers disagreed to the point.

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 2%.
2. The interview results also showed that there was no resonance of the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’.
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was very low level of resonance but not statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘objects of sexual desire’ did not contribute towards the resonance among urban viewers.
5. There was low level of resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance levels between Rural and Urban viewers.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups and type of viewers.

5.1.4b Successful in the Public Domain

Opinion of Viewers on the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. There were 76% of urban viewers and 86% of rural viewers felt women were shown as ‘successful in the public domain’.
2. Among the homemakers and working women, 79% of homemakers and 83% of working women felt this way.
3. Among the type of viewers based on number of serials watched per day, 81% of light viewers, 79% of medium viewers and 86% of heavy viewers felt this way.
4. Therefore, the overall opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘successful in the public domain’ was above average (81%).

Resonance among Viewers regarding the Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials

1. The percentile study revealed that resonance level among all the viewer groups for this variable was 29%.
2. The interview results also showed that there was average level of resonance of the portrayal of women ‘successful in the public domain’.
3. Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis revealed that there was below average resonance but statistically significant.
4. Factor analysis result showed that this factor ‘successful in public domain’ contributed towards above average resonance among urban viewers.
5. The overall resonance was average in the portrayal of women as ‘successful in the public domain’.

Difference in the Resonance Levels

1. There was no significant difference in the resonance levels between Rural and Urban viewers.
2. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between occupational groups and type of viewers.

5.2 Discussion and Implications of the Findings

In this section the researcher takes the major findings of the study and discusses it on the basis of objectives of the study.

The first objective was to find out the manner in which women were portrayed.

The second objective was to study whether the particular portrayals of women in Tamil TV serials resonate in the viewers’ real life situations. For this the researcher compared the opinions of viewers on the particular portrayal of women and their real life experiences on the particular factor.

The third objective was to find out whether there were any differences in resonance on different types of viewers (rural & urban, working & homemakers and among heavy, medium and light viewers). This was done to find out which sub group had more resonance level.

5.2.1 Economic Status of Women

This factor dealt with whether women were shown as owning wealth and economically independent or whether they were dependent on male members of the family.

The opinion of women viewers on the portrayal of women owning wealth in Tamil TV serials was above average (ie. the number of women who agreed to the point that Tamil TV serial portrayed women as ‘owning wealth’ was more). There was below average resonance (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the TV serial portrayal of women as ‘owning wealth’ was less). The reason for the less resonance level was that the number of women viewers who own wealth in real life was less. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between sub-groups. Though women viewers opined that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘owning wealth’ their real life situation was not similar to that of TV serial portrayals.

Therefore, it has been implied that women viewers felt that Tamil TV serials portrayed women in a constructive manner which disproved the existing literature of Tamil TV serials.

The opinion of women viewers on the portrayal of women ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ in Tamil TV serials was average (ie. the number of women who agreed to the point that Tamil TV serial portrayed women as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ was normal). There was average resonance (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the TV serial portrayal of women as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’ was normal). There was no significant difference in the resonance level between sub-groups.

It is implied that the women viewers felt the serials still portrayed women as dependent for money on male members of the family. There still exist stereotypical portrayals in this regard. It is also implied that a good number of women viewers remain dependent for money on male members of the family.

While talking about the factor ‘Economic Status of Women’, it was found that women were often portrayed as owning wealth. However, many of the women continued to be depicted as being dependent on male members of the family for financial help.

Previous studies had various views on the portrayals of women. Shrivastva (1992) and Rajan (2010) revealed that most women were not shown as working and so dependent on male

members for financial needs. Punwani (1988) & Arora (2015) observed that though Indian dramas showed women as working, the women were not happy in their place of work and some of them were forced to work. Ranganathan & Rodrigues (2010) observed that women characters in Tamil TV serials were seen as independent, travelling alone and very capable at their place of work. Jana (2016) observed that women characters shown in TV serials were independent. However, in the present study the women were seen as largely dependent on male members for money and therefore are contrary to Jana's findings. The in-depth interviews also suggest the same.

Therefore, there was resonance of women both owning wealth as well as dependent for money on male members of the family. It was to some extent similar to the findings of Kaul and Sahni (2010) where women viewers saw a reflection of their own life experience in the serials.

5.2.2 Social Status of Women

This factor deals with how women were treated in their family and in society. Were they treated on par with men and how much freedom did they have in making their own decisions?

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women 'being treated on par with men' in Tamil TV serials was above average (ie. the number of women who agreed to the point that Tamil TV serial portrayed women as 'being treated on par with men' was more). The resonance was average among women viewers (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the TV serial portrayal of women as being treated on par with men' was normal). The reason for less resonance level was the real life situation of the women viewers was not similar to that of their opinions on the portrayal of women 'being treated on par with men'. There was a significant difference in the resonance level between type of viewers. There was more resonance among light and medium viewers than heavy viewers.

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women 'having rights to take decisions in personal life' in Tamil serials was above average. However, the resonance was average (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the portrayals was normal). The reason for less resonance level was because the real life

situation of the women viewers was not similar to that of their opinions on the portrayal of women ‘having rights to take decisions in their personal life. There was significant difference in the resonance level between the types of viewers. There was more resonance among heavy viewers than light and medium viewers.

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’ in Tamil TV serials was above average. However, the resonance was average (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the the portrayals was normal).The reason for less resonance was that the real lives of the women were not similar to that of their opinions on the portrayal of women ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between the sub-groups.

While talking about the factor ‘Social Status of Women’, it was found that majority of the viewers opined that Tamil TV serials showed women in a constructive manner in terms of social status. This finding supports earlier studies of Tous-Rovirosa, (2013) and Sharda, (2014) who remarked that women were shown as being treated on par with men and as having decision making rights.

The problem arises when it comes to the resonance level of these portrayals among women viewers. There was below average and average resonance in the portrayal of the social status of women among the viewers while opinion on the TV portrayal was above average. It was because the real life situation of the viewers did not find much similarity with their opinions on the TV portrayals of social status of women. To an extent it was similar to the findings of Kaul and Sahni (2010) where women viewers saw a reflection of their own life experience in the serials.

There was no difference in the resonance level among urban and rural viewers, homemakers and working women. But there was significant difference in the resonance levels of the types of viewers based on number of serials watched per day.

5.2.3 Emotional Status of Women

This factor was considered with special reference to how women handled issues, especially during a crisis. Were they portrayed as weak and helpless or as bold and intelligent?

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless while managing any sort of crisis’ in Tamil TV serials was below average. However, the resonance was below average in the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless in crisis’

among women viewers (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the TV serial portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless’ was less). It implied that majority of the women viewers felt that the serials did not show women as weak. Likewise neither in their real lives were they weak and helpless when faced with crisis. There was a significant difference in the resonance levels among the types of viewers wherein there was more resonance among the medium viewers.

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent while managing any sort of crisis’ in Tamil TV serials was above average. However, the overall resonance was only average in the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent’ at the time of crisis. This implied that majority of the viewers felt that Tamil TV serials showed women as bold and intelligent when faced with a crisis. And it was the same in reality as well. There was a significant difference in the resonance levels between urban and rural viewers and between the types of viewers as there was comparatively more resonance among urban and heavy viewers.

While talking about the factor ‘Emotional Status of Women’, it was found that majority of the viewers opined that the serials portrayed women in a positive manner. This findings support the earlier studies of Punwani (1988), Tous-Rovirosa (2013) and Sharda (2014) who remarked that women were shown as strong characters to a great extent in Indian and Spanish TV serials. Ranganathan & Rodrigues (2010) also specifically found that female characters in Tamil TV serials were shown as bold and courageous.

There was below average resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless’ and average resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent’. It meant that majority of the viewers were bold and intelligent when faced with crisis in their real lives. It was to some extent similar to the findings of Kaul and Sahni (2010) where there were women viewers who saw a reflection of their own life experience in the serials.

There was no difference in the resonance level among urban and rural viewers, homemakers and working women. But there was significant difference in the resonance levels among the types of viewers based on number of serials watched per day. There was more resonance among medium viewers in the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless’ and more resonance among the heavy viewers in the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent’. This was a significant factor.

5.5.4 Characterization of Women

The final factor deals with whether women by and large were portrayed as objects of sexual desire or as successful in the public domain.

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’ was below average. There was low level of resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’. It was because very few of the women viewers surveyed felt they were treated as ‘objects of sexual desire’ in their real life. There was no significant difference in the resonance level between the sub-groups.

The opinion of women viewers regarding the portrayal of women as ‘successful in the public domain’ was above average. However, the resonance was average in the portrayal of women as ‘successful in public domain’ (ie. the number of women whose real life situation was similar to their opinions on the TV serial portrayal of women as ‘successful in public domain’ was normal). It implied that majority of the women viewers felt that Tamil TV serials showed women as ‘successful in the public domain’. And in reality, an average number of viewers remained ‘successful in the public domain’. There was no significant difference in the resonance levels between the sub-groups. This meant that the women felt that they were portrayed in a more constructive manner.

This finding was contrary to the study results of Gahulant (2002), K. Sujitha., et. al.,(2015), Shukla (2015), Cooper’s (1994) and the UNESCO report referred by Roy (2012) which observed that women were portrayed in decorative roles and as objects of sexual desire.

These findings supported the observations of Geraghty (1991) and Signorielli & Bacue (1999), where foreign soap operas showed women playing a positive role in society. These results supported few Indian studies like that of Arora (2015) and Punwani (1988) and the study on Tamil TV serials by Ranganathan & Rodrigues (2010), which held the view that TV serials showed women as successful in the public sphere.

There was no resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’ and average resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘successful in public domain’. It meant that majority of the viewers remained successful in public domain in reality. It is similar to the findings of Kaul and Sahni (2010) where there were women viewers who saw a reflection of their own lives in the serials.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This study was based on the cultivation theory of George Gerbner. The basic assumption of cultivation analysis is that if one spends more time in the television world, the more he/she likely to believe that social reality is that of television portrayals. While responding to the criticisms against the above mentioned claim, Gerbner responded by introducing resonance and mainstreaming, two new concepts to help explain inconsistencies in the results (*Gerbner et al., 1986*).

What is meant by “resonance” is that when what people see on television is most congruent with everyday reality (or even perceived reality), the combination may result in a coherent and powerful “double dose” of the television message and, thus significantly boost cultivation.

The present study focused on this aspect of ‘resonance’ of TV serial images of women. The findings of the present study revealed that though there was a constructive portrayal of women, according to the opinions of the viewers, the resonance level was average. This was because the real lives of the viewers were not similar to the portrayals of women in the serials.

Therefore, it has been concluded that to a great extent, the socio-economic and cultural background of the viewers determine the resonance and thus affects the cultivation of serial images.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

The researcher suggests that based on the present study which analyzed ‘resonance’ the future studies on Tamil TV serials could concentrate on cultivation effects of these portrayals. The future studies on Tamil TV serials could focus on how these constructive portrayals brought changes into the lives of women viewers if at all there existed any change.

This study focused on North Tamilnadu women viewers only and therefore future studies could analyze the resonance level among other parts of Tamilnadu too.

Another area neglected by the researcher was the resonance level among the groups of viewers with educational differences and age differences. Therefore, the future studies could

concentrate on these two independent variables and see the resonance levels among these sub-groups.

5.5 Conclusion

This study began when the researcher happened to watch some Tamil TV serials in 2012 and found that a few female characters were shown as strong and courageous while a few others were shown as crying and stereotypically “weak”. It was then that the decision was made to study the kinds of portrayal of women available in Tamil TV serials.

The researcher found that several studies on the ‘Representation of Women in TV serials’ were conducted both abroad and in India. There were a few studies claiming that women were shown stereo-typically and a few claimed that constructive representations of women in Television serials did exist. At the time of reviewing the literature, the researcher found that a study done on the ‘Portrayal of Women in Tamil TV serials’ by Gnanabharathi in 2011, concluded that women were shown in a very stereotypical manner.

The researcher wanted to extend the focus area of the study. Therefore, instead of studying “the portrayal of women in Tamil TV serials” alone, he wanted to focus on Gerbner’s resonance aspect as well.

The aim of the study was to find out the opinion of the viewers on the manner in which women were portrayed in Tamil TV serials and to find out the overall resonance level of the images of woman as shown in Tamil TV serials.

In conclusion, the researcher tries to answer the objectives of the study one by one.

1. The first objective was to find out the manner in which women were portrayed. To meet this objective, the researcher studied the opinion of the women viewers and came to the following conclusions.

According to the opinions of the women viewers from North Tamilnadu, Tamil TV serials showed women in a constructive manner in all the four factors related to the status of women. Very few respondents felt that women were shown as ‘weak and helpless’ and as “objects of sexual desire”. The majority of the viewers opined that women were shown as ‘owning wealth’, ‘being treated on par with men’, ‘having decision making rights’, ‘bold and intelligent at the time of crisis’, and ‘successful in the public domain’. However, many of the

respondents said that by and large women were portrayed as ‘dependent for money on male members of the family’. Other than this one variable, the response was by and large positive. Therefore, one of the findings of this study is that there is a huge difference and progress in the portrayals of women in Tamil TV serials.

2. The second objective was to study whether these portrayals of women in Tamil TV serials resonate in the viewers’ real life situations. In order to answer this question, the researcher compared the opinions of the viewers on the portrayals of women and their real life experiences for each variable.

The study concludes that there was below average resonance in the factor dealing with economic status and average resonance in the factors dealing with social status. Coming to the emotional status, it was found that there was below average resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘weak and helpless’ and average resonance in the portrayal of women as ‘bold and intelligent’. It was found that there was no resonance at all in the portrayal of women as ‘objects of sexual desire’ and average resonance of the portrayal of women as ‘successful in public domain’. On the whole, there was average resonance in the constructive portrayals such as ‘being treated on par with women’, ‘having rights to make decisions in family matters’, ‘bold and intelligent’ at the time of crisis, and ‘successful in public domain’.

However, even a below average or average resonance level is something significant given the socio cultural background of these women who belong to a patriarchal society. The actual socio cultural background of the viewers from North Tamilnadu is very different from the socio-cultural status of women as portrayed in Tamil TV serials. The situations and circumstances are different.

3. The third objective was to find out whether there were any differences in resonance on different types of viewers (rural & urban, working & homemakers and among heavy, medium and light viewers). This was done to find out which sub group had more resonance level.

There was no significant difference in the resonance levels of the portrayals of ‘economic factors’ and the ‘characterization of women’ among the sub-groups. Even in the portrayals of other two factors such as social status and emotional status, there was no significant difference in the resonance levels of rural and urban viewers, homemakers and working women.

However, there was a significant difference among the type of viewers in the portrayal of women for variables such as ‘being treated on par with men’, ‘having rights to take decisions in personal life’, and ‘weak and helpless/bold and intelligent in crisis’. There was more resonance among the heavy viewers for the variables “having rights to take decisions in personal life”, ‘weak and helpless in crisis’, and ‘bold and intelligent in crisis’. For the variable ‘being treated on par with men’ there was more resonance among medium viewers. Therefore, it could be concluded there existed difference in the resonance levels only among the type of viewers and not among the geographical groups and occupational groups.

Therefore, it has been concluded that the socio-economic and cultural background of the viewers determines the resonance to a great extent and thus affects the cultivation of serial images. However, according to George Gerbner, wherever there is resonance, greater amplification of the serial images could lead to further cultivation among the women viewers.

Another factor that has to be taken into account is that even though the resonance factor was low, women still continued to watch TV. In fact, this was their chief form of entertainment. And according to one of the questions asked by the researcher in the survey and the information gathered from the in depth interview, the respondents have clearly stated that they would like to see more and more successful women in every sphere whether economic, social or emotional. In fact, if the circumstances of these women changed and they had better opportunities they too would get a chance to be successful like their favourite role models on the TV screen.