

Impact of Bollywood DSTV on Identity: A Study of a Select Group of South African Indians in the Metropolitan Area of Durban

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ABSTRACT Indian cinema played an important role in connecting the South African diasporic community with their land of origin in the Indian subcontinent. In the late 1980s videocassette recorders (VCR) led to the virtual demise of the Indian cinema industry and during the late 1990s DVD's played an important role in promoting Indian entertainment and culture within the diaspora. These three modes of entertainment and cultural contact with the land of origin was however restricted to specific themes and events in the Indian sub-continent sometimes promoting particular values, ethnic and political orientations which viewers had very little control of. The advent of Bollywood DSTV has however provided the South African diasporic community with a wide range of bouquets to select from. This study examines the nature and impact of Bollywood DSTV media viewing and its influence in shaping the diasporas sense of identity.

INTRODUCTION

The media is known to be a powerful communication medium in shaping and reshaping identity. A variety of communication media exists but by far visual media is known to have the greatest impact on the way one perceives the world around them. With technological advancement, visual media has taken different forms. Commencing from public theatre screened through projectors to current DSTV technology, there is a marked difference on the nature and impact that visual technology has had on the way people think and act. This is so because with the former mode of theatre there has been some control on the extent and frequency of viewing as compared to the latter which provides easy access since it is home based. In the case of the latter, viewing and being connected to DSTV is more likely to occur with greater frequency. The transnational nature of DSTV provides a variety of global flow of information and images. By far the most rapidly developing DSTV channel is Bollywood which not only targets

one of the world's largest population in India but also its diasporic communities that are scattered across developed and developing nation states. Bollywood DSTV has become an important source of contact for diasporic communities to their homeland as it helps to a certain extent to maintain their sense of identity. For transnational Indian communities who at some point in time might want to return to their homeland, Bollywood viewing is more meaningful to keep in touch with their homeland. In respect of diasporic communities who have some degree of permanence in their host countries, Bollywood viewing is likely to have varying impacts on their identity. It is against this context that this paper examines the impact of Bollywood DSTV on the identity of a select group of South African Indians in the Metropolitan Area of Durban. The paper commences by examining the South African Indian media context followed by constructing a theory of Bollywood theatre. This is followed by looking at identity challenges within the diasporic community. Thereafter the impact of Bollywood on the diasporas sense of identity is discussed. Finally the paper presents the findings of field research and examines whether the viewing of Bollywood DSTV has any impact on the identity of the South African Indian diaspora.

METHODOLOGY

This paper draws from a variety of methodological orientations. Firstly it constructs a pro-

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file of the South African Indian media by examining archival materials and conversations with local people in the media industry. A theory of Bollywood theatre is constructed by analyzing contemporary literature in the field and analysis of secondary sources of information. The sections on identity challenges within the diasporic community and the impact of Bollywood on the diaspora's sense of identity is similarly constructed. The impact of DSTV on the South African diaspora is assessed through primary data using a semi-structured questionnaire. In many respects, this study compares similar to that undertaken by Kaur and Yahya (2010) on the impact of DSTV on the Singaporean diasporic community. Their study was based on a longitudinal qualitative analysis of households whilst the South African study focusses on 67 males and females selected through purposive sampling technique representing a diverse group of respondent's from whom both qualitative and quantitative data was elicited. The qualitative data was subjected to content analysis and the most popular responses are analysed for this paper.

RESULTS

South African Indian Media Context

In the early history of Indians in South Africa from 1860 onwards entertainment and leisure time activities was virtually nonexistent. This was largely due to Indians especially those of indentured backgrounds being confined to remote parts of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and in certain parts of Gauteng Province. As compared to their merchant counterparts, who were confined to the urban centers of both provinces, they had some access to leisure time and recreational activities due to easy access facilitated by public transport, telecommunications and financial affordability to spend on leisure time activities. For the indentured Indian, life on the remote farms, removed them from any self-indulgence they may have desired.

In KwaZulu-Natal which has the largest concentration of Indians in the country, entertainment activities through cinemas were largely accessible to the urban rich who were concentrated in the city centre. The Grey Street complex in the city of Durban housed a large population of Muslims and Hindus. Amongst these

religious groups were Memon and Gujarati speaking Muslims and Gujarati and Hindi speaking Hindus. These two Indian communities were privileged to view Indian films at the Royal Picture Palace in Victoria Street under the auspices of the African Consolidated Theatres Group (A.C.T) which was a concessionary segregated theatre established around the early 1900s under strict colonial policy which restricted the mixing of races (Coppens n/d). In the remote part of the province, entertainment activities were virtually non-existent due to a lack of amenities such as theatres. Being largely populated by indentured Indians, cultural and religious activities in part provided a sense of community. It is against this context that Indian cinema became part of community life.

In the urban centres, Indian entrepreneurs seized the opportunity to build theatres that will cater for the entertainment needs of the diasporic communities. In the urban centres of Durban many such theatres were established. The Avalon was the first Indian owned cinema to be opened in 1940, followed by Naaz in 1953, Shah Jehan in 1956, Shiraz in 1968 and Isfahan in 1976 (Jagannath 2014). Similar theatres were modelled in small towns which comprised small settlements of the diasporic community. In areas that had no theatre, it was common to screen films through a projector within the neighborhood which served as an open air theatre.

In the 1970s television was introduced for the first time in South Africa. The rich who could afford it found an important medium through which they could meet their entertainment needs together with their family. Almost all programmes on the state owned television network was Eurocentric in content which was part of the apartheid government's propaganda machinery. Drive in cinemas which were historically reserved for Whites experienced dwindling patronage. Some of these opened their doors to the Indian community. In the 1980s when the video cassette recorder (VCR) was introduced, the Indian cinema houses dealt a major blow due to reduced patronage. The advent of VCR resulted in new markets emerging in the supply and distribution of Indian films for home viewership. The VCR was soon to be replaced by Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) resulting in large scale pirate copies flooding the market (Sewsunker 2002). This era saw the end of the VCR as a mode of family theater. In this period major shopping malls began to

emerge in the city centre and conglomerates such as Ster Kinekor and Nu Metro cinema groups began to emerge (Primo and Lloyd 2011). This may be considered to be the final blow to small scale Indian owned cinema. Another revolutionary change in the Indian theatre sector was the introduction of Digital Satellite Television (DSTV), a private television broadcasting company offering North and South Indian entertainment packages on a subscription basis.

In the era of VCR's and DVD's, viewers exercised greater control on what they watched and when they could. They had a choice on the type of films they wished to view. With the advent of DSTV, the bouquets and programmes are scheduled and viewers have very little choice on what they would like to view. This is no different to the state owned television network where all subscribers view the same programme at the same time. The choice of content on DSTV is limited in that networks consist of a one way flow of material. Engagement with DSTV is beyond the boundaries of national society and it is controlled transnationally that determines the nature and type of content that can be viewed.

DSTV in South Africa is relatively a new appendage to the number of media offerings in the country. It is a broader array of communication technology that offers a way to reinforce long-distance identities. A distinct feature of DSTV apart from a diverse spectrum of arts, culture, news and entertainment that it provides, is the language medium which it uses to communicate with the audience. The vernacular amongst the South African Indian diaspora has almost disappeared but it continues to remain an important source of identification, particularly as a representation for both religion and identification in keeping with the North/South Indian affiliation that is prevalent in the home society.

Constructing a Theory of Bollywood Theatre

Given the rise of "Bollywood" a colloquial reference to Indian films that originate from India, there is increased scholarly interest in this commercial cinema which is largely located in Mumbai. Ebrahim (2008: 64) asserted that despite Bollywood's popularity in recent times, it is not the only Indian national film industry that exists but there are many that are located regionally. However, it is Bollywood that overtime made its mark at a global level with significant

measure of international success. Reference to Bollywood as India's cinema industry, in some quarters is perceived to be derogatory as it denotes Hollywood as its standard of reference making it look as though it is Hollywood's step-child (Ebrahim 2008: 64). Nonetheless despite these dissenting voices, Bollywood in the past decade has earned a significant status in the global film industry.

Since the 1970s and 1980s Bollywood has undergone major transformation. It has undergone generational change in the film industry as the major stars and directors of this era have been succeeded by their children. The global expansion of transnational television, international brands and global aspirations has given rise to a very different genre of cinema amongst the young cadres who succeeded their talented predecessors. Hence Bollywood films are more outward looking in their content and style in contemporary times compared to that produced by the previous generation who mainly targeted the closed domestic market (Athique 2012: 112).

According to Banaji (2006: 1) skilfully choreographed dances, moving songs, aesthetically pleasing or lavish sets and costumes and sensational plots and characters have invited the attention of newer and wider audiences and, in tandem, given rise to the popularity of Hindi films. Chakravarty (1998) and Kazmi (1999) cited in Banaji (2006: 1) have provided interesting content analyses of Hindi films depicting nationalism and 'culture' to the 'role of women' and 'nature of the hero' in the film and what it is to be Indian connected to cultural traditions.

The role of Indian films in the process of state and nation building may be questioned. A "nation" is considered to be a social construct formed on the principles of either inclusion or exclusion. This social construct is subsumed by the internal divisions underlying the relations of gender, class, and caste through the making of collective national identity, culture, and interest. Popular Indian cinema has long been known to comprise particular forms of nationality, including common language, culture, and identity. Additionally it enunciates ideologies that enable, contest, and negotiate the conflictual social relations that lie at the heart of the post-colonial nation-state (Rosen 2010: 85; Thobani 2014: 489). On the contrary, Appadurai, cited in Aggarwal (2010: 2) asserted the "nation-state" archetype in line with shifting global economy,

where flows of capital, people, and goods are the norm, itself is an outmoded assertion.

Despite various aesthetic and political overtones, the Indian film industry enacts broader questions about colonial fantasy, masculinity, national identity, and modernity, as well as the rhetoric of martyrdom and terrorism in a period of what Arjun Appadurai cited in Aggarwal (2010: 2) referred to as "high globalization." Indian film focus shifted from a materialist approach to the state, ideology and representation to questions of its impact on consciousness, sexuality, and desire, as well as in constituting subjectivity within a postcolonial theoretical framework. Film scholarship is also increasingly attending to the question of communalism (Thobani 2014: 490).

Appadurai's assertion of high globalization can be seen in the way Bollywood films targets diasporic communities as consumers of mass media products indigenous to the ancestral homeland. Indian films since 1998 apart from focussing on the domestic markets began to focus on Western youth culture targeting Non Resident Indians (NRI) and diasporic audiences. Stafford (2006: 4) noted that the trend has been less towards socially realistic cinema and moreover reflected consumerist fantasy in light of an increasing number of NRI and diasporic audiences in the UK, North America, Africa and other parts of the globe. These NRI and diasporic audiences are financially better predisposed to pay higher ticket prices thus increasing the profit on Bollywood export products. With its ability to reach and circulate among diasporic communities on whom it is dependent on for its global profile, revenues and remittance, Bollywood functions as "a crucial determinant in globalizing and deterritorializing the link" between the homeland and the diaspora (Bhatia 2011: 6).

At a domestic level, one finds a massive popular audience in need of cheap entertainment which is met by Bollywood. The audience includes a significant proportion of people with limited access to education, which enjoy universal genres such as action, comedy and melodrama and more specifically 'Indian' stories with spiritual/mythological themes (Stafford 2006: 3). In the 1970s Indian cinema developed a more socially aware and politically orientated form of cinema, partly subsidised by public funding. This political cinema has gone into decline, but to some extent the tradition of 'socially aware' films

has been supported by Indian filmmakers (Stafford 2006: 3).

In most films, the traditional Indian family is known to have taken precedence over the individual. However, of recent the audience are led to believe that living within western societies would not destroy their traditional lifestyles since western culture can co-exist alongside Indian norms and values. On Bollywood stages, couples are portrayed as achieving modernity through love marriage and through traditions which is a familial approach to conclude the marriage. Hence as a reflection of India, the Bollywood romantic formula represents an unchanging dedication to nationhood (Rosen 2010: 85-86).

Bollywood films to a significant extent illustrate the political engagement of the nation state on certain assumptions with regard to the status of Muslims in India. It highlights the relation between religion, the national subject and gender. It frames around collective violence within the paradigm of communalism rooted significantly in inner religious intolerance and prejudice. Notwithstanding the fact that religious traditions and communities are far from being homogeneous, most of these religious traditions and their communities are treated as modernisable through secularisation with the exception of Islam. Despite the secularist projection of these films, they nevertheless depict certain religious traditions as being compatible with the nation's identity, its cultural politics and forms of social belonging. These traditions are thus embraced into the nation as though Islam and Muslims are fixed firmly outside of it (Thobani 2014: 491-495).

Although Bollywood may be perceived as the most popular, attracting large audiences both domestic and within global markets, in comparison to other regional film industries its total film output is almost half. Regional film industries confined to the South of India are known to attract larger audiences as compared to Bollywood as reflected in Table 1.

It will be noted from Table 1 which depicts the type and number of Indian films produced in 2003. The four Southern film industries representing the Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam language groups produce more than half (479) of the total number (877) of Indian films produced in the continent. Such a trend is not surprising since the South is known to be endowed with more cinemas and a higher per cap-

Table 1: Type and number of Indian films produced in 2003

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Assamese	17
English	23
Marathi	25
Bengali	49
Other	62
Malayalam	64
Kannada	109
Tamil	151
Telugu	155
Hindi	222

ita cinema attendance rate compared to the North (Stafford 2006: 3).

Identity Challenges within the Diasporic Community – The Role of Visual Media

Diasporic communities are caught between social and psychological processes that shape their identity. They either have to assimilate within the host communities norms and values and integrate the dominant culture of the host country. In doing so they undergo a process of acculturation where they have to unlearn many of their beliefs, culture and ideologies and begin to accept those of the dominant culture. The extent to which they resist domination of their culture from that of the host society will to an extent determine their social position in the host country. Often, according to Govender (2012: 10) the diasporic community are confronted with the challenge of determining where their “home” is. Home is defined as either those from which they have originated or that of their host country. Govender (2012) asserted that within the diaspora individuals are “either here or there”, they are torn between the host country and their land of origin. Dickinson (2007) in this instance asserted that they are caught between two cultures and have to make a decision on which one serves their self-interest. The extent to which they are affected by this will depend on the length of naturalisation within the host country. The longer their presence in the host country and the number of successive generations that are produced will determine the extent to which they are acculturated and assimilated within the dominant culture of the host country.

In so far as the Indian diaspora in South Africa is concerned, living “here nor there” is not a

major challenge to their identity. Very early in their evolution as a diasporic community, they have been exposed to British colonialism which never provided them an opportunity to assimilate within the broader English culture. Thereafter in the 1940s onwards they have been exposed to apartheid which maintained a clear boundary between the different race groups. The Indian diaspora was neither assimilated within the dominant Afrikaner culture nor became part of the majority indigenous Black population. However over generations through modernisation taking place in the country, the Indian diasporic community have taken on some of the western values that came with it. This to a large extent has been inspired by the mass media which projected images of westernisation in its different forms.

The question that emerges is what the media has to do with identity formation and positioning? Lorenza (2013) asserted that the link could be established by understanding how identities are constructed through representation since the media is a practice of representation that uses image, text, symbol and sound. Siverstone and Georgiou (2005) cited in Lorenza (2013: 188) argued that the media are seen not to be determining identities but contributing to the creation of symbolic communicative spaces through representation of minority or ethnic groups. They further pointed out that minorities often do not appear in mainstream media. Even though when they do they are often represented in stereotypical and alienating images. In media spaces where minority groups are given an opportunity to appear are not because meanings about them are constructed but rather such meanings provide frameworks for inclusion and exclusion. Indeed media contributes to the process of boundary maintenance through representation of minority groups that elicit either inclusion or exclusion (Lorenza 2013: 188).

During apartheid the Indian diaspora were given certain concessionary spaces within the mass media. With regard to the audio media, they were provided with limited airtime that aired aspects of Indian culture through the state controlled media. This audio media prohibited the airing of any programmes that will be a potential threat to the hegemony of the white ruling class at that time. In terms of the visual media, the television only became a household communication media in the 1970s. Here again television viewing was highly regulated with no provision

made for the airing of programmes that will be of interest to the Indian diaspora. In all respects television programmes consisted of the dominant political ideology of the apartheid government. According to Dickinson (2007: 167) such restrictions on the mass media in respect of diasporic communities can be understood from the perspective that organised diasporas can be a source of concern in respect of security threats since they are known to promote regime change, support situations of conflict, promote public opinion and draw international support for their cause. In the South African context, the Indian diaspora has been in the forefront of resistance against apartheid and it comes as little surprise that they were restricted in terms of the main stream media in the country.

In the post-apartheid era, although some limited opportunity is provided on television to screen some aspects of their diasporic culture, in the main these are limited to western and local indigenous content. With the exception of a dedicated public radio station for the diaspora there has been an increasing demand for visual programmes that depict Indian culture. In the 1990s, just after democracy there has been a heightened interest in DSTV subscriptions within the diaspora which contain a variety of North and South Indian bouquets. Although access to DSTV is open, it is only the rich that can afford subscribing to it. For the not well off members of the diaspora the only access to visual media is that provided for by the state.

Access to transnational media that contain purely Indian bouquets has placed Indo-South Africans in a dilemma. As compared to the past there has been a degree of acculturation in respect of their cultural identity due to a lack of exposure to Indian audio-visual media. In the post-apartheid era, with heightened exposure to Indian visual media the likelihood of raising a sense of consciousness on their Indian sense of identity cannot be dismissed. However, exposure to such transnational media may also be seen as undermining their loyalty to South African society. On the other hand it can also foster loyalty to their host country. Notwithstanding such diversity in responses, Dickinson (2007: 160) noted a rejection of dual citizenship with India, which is underscored by the desire of Indo-South Africans to be South Africans primarily. Complicating this further, is a tension between the optimism of the "Proudly South African"

dream and the frustrations of living in a nation still fragile from the economic and racial fractures of the apartheid past (Dickinson 2007: 160). However, there may be a class difference in the way media shapes ones identity. Considering that within the diaspora it is the rich that have access to DSTV it may be postulated that they are more than likely to develop some affinity for their home of origin whereas for those that cannot afford such subscriptions have no alternative but to be exposed to the state run television network that portrays images and programmes that represents a "Proudly South African" sense of identity in the interest of nation building.

Viewing transnational media on the other hand can discourage integration of diasporic communities into their host societies. Constant viewing of transnational visual media can indeed alter the commitment of Diasporas to the host country. Visual media helps to reinvigorate and sometimes polarise contact with their former home societies. Transmission of images of home and other diasporic communities have the potential to facilitate the trans-migration of diasporic communities to other societies. This has been witnessed in the case of South Africa during the post-apartheid period that there has been widespread transnational migration to western countries by Indian diasporic communities to places such as the UK, Australia and Canada to mention a few. On the other hand the visual media can strengthen the construction of identities and the maintenance of transnational commonalities. It can also slow down integration and result in a hybrid diasporic identity emerging.

Impact of Bollywood on the Diaspora's Sense of Identity

According to Tere (2012: 2), Bollywood films may be perceived to be the "opium of the Indian masses" as viewers depend on this medium to help them escape to a world of fantasy. In a very unambiguous way, cinema to a large extent shapes the cultural, social and political values of people within a country. In many respects, the same can be said about diasporic communities who are exposed to a wide genre of films spanning a multitude of issues. However studies on the effects of Bollywood films on the lives of the diasporic communities are scant. Nonetheless a study undertaken by Kaur and Yahya (2010) on the effects of Zee TV on the cultural,

social and political values of Singaporean Hindu communities provide some insights and worth a reflection.

Kaur and Yahya (2010) undertook a qualitative study of Hindi speaking households in Singapore. They observed the consumption of the Hindi cable channels of Zee TV and Sony entertainment over two years and the resultant behaviour or lifestyle as affected by the viewing of these channels. They observed that specific serials were dutifully watched especially by grandparents of households who identified with the trials and tribulations of characters depicted in these programmes to the extent that they became emotional in respect of the twists and turns in the serial plots of the programmes. Hence viewing Hindi channels provided the Hindi speaking communities in Singapore the opportunity for a renewal of Indian values and cultural codes especially among the older generation. By emotionally engaging in the serial plots they were participating in the re-endorsement of Indian values in their own lives which they could not otherwise do within the mainstream public space in Singapore (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 269-270).

Kaur and Yahya (2010: 270) noted that watching Indian serial movies went a step further in questioning certain taboos such as the colour of skin in the Indian marriage market. Indian films are known to present an exotic view of beauty and those who are fair skinned are considered handsome or beautiful. Often one finds in between serial episodes, adverts of different skin lightening potion screened. They conclude that people behind the ad know how to sell products because they know that being fair in India is absolutely essential in getting ahead in life. Fairness equates with beauty. You not only get the desired husband but also different opportunities in life (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 271).

For the expatriate, viewing Indian films provided an opportunity for keeping up with the familiar social conditions existent in the land of origin. It helped to facilitate the constant affirmation of social norms in the host land which did not necessitate assimilation of other cultural values as offered by western films. While the expatriate claimed a modern, educated mind-set in not adhering to social taboos, they nonetheless were able to recognize the social issues being discussed and maintained connection with their home society through the Hindi language medium. Thus watching Hindi cable entertain-

ment was an avenue of rediscovery of contemporary life in India for Indians who have been long settled in diasporic communities globally (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 271). For Bhatia (2011: 5), Bollywood has been crucial in bringing the 'homeland' into the diaspora as well as creating a culture of imaginary solidarity across the heterogeneous diasporic community.

It was noted in the Kaur and Yahya (2010) study, that Indians were awed by the display of mythical, spiritual heroes on television and it created an avenue for Indians to connect with their heritage through their television screens. The serials also provided lessons and an elevation of emotions for Indian culture as they watched their gods and goddesses experience similar trials and tribulations as in human life. The reaction in the diaspora to these serials was not dissimilar, especially among the older generation of viewers. However, during the study Kaur and Yahya (2010: 273) interestingly noted none of the families observed conducted *puja* (prayers) despite watching serials that depicted Hindu mythology. In essence what viewing of religious programmes did was create a sense of desire to revisit the homeland and connect with cultural and religious linkages as prevalent in the homeland which otherwise would have been forgotten or lost due to acculturation within the diaspora.

There is an intergenerational difference in the way in which the older and younger generation experience their religiosity and express these. In the study, the younger generation found it much easier to learn Hindu mythology by viewing programmes instead of reading about it. In so far as physical and psychological wellbeing was concerned the middle-aged showed greater interest in programmes highlighting Yoga exercises, Ayurveda therapies and meditation which became a fad amongst Indians as alternative forms of healing. An off shoot of viewing Hindi channels was the emergence of interest in culture and fashion expressed in dress accessories, sari designs, and application of fancy *henna* designs and adornment of decorative *bindis* (stick-on accessories for the forehead) (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 274-275). With these trends, Tere (2012: 4) contended that women in Hindi cinema are personified as decorative objects with rarely any sense of agency being accorded to them.

Before the advent of Hindi cable channels, Indian culture in the study was considered old

fashioned and boring. By viewing the way it was celebrated in the homeland, the diasporic community experienced a sense of rejuvenation in wanting to participate in the traditional Indian way of doing things (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 276). Cable television succeeded in unifying the Indian diasporic communities with their counterparts in the subcontinent by raising a common sense of consciousness expressed through the appreciation of Hindi music and the display of talented artists and musicians (Kaur and Yahya 2010: 278).

The glamour of Bollywood for Bhatia (2011: 6) was couched in the rhetoric of a “shining India” of global capital, of India as the technology capital of the world, and of a land inhabited only by robust border-crossing elites for whom holidays in Switzerland were the norm - has become so pervasive that it shaped representations and shut out references to the local, the small, those on the fringes and the working poor. This was most visible in films that portrayed characters moving comfortably between India and the West, through transnational marriages or for purposes of business. In most respects, such characters were wealthy Indians who pursued business abroad, owned private jets and possessed unimaginably opulent homes. Such representations obliterated the reality of India, its poverty and myriad number of social issues.

In films appealing to the diaspora, Terre (2012: 5) observed that there was a clear emphasis on the superiority of Indianness over western culture. The Indian was presented to be pure whereas western subjects were pictured as morally decadent. Western woman in these films were depicted as morally degraded and inferior to the Indian woman, whom the hero in the film eventually chose. On the other hand, women were also represented within the confines of traditional, patriarchal frame-work of Indian society. The ordinary woman was hardly featured in Bollywood films. They were presented as satiating the husband’s ego resulting in a conventional closure that demands adherence to traditional values of marriage and motherhood. On the flip side of the coin, films inspired by religion and mythology portrayed women characters as the epitome of virtue and values, those who could do no wrong. Such portrayal at best highlighted the power structures that governed Indian society which does not impart any agency to women. Moreover, more contemporary cinema has

attempted to explore taboo subjects like sexuality, infidelity, surrogacy, divorce and live-in relations (Terre 2012: 2-6).

In most films, the traditional Indian family was known to take precedence over the individual. However, of recent, the audience are led to believe that living within western societies would not destroy their traditional lifestyles since western culture can co-exist alongside Indian norms and values (Rosen 2010: 85-86).

DISCUSSION

In discussing the impact of DSTV on the South African diaspora’s sense of identity, the findings suggested very little that there has been any significant impact. In this section the findings from the primary data are discussed which affirms that there is minimal impact on shaping the diasporas sense of identity.

The profile of respondents was adequately represented across gender and age. Approximately two-third (65%) of the respondents were females as compared to one-third (35%) were males. Majority of the male and female respondents were between the ages 22 to 65. In respect of distribution of respondents by faith groups, 60 percent belonged to the Hindu, 33 percent to the Islamic and 8 percent to the Christian faith group. Respondents were engaged in a diverse number of occupations with 40.9 percent holding professional jobs, 3 percent technical, 10.6 percent and 3 percent skilled and semi-skilled occupations respectively, 16.7 percent home executives and 7.6 percent and 18.2 percent self-employed and unemployed respectively. A vast majority of the respondents were married making up 65.6 percent of respondents whereas 26.9 percent were single. A small percentage which is 6 percent were widows and 1.5 percent were separated from their spouses. Respondents ranged between the third to the fifth generation with 44.8 percent in the third, 46.3 percent in the fourth and 3 percent in the fifth.

On the question as to whether watching DSTV has increased the understanding of viewers about the Indian way of life, 78 percent responded in the affirmative as compared to 22 percent who felt that it did not. Of the 78 percent who responded in the affirmative, the most common response was that the programme “*increased their political, religious and economical understanding of India*”; “*created aware-*

ness about culture and their belief system"; "helped better understand family relationships"; "increased tolerance about other faith groups"; "provided understanding about different religious events"; "hardships and challenges"; "insight into environmental issues" and "understanding different language groups". It will be noted from these responses that viewing Indian DSTV has heightened respondent's individual sense of awareness which otherwise they did not have. This may partly be attributed to the South African diasporic community with the advent of DSTV now having a greater opportunity to view a wide range of programmes and channels with increased levels of frequency. These affirmative responses also illustrated that overtime the South African diaspora has undergone a process of acculturation which was only now emerging with a sense of revitalisation about their ancestral homeland through frequent exposure to Indian DSTV.

In contrast to the above, those respondents who have not experienced an increased understanding about their ancestral homeland may have become resilient to what was being screened on Indian DSTV channels. Responses such as "they are different"; "they are caught in class and caste structures"; "only the rich side of India is portrayed" and "images of poverty is harsh and it affects me" suggested that the South African diasporic community see themselves as the "Other" and do not share much sentimental attachment to their ancestral homeland.

In respect to how respondents perceived South Africa having been exposed to Indian DSTV programmes, only five percent responded that their perceptions had changed. Some of the responses are that "it has brought me closer to my motherland"; "India has lots to offer in terms of my belief" and "makes me proud of being an Indian". In contrast, an overwhelming majority have indicated that exposure to Indian DSTV had no impact on their perception about their ancestral homeland. Strong responses such as "it does not affect me at all. My upbringing was not like Indians in India caught in culture and religious issues"; "India has much to learn about modern ways of living. South African Indians are way ahead"; "my history is different and I think Indians in India are caught and too steeped in culture and not in universal values"; "proud to be a South African Indian, we have

good cultural morals"; "South African Indians are different from Indians in India"; and "we have progressed in all aspects" attests to respondents affinity to being South Africans. More than one-third (37%) of the respondents qualified their perception of their diasporic country as "proudly South African" which strongly suggests the respondents loyalty to the diasporic home.

With regard to whether viewing Indian DSTV has had any impact on the respondent's cultural life, a 67 percent response rate was obtained. Of this, less than a third (31%) felt that Indian DSTV impacted positively on their cultural life as compared to just more than a third (36%) felt it had none at all. For those who felt that Indian DSTV impacted positively on their cultural life, the most popular responses are captured as "am able to enhance and relate the Hindu culture and beliefs"; "I am more informed about my festivals and other religious practices"; "I feel closer to my culture especially since all the Hindu religious days are highlighted"; "I respect my culture more. I have learnt more about my Indian culture"; "improved on my Hindi language"; "we see how the priest in India do the prayers"; and "made me want to interact more in doing religious activities". Such positive responses affirm a strengthening of cultural bonds derived through Indian DSTV viewing. For those respondents who felt that viewing Indian DSTV had little or no impact on their cultural life, the most popular responses were "we South African Indian live a very different life"; "not really. I can relate due to my strong orientation to culture from my family"; "not much. I believe in prayer. I pray but keep to what's necessary. I have learned a little that it pays to have faith in the God above no matter what name you may call him by"; "not much as we still practise our culture in South Africa. It is sometimes a bit different from ours"; and "it has not as I have my own cultural roots here in SA". These responses suggests that respondents have formed their own sense of identity within the diasporic community and it is unfazed despite being exposed to a similar culture through DSTV viewing.

Interestingly when looking at similarities between the South African and Indian way of life, some differences are noted. Of the 45 percent of responses to this question, 18 percent felt that there was no similarity whilst 27 percent

felt that there were some. For those who felt that there were no similarities they commented “*not really. We do not practice the dowry system. There is no class system in South Africa. As Indians there are cross culture marriages*”; “*no. Lifestyles are completely different*”; and “*no our culture seems less diverse*”. In contrast, those who felt that there were similarities commented that “*some similarity in terms of the temples and prayer*”, “*yes emphasis on close family ties*”; “*yes the foods, languages and some family lifestyles and to some extent their cultures*”; and “*yes. We are not far removed. Minor differences in details*” are some of the responses obtained from respondents. It can be noted from the responses that respondents have provided, that there are quite diverse perceptions on similarities and differences in the Indian way of life.

CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the evolution of South African Indian visual media commencing from projector screened films to its demise spurned by the advent of DSTV. It traced the different phases that the Indian visual media has undergone in the country. With the advent of DSTV there has been increasing fervour for Bollywood films and programmes especially amongst those who have the financial means to do so. For those who don't, they are confined to the state owned television network which provides very little exposure to Indian culture and its way of life. In the main, the study highlighted for those that are exposed to DSTV there is some presence of connectivity but not heightened to their ancestral home society. The difference between the levels of connectivity to the ancestral home society is not significant. In fact it is almost equal. An overwhelmingly large percentage (95%) felt that viewing DSTV had very little impact on the way they perceived their home society. Within this, more than a third (37%) of the respondents qualified their perception as being “Proudly South African”. This finding is significant as it illustrated that DSTV has had very minimal impact on the identity of the diaspora and it reflects a sense of belonging to the host society. The impact that DSTV had on the respondents has largely been on reinvigorating their cultural and religious way of life. Generally respondents in the study have seen themselves as more advanced and modernised

as compared to their counterparts in the ancestral home society. Although it may appear that the South African diaspora is unfazed by the impact of DSTV on their sense of identity at this point in time, one cannot firmly hypothesize as to what it will be in the future. This in part may be attributed to DSTV being a relatively new feature within the diaspora and as such the full impact of it has not come to light.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the scope of this study which was confined to a small size of respondents it provided some insight into the impact of DSTV on the way they perceive their ancestral home and their host country. Viewing Bollywood DSTV is a relatively new recreational activity amongst the South African diaspora and its full impact is perhaps only partially known through this study. A longitudinal and more extensive study in the future, using this study as a baseline will perhaps provide greater insights on the extent to which Bollywood DSTV has impacted on the South African Indian diasporas identity.

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