

Restructuring the Concept of Romanticism in Pakistani Dramas

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Abstract

Not many in our society can distinguish if harassment or violence is being romanticized and normalized in Pakistani society by the media. This research undertakes the objective of finding out if the Pakistani drama industry is portraying harassment as love. This research objective is to find out if harassment is being romanticized by Pakistani dramas. Taking a qualitative approach, conversation analysis was used to gather data. Three top-rating dramas on 3 leading entertainment channels - ARY Digital, Geo TV, and Hum TV will be closely analyzed. Dramas chosen for analyses are; Ishqiya from ARY Digital, Ye Dil Mera from Hum TV, and Deewangi from Geo TV. For a closer analysis, two categories were formed; Technical Harassment by law, and culturally unacceptable actions. Both verbal and non-verbal harassment has been closely investigated. A detailed analysis of verbal, written, physical, and visual harassment in each drama serial has been done. To make the analysis transparent, a list of acts considered harassment in real life but are portrayed romantically in these plays was drawn. After the analysis, it was found that harassment is being romanticized by the Pakistani drama industry. Most of the time when harassment was being romanticized, it was framed in a way that people probably didn't even recognize it as harassment or a crime.

Keywords: Romanticism, Harassment, Pakistani Dramas, Forced love, Obsession

Introduction

Pakistani media from its inception has been popular for its television plays which are consumed across cities, by all gender and age brackets. The impact of these stories on the public minds have always been phenomenal. With the launch of private media channels society saw a surge in televised content, in which dramas remained the most popular genre in all. With the competition at hand, it was observed that sensationalism and scandals remained the biggest crowd puller which then led to dramas in which women were portrayed in various stories with male suitors chasing them. In the true Shakespearean Romeo and Juliet style, there would always be a girl pursued by a boy with some conflicts to keep them apart, this similarity in plots then propelled the writers and directors to add something novel hence the type of romance emerged which was aggressive and abusive. The predicament with these plays was and is that they are packaging such abusive behaviors in the garb of romance, making it acceptable for the youth of Pakistan. These blurring lines between love and abuse in Pakistani dramas are perpetuating content which has no regard for the wishes and desires of the female protagonists. They are the mere objects of male desire and hence bow to the male protagonists' yearnings. The story makes sure that the 'hero' of the story maintains his swoon worthy style and is presented in a way in which 'real men' are supposed to behave. The dewy-eyed female protagonist is tossed around by societal pressures into accepting these ideas of love and romance as the perfect solution to her otherwise harrowed life.

Roots of harassment, obsession, and romance lie far deeper in the pop culture of the region. In desi cinema, stalker syndrome has been confused with love. Even if romantic feelings are rejected initially, the stalker keeps pursuing his interest until they magically reciprocate. Such behavior should be considered harassment in the current environment we live in; however, it seems this new reality is yet to dawn upon our contemporary drama writers.

Harassment is a situation in which someone experiences unwelcome, inappropriate behavior that they find intimidating or humiliating. It may take place separately or in combination with other kinds of discrimination. Unwanted behavior may take the form of verbal or written abuse. It includes a wide variety of malicious acts. It is usually regarded as conduct that denigrates, demeans, degrades, or embarrasses a person, and it can be identified by the fact that it defies social and ethical norms. (Doyle, 2021)

Legally, these are actions that seem stressful, distressing, disturbing, or frightening. You may experience distress, upset, and even terror when the contact you receive from others becomes inappropriate, excessive, or intimidating.

People nearby are threatening, bugging, and blackmailing people more frequently. The most common type of harassment, out of its various types, is sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is any insulting or demeaning conduct that is connected to a person's sex and can take both verbal and physical forms. Most commonly, it consists of offensive or unwelcome words, gestures, symbols, actions, or any sexual conduct that causes discomfort for the victim. In a variety of settings, including schools, colleges, theatres, workplaces, and offices, sexual harassment occurs. Frequently, the harasser has or is going to have superiority or authority over the victim. Anybody can be a harasser, including a customer, co-worker, friend, relative, instructor, or a total stranger.

In the contemporary world, sexual harassment is a well-known societal issue, and as new technologies emerge, more and more crimes are being committed. Although it isn't always the case, it is typically challenging for victims to articulate their experiences. This can be the result of the difficulty in categorizing the circumstance or it might be brought on by stress and embarrassment. Online harassment is reaching its height as a result of the development of the internet and social contact.

Pakistan is no exception as here sexual harassment is a rising issue. This serious crime is not even acknowledged as a real issue by the society. According to data provided by Madadgaar National Helpline (Kazi, 2017) Pakistan is among the nations where about 70% of women and girls have faced different acts of violence by their own intimate partners and about 93 percent of women have faced various types of sexual misconduct and harassment in public settings over the course of their lifetimes. Over 90,000 women have requested protection, according to the same helpline, but most of these women and girls are unable to stand up for their rights due to family norms. White Ribbon Pakistan has reported an even harsher situation as according to its report, 4,734 women in Pakistan have been sexually abused during the last year and above 15,000 cases of different scenarios of honor, crimes were registered between 2004 to 2016 across the state. Moreover, according to a periodical report, a 200 percent increase was recorded in cases of violence against Pakistani women during the first three months of the year 2020 (Geo News, 2020). Because of such pathetic conditions, Pakistani women endure various heinous things and live in constant fear of threats, harassment, and blackmail; as a result of which some commit suicide.

What may Pakistani women do if they experience sexual harassment themselves or come into contact with someone who has? Currently, many laws have been enacted to protect Pakistani women from heinous acts of harassment. The Pakistan Penal Code 1860 is among such acts that contain regulations that allow the accused to be found guilty and given a prison term, a significant fine, or possibly the death penalty. Because sexual harassment can affect both men and women, these regulations apply to both. A person can be sentenced to three years in prison, a fine, or both under section 509 of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 for insulting a woman's modesty through gestures or words. (Punjab Police, n.d.)

Similarly, according to section 354A of the Pakistani Penal Code 1860, anyone found guilty of engaging in indecent or vulgar behavior, including singing a song with derogatory lyrics, faces up to three months in prison, a fine, or both. According to section 534-A of the Pakistani Penal Code 1860, anyone who abuses a woman and uses physical force against her or strips her in front of the public is guilty of a crime. The accused might receive a life term in jail or the death penalty. The 2010 Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act is one law that can help women in the workplace. (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2010)

Moreover, the statute, which is regarded as one of the most recent developments in Pakistani law, establishes the investigation committee system, which will have three members, one of whom must be a woman. This investigation committee must be established by a group or business that receives complaints about harassment from employees. Section 3 of the 2010 Protection Against Harassment of Women at Work Act contains these obligations. The same statute's Section 4 introduces a number of other punishments for the offender. Among these sanctions include censorship, recompense from the offender in the form of a payment or fine, suspension, dismissal, early retirement from the organization, or reduction in status to a lower position. (UN Women, 2010)

As a result of the threat and blackmail issues that many girls today are dealing with from their partners and friends, who are ruining their lives because they don't know where to turn for assistance, they comply with the demands of the blackmailers out of a fear that their private information, photos, and videos will be leaked.

Literature Review

Romance is harassment when the attention is unwelcome by one of the parties. Unwelcome approaches are problematic and should be dealt with immediately. If you are on the receiving end of unwelcome romantic attention, it is important to let the person know that their advances are not welcome. This can be done in a clear and concise way, without being rude. If the person does not take the hint or continues to make unwanted advances, it may be

necessary to take more drastic measures, such as involving law enforcement or human resource.

In 2018, Malik Taimoor, an MPA from Rawalpindi, believed that the word divorce should be eliminated from the allowed word list that the writers have for the main stream electronic media. For which a prompt reaction was seen by PEMRA in which it was banned to utter this word. It is unfortunate that this regulatory body does take into notice as to how many other derogatory narratives are being portrayed. (Hyder, 2018). Many females are forced into marriage because the harasser formally proposed to them and the tag of "talaq" forces them to stay quiet against every single act of harassment.

Galdi and Guizzo investigated the media induced sexual harassment and its impact on the people's perception on women objectification. The evidence in this paper showed that media objectification has made a shift in gender norms and has normalized harassment in a society. The three perspectives that they have specifically discussed are; the perpetrator, the victim and the by-standers, whereby the media content has dehumanized the victim and no empathy has been found in the people around them. (Galdi & Guizzo 2020)

Media portrayal of romance bordering on violent behavior in intimate relations have proved to be problematic in the study done by Kenasri and Sadasri in which they have analyzed Korean dramas consistent with the concept of abuse disguised in romantic advances. The depiction of such ideas in the entertainment media content has propelled the victims to accept such exploits as romantic and has created a general acceptance of such behaviors. (Kenasri & Sadasri)

Lippman, in her study, investigated the effects of media content with reference to stalking and the way it has been justified by the narratives in films. It is an experimental study in which respondents were analyzed to their exposure of such media content which in effect does lead to the understanding that it can be an acceptable phenomenon and that if one is genuinely pursuing a romantic interest by shadowing someone then it is supported by the societal norms. (Lippman, J. R.2018).

Studies have depicted that many Pakistani dramas revolve around the theme that a woman goes to work, her boss falls in love, tries to persuade her to marry him and the woman gives in. Small wonder then that this is the dynamic most audiences are at risk of believing that is the norm or even the ideal. The man is the active subject, and the woman is the submissive recipient who surrenders to the male character, who is usually her boss. To assess the influence of this trend, a survey of 300 women by Dawn (Sethna et al., 2018) on sexual harassment, abuse, and discrimination in Pakistan's workplaces revealed that harassment at workplaces is pervasive, usually unreported, and neglected by senior managers. In response to being questioned whether women were hushed about workplace harassment, 61 percent said their employers did not constrain them to keep quiet, but a significant 35 percent were told to remain silent by their colleagues and bosses.

In order to verify responses from women in the workforce across professions and industries, assess experiences of sexual harassment, and determine whether or not workplaces have anti-sexual harassment policies in place, this research used online questionnaires and interviews in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta. Only 17 percent of individuals who experienced harassment addressed their organization's internal inquiry committees, despite the fact that responses from women suggest the majority lack faith in the process when it comes to formal reporting methods. Despite 59 percent of respondents indicating that their management does take harassment seriously, the majority of women expressed concern that managers would fail to punish harassers and that their working conditions would remain the same. Most women feared they would not be taken seriously during investigations or when criminals had powerful allies (Sethna et al., 2018)

Harassment by definition identifies any unwanted behavior which is directly or indirectly sexual in nature. It also includes written or oral communication which can then disturb and disrupt the victim at the workplace. (The Gazette of Pakistan, 2010). since the definition explicitly says workplace but does not give any category for what can be constituted as workplace which is why Messha Shafi was dismissed on the grounds that the it was not a workplace where the complainant felt harassed. (Bilal, 2019).

It is important to note that any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, any verbal or written communications, physical conduct of a sexual character, or sexually degrading attitudes are all considered to be sexual harassment in educational institutions, according to the Higher Education Commission (2020). But, across the nation, incidents of bullying and violence against students are on the rise. Sexual harassment and assault in academic settings are always underreported, whether it occurs in Lahore's public institutions, the run-down buildings of government-run schools in Southern Punjab, or the crumbling madrassahs of interior Sindh. Harassment in educational institutions is not at all new to us, every single day a woman has to go through some traumatic harassment incident that she can't even convey to her friends and family.

In Pakistan, sexual harassment in public spaces has become a social issue. Numerous studies on sexual harassment of women have been done in Pakistan, although they tend to focus on contexts like workplaces and educational institutions. Imtiaz & Kamal's research from 2021 indicates that women experience sexual harassment at a higher rate than males do in Pakistan's major cities. This study also supports the notion that in Pakistan, men were subject to sexual harassment in public settings. A person's essential "right to dignity," as guaranteed by the Pakistani Constitution, is violated by sexual harassment. The fact that women aren't even aware of their legal status under Pakistani law, however, just makes the predicament worse (Siasat.pk, 2020).

Research by (Ali & Naz, 2016) found out that staring is the most common form of harassment which made the victims uncomfortable, followed by sounds to tease the victims on the streets. This research profoundly states the effect of street teasing made the women vulnerable and made them fearful to move outside freely.

Studies have reported 3 types of harassment; verbal/written, physical, and visual. Verbal harassment is the most evident form of workplace harassment. Sending racial or religiously objectionable jokes or images, or constantly asking for dates or sexual favors in person or over the phone are some scenarios of verbal harassment. The second type of harassment, physical harassment, can occasionally be quite subtle, as it may be a little more difficult to spot. Impermissible hand motions or other body languages, unwelcome physical contact with a person or their clothing, and intentionally following are a few examples of physical harassment. The third type of harassment, visual harassment is considered the most subjective and requires you to genuinely put oneself in the other person's position. Wearing apparel with derogatory or profane phrases, displaying sexually explicit posters or images and displaying sexually explicit text messages or emails to others are a few examples of visual harassment, most of such has been presented in the Pakistani media masked romantically.

Theoretical Perspective

There are two theories that would help this research to be comprehended; the cultivation theory, and the uses and gratification theory. Both these theories explain how televised content propels minds and embeds ideas into the masses' minds whereby they find the narrative to be a normal code of behavior and then mold their actions accordingly. According to the cultivation theory, people are more likely to view social realities as they are represented in the media if they are exposed to them frequently and over an extended period of time. Their views and behaviors are influenced by what they consume (McQuail, 2010). In this study, we'll look at whether or not Pakistani dramas have an effect on people.

In users and gratification theory, people always make decisions based on their own preferences and moods. Through the media, a specific person's needs are satisfied. People may watch the news for a variety of reasons, including information, amusement, and self-assurance, but in such situations, people become the passive consumers of the content and thus it makes them susceptible to the desires projected in the story. This notion is being used to determine whether viewers are doing so voluntarily or are being compelled to do so because there is a dearth of quality content. (Baran, 2022)

The dramas on mainstream television these days, depicts a confusing storyline in which harassment is misrepresented as love. The male protagonists are shown to be professing love by actually harassing the female protagonists, which in fact is a traumatizing real-life scenario.

Not many of us think that harassment or violence is being romanticized and generalized in Pakistani society by the media. No research article or paper was found on the romanticization of harassment in Pakistani soap plays, although multiple magazines and news articles were published on this topic. These articles focused on the romanticization of rape culture and marital violence, but not on harassment. Thus, arises the need to investigate these misnomers in our mainstream entertainment which are having a profound effect on our society.

Research Objective

This research is undertaking the objective to find out if harassment is being romanticized by Pakistani dramas.

Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature in which we closely studied three top-rating dramas on three leading entertainment channels; ARY Digital, Geo TV, and Hum TV. The dramas analyzed are Ishqiya from ARY Digital, Ye Dil Mera from Hum TV, and Deewangi from Geo TV.

These dramas were chosen because they are the most recent ones, have now ended, and have high ratings according to the channels' website and IMDb. Conversation analysis is undertaken for this research in order to mine out the words and phrases which are used in the script, leading onto creating situations where the female protagonist feels uncomfortable. Critical conversation analysis has been used in analyzing electronic media content which is

manipulated and framed in the way that masses cannot understand the subliminal messages in it. It also addresses the social scenarios that are created by using such words. (Scannell, P.1998)

We divided the data into two categories: Technical Harassment by law and culturally unacceptable actions. Investigations have been made on both verbal and non-verbal harassment including verbal/written, physical, and visual harassment in each drama serial. The use of offensive language, shouting or yelling at someone, making crude jokes about them, sending rude slurs in emails, texts, or letters are of verbal or written harassment. In the televised content we have chosen, acts that are portrayed romantically in these plays but are in fact harassment as per the definitions mentioned below.

Physical harassment is an act where someone inappropriately touches you against your will. This type of behavior is intimidating, embarrassing, and threatening, and makes the victim feel uncomfortable.

Visual harassment includes sexually explicit images in the form of official and unofficial documents and mails, offensive computer graphics and any other such kind of images displayed which are offensive sexually.

Acts Considered as Harassment:

- Sending unwanted gifts and flowers
- Using someone's pictures or chats to blackmail them
- Cracking inappropriate jokes
- Staring in a manner that makes females feel uncomfortable
- Non-verbal sounds (whistling, hooting)
- Catcalling
- Gestures that made them uncomfortable
- Indecent exposure by men
- Receiving comments on physical appearance
- Vulgar, derogatory, or insulting comments
- Being followed/stalking
- Unwanted/forced touching
- Unwanted/forced marriage proposals
- Blocking way/not letting the other person go
- Rape attempt
- Boss/client/ manager asking female employees to have lunch or dinner after work
- Acid Attacks
- Unwanted calls, messages & emails

Finding and Discussion

Table 1.

Medium	Hum TV – Ye Dil Mera	ARY Digital - Ishqiya	Geo TV -Deewangi
Types of Harassment	No. of times act shown	No. of times act shown	No. of times act shown
Sending unwanted gifts and flowers.	2	3	4
Using someone's pictures or chats to blackmail them.	0	8	2
Cracking inappropriate jokes.	2	0	3
Stared in a manner that makes females feel uncomfortable.	9	2	4
Non-verbal sounds (whistling, hooting).	0	0	2
Catcalling.	0	1	3
Gestures making females uncomfortable/ Indecent exposure by men.	1	0	0

Receiving comments on physical appearance.	4	0	10
Vulgar, derogatory, or insulting comments.	0	7	60
Sending friend requests/stalking	2	2	6
Unwanted/forced touching.	2	5	14
Unwanted/ forced marriage proposals.	3	0	8
Blocking way/ Not letting the other person go.	1	6	4
Rape attempt.	1	0	3
Boss/ client/ manager asking female employees to have lunch or dinner after work.	5	1	8
Unwanted calls, messages & emails.	5	17	13
Total	37	52	144

This table shows the number of times each type of harassment is shown.

Discussion

Taking a look at the material which has gone on air in recent years, it would not be a stretch to say that genuine, heartfelt romance is difficult to come by. More worryingly, we can safely say that what any sane person would classify as obsession, bordering on harassment, is often wrapped in the deceptive packaging of romance. Such dramas where obsession has masqueraded as romance include *Malaal-e-Yaar*, *Bashar Momin*, *Muqadar*, etc. No surprises here that all three stories revolve around an aggressive male from a feudal background who gets obsessed with a girl and vows to get married to her.

Cultivation theory strongly implies that if masses are given exposure on a regular basis to a certain type of content, they are going to have perceptions accordingly. While working on this study, researchers came across tweets, comments, and posts where female audiences mostly craved aggressive figures like Danish Taimoor and Feroze Khan in their lives. While for most men, their toxic attitude was praise-worthy, and they would most likely do something like that to make girls fall for them. It's not new that most watched channels are glamourizing harassment in their big-budget productions.

According to a survey, (LaBore et al., 2019) 93% of Pakistani women would suffer sexual violence of some kind in public settings during their lifetime. Out of 300 Pakistani women who experienced sexual harassment at work, it was noted in another survey that 35% were coerced to maintain silence by someone holding power over them. Section 509 of the Pakistan Criminal Penal Code and the 2010 Protection against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act are the two legislative measures that control sexual harassment in Pakistan. Both statutes are applicable throughout the board. Nationally, however, hardly anything is done to uphold them.

This glamorization can be looked at as priming done through the content, created especially for the audience belonging to middle and lower-middle socio-economic classes. Through these plays, ideas like physical abuse, forced love, kidnapping, and forced marriages are propagated. It is important to make people aware of the laws or else people will be breaking laws without even realizing them, and if they don't recognize it, they won't report it. As social scientists, we should be concerned about the psychological and physiological well-being of the people of our society.

According to the data analysis, in *Deewangi*, a Pakistani drama of 41 episodes, unwanted or forced touching is shown nearly 16 times - be it a man touching a woman or a woman touching a man (But it is mostly men who forcefully touch women around them).

Spying, following, and stalking were such common acts that it was shown more than 17 times. Staring was shown more than five times, and unwanted gifts and flowers were sent thrice and more.

Staring at women in the workplace, winking, sending inappropriate text messages, assaulting, name-calling, and more are now to be declared serious criminal offenses. The breaking of this law can result in a maximum penalty of imprisonment of three years and a fine of up to Rs 500,000.

But in *Deewangi*, we see Sultan Durrani and other men following bus hostesses and asking them to be their friends. We also see that a male constantly followed Faryal (Nagin's colleague) and tells her how beautiful she is and how he wants to spend the rest of his life with her but when she asks him to bring a formal proposal to her family, he denies it and tell her that he only wanted to be her friend and, on her refusal, he attacks her with acid, as a result to which Faryal dies.

In southern Punjab it is calculated that there is a high occurrence of acid attacks when any kind of advances are being rejected by the women (Orujova, 2022).

In another incident, Sultan spends a whole day in front of Nagin's hostel, refusing to leave unless Nagin talks to him. Sultan books the entire bus and shamelessly asks for Nagin only as a hostess and keeps staring at her the whole time shamelessly, asking her for things to keep her close, which later on Nagin and her colleagues think was romantic. Well, any sound or gesture like winking and staring directed at a woman or girl in public or at her workplace is an offense and is considered sexual harassment under Section 509 of the Pakistan Penal Code. (Ashfaq, 2018) Sultan falls for Nagin and deliberately tries to put a wedding ring on her finger, yelling, "*Main tumhe pasand karta hun, shadi karna chahta hun tumse, abhi tumhe anghoti pehna kar apna bana lunga.*"

Upon which Nagin slaps him for being disrespectful towards her. Thus, the situation turns topsy-turvy for Sultan as the incident was recorded and leaked on social media. He faces extreme disgrace and blames Nagin because he thinks she leaked the video. Nagin loses her job because according to her boss, "*Apko tou khush hona chahiye ke ap jesi larki ko ek izzatdar ameer admi apni biwi bnana chahta hai!*" Now, the question is what is wrong with being a hostess and why would working as a hostess make you a "*burī aurat*"?

Nagin's friends tell her to at least meet Sultan and talk to him as he seems to be a good guy because he is rich and why would a filthy rich businessman, and politician follow a poor bus hostess?

Nagin after listening to all this feels bad and meets him apologizing for her slap and for explaining how unreasonable she had been. Sultan still waits for Nagin to come to him but this time, for vengeance, for the shame she brought to him. Sultan satisfies his ego by getting her kidnapped on her wedding day which shatters her and puts her character to question in society.

We see Sultan constantly saying, "*Ek dafa mera dil kisi cheez pe ajaye tou usko mera hone se koi nahi rok sakta!*" (Akhtar, 2020)

Many people have used Twitter to explain how *Ye Dil Mera* presents sexual harassment and job misconduct as romance. The women have expressed that the female protagonist should have walked away when facing such red flags, whether it is in a workplace or a personal setting. They fully realize how absurd it looks in this day and age when these female characters go along with such circumstances. (Express Tribune, 2019)

The disturbing part is that Noor-ul-ain Khan goes for a job interview. Her boss asks personal questions instead of asking her questions about her qualifications. What does she think is his favorite food? And how does she like him? Not just this, but around 4 times he comments on her dress and way of living too.

It is portrayed that a boss is stalking his (to-be) intern and sends her a friend request, and when she keeps him waiting, he unsend his request. The next morning, out of excitement sends him an add request, which he instantly accepts while being a part of a business meeting. If Noor would have read a little, she would have known that Sharmeen Obaid sued a doctor for sending her sister a friend request when the sister was her patient and called out workplace harassment. (Kazi & Khan, 2017)

We also witness a boss (Aman) asking Noor out 5 times while she was working for him. He also proposed to her in his cabin. The story later unfolds that Farooq Zaman was after Amanullah's mother, he proposed to her 3 times (1 first time before she was unmarried and twice after 10 years of her marriage) in response to which she slaps him and, in order to satisfy his ego, he tries to rape Amanullah's mother. Moreover, unwanted touching was shown 8 times and flirting 6 times.

Aman after marriage turns out to be a completely different person and he yells at Noor, keeps her locked for days, takes away her phone, and does not let her meet her family members. Even after all this when Aman comes apologizing for his deeds and Noor no longer trusts him, we see people looking forward to a happy ending. On the contrary, we see that the beloved couple is no longer together. This is not the first time we see abuse and harassment being glamorized, Bashr e Momin was one such example. He harassed Ushna Shah and kept on touching her without her consent and eventually ended up marrying her to free her fiancé for his sister.

Ishqiya is a drama based on revenge and obsession so it involved more than 17 incidents of unwanted calls, messages, and voice notes. Hamza blackmailed Hamna almost 8 times, threatening to leak her indecent photos and chats. He also forces Hamna to meet him outside or he will leak their conversations and Hamna, being timid, was scared.

In the drama serial *Ishqiya*, Hamza and Hamna are in a four-year-long relationship. Hamna is portrayed to be fearful and reluctant to open up about her boyfriend to her parents; while Hamza is quite open about his enchantment and obsession for Hamna. We see Hamza quite often (5 times to be precise) blocking Hamna's way in university and even in hotels and standing extremely close to Hamna, while threatening other males around her. In a scene, Hamza beats up a class fellow because he touched Hamna and says, "*Jaan se mardunga isko, hath kese lagaya isne Hamna ko!*" Hamna, although is in love with Hamza is also scared of him as she mentions to her friend "*jo choti si baat per maar peet par utar ae wo itni badi baat pe chup nae bethega*" when disclosing her nikkah to another man in episode 4 and many other times.

Many would agree that being in a relationship with someone who is borderline obsessed with you would indeed make life much more difficult for the object of obsession. Consequently, romanticizing not-so-romantic characters is a huge flaw in itself. While some viewers might feel sympathetic towards Feroze's character in *Ishqiya*, we might believe his aggression towards Hamna depicts signs of obsession. So often Hamna feels uncomfortable that one wonders why writers do not enlighten the audience that such behavior on part of men is quite plainly wrong.

We do witness Romaisa's strong character and how she stands against Hamza's harassment of Hamna. She strongly condemns it and files khulla. Therefore, the drama serial *Ishqiya* ended on a high note, leaving a deep message for the new generation. Some people liked the ending because it shows how a harasser's life gets ruined in the end. (Saleem, 2020)

As we can see in the table of the conversation analysis data which has been gathered and the descriptive analysis, the dismal portrayal of an aggressive lover who cannot appreciate the idea of consent and the presence of a powerless female protagonist who cannot find herself to fight off such advances, is a consistent and relentless effort by the story tellers in our electronic media. These plays have perpetuated these messages openly or subliminally at a pace which can lead to adaptation by the masses as the cultivation theory suggests. More dangerously the unceasing airing of such content can suplicate and gratify such ideas in a society like ours where the youth is already disarrayed and confused in their social behaviors. The world has already gone into a transition where consent is supreme in romantic relationships, Pakistan, however is still harboring the concept of 'no means yes' and romanticizing it through the dramas. Such narratives can also desensitize the public, normalizing antagonistic behaviors and making abusive conduct as a standard of love and adoration.

Conclusion

Almost every one of us has witnessed harassment in a drama, movie, or even in a song, but because it is framed in a particular way, most people probably wouldn't even recognize it as harassment or a crime. From the discussion in this paper, it can be concluded that harassment is being romanticized by the Pakistani drama industry. Furthermore, these aren't the only romanticized examples of harassment in our culture. It's about time we started to see them for what they really are.

Pakistani society as a whole is failing to confront the problem of harassment once and for all because most people are unaware of the enacted rules and their rights or are afraid of social stigma and family standards. It is believed that the problem of harassment can be reduced with the passage of time with the aid of awareness initiatives. Though, many women and children did come forward, reported their incidents, and took a step to punish the criminals under the enacted laws of the state. This is a big step toward igniting the societal change that is so desperately required, especially in nations like Pakistan. However, rising cases of harassment depict the fact that the issue of harassment is widespread and society is somehow continuously learning it from different media sources. The situation has reached the point where many harassment scenarios are considered the expression of love and women are destined to tolerate them. It is necessary to take more concrete steps to regulate the media programs to effectively control the menace of harassment in Pakistani society.

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