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**RESEARCH PAPER****Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Drama "Ranjha Ranjha Kardi"**

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**ABSTRACT**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a breakdown of interactive or transactional communication. It enables the understanding of the message conveyed through different media through linguistic analysis. This provides the basis for either deductive or inductive reasoning. It justifies various genres of text, allows for liberating linguistics and creativity in all its forms. It reinforces the ways in which language users use language to communicate with power dynamics in mind. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) to investigate the need for such drama in Pakistani society to combat the stereotypes and stigma attached to the portrayal of mental illness. Based on the framework of "Critical Discourse Analysis" (CDA), the study hypothesizes that the issue is again power relations, the propaganda we are part of about mental illness, the distortion of the facts, the story created by the media that third world countries are bad – sensing their marginalized communities through the media. The prejudice and stereotypical behaviour exists towards people with disabilities whether physical or mental.

**KEYWORDS** Discourse Analysis, Pakistani Drama, *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*

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**Introduction**

Pagal ho kiya? It is a concept that is highly romanticized in our culture when we want to mock, humiliate or curse someone. Words like "saen looki", "Allah looki", "malang", "khiska/khiski huwi", "paich dheela" are often used when talking about people with mental health problems. The same group does not refrain from using words like "lula", "langra" and "andha" for certain physically challenged people.

The research topic is "Presentation of mental health illness through Pakistani drama *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the aim of the research is to construct an interpretation based on CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis). The researcher intends to analyze the drama paying attention to its content and context. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary study: Dijk (1993) explains that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a complex field of research that must be explored due to its interdisciplinary nature. It has its own socio-political perspective.

Understanding the intricacies of language acquisition is a complex field (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Cook, 2016). This field is then responsible for shaping the perspectives that are formed in society, the constructed stories and to what extent (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 1998). It gets more complicated when we talk about a marginalized community (Pennycook, 1998; Lippi-Green, 2012). The drama '*Ranjha Ranjha*

Kardi' is based on the protagonist 'Bhoola' whose name aptly describes our feelings towards such people.

The feelings are based on either unnecessary pity or excessive insensitivity. The accompanying connotations with which we then label/label them are horrible and far from sensitivity or even humanity. This is an unfair expectation of a society that uses such terms to deal.

However, critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be used to question social inequality by discussing the role of power through elite institutions and groups exercising power, the consequences of which we have seen as social inequality. That inequality takes many forms, ranging from cultural, sexual, ethnic, political, racial, social and many others.

Any type of Communication based on different languages, whether verbal or non-verbal, computer or graphic, affects power relations, and that is exactly what the Critical Discourse Analyst is looking for. Dijk (1993) explains that "more specifically, critical discourse analysts want to know which structures, strategies, or other features of text, speech, verbal interaction or communicative events are manifested in those forms of reproduction" (p. 250). The drama 'Ranjha Ranjha Kardi' does the same.

The drama 'Ranjha Ranjha Kardi' mainly understands how there is a misuse of social power in our society against those who suffer from any mental illness. It highlights the dominance of a culture of humiliation to people suffering from mental health challenges and their family members. Inequality against the taboo of mental illness is performed, reproduced and resisted by actors. In the case of such a work of art, Critical Discourse Analysts should take a stand and thus be willing to explore, investigate, and ultimately resist such psychological and social inequality.

The drama "Ranjha Ranjha Kardi" explores the concepts of domination, power and social exploitation, inequality in culture, society and economy. Abuse of power is practiced where there is a popular culture that tends to stigmatize mental illness. We see social inequality and injustice when people from marginalized communities in our society suffer because of ignorance. We encounter a lack of compassion and tolerance for such people. People feel differently about those who are experiencing a mental health disability, disorder or illness. The drama, Ranjha Ranjha Kardi exposes the hypocrisy of this society which includes all the critical issues of discrimination, stigma, stereotypes or taboos.

### **Literature Review**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary field of study (Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1995). Dijk (1993) explains that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a complex field of inquiry that needs to be explored due to its interdisciplinary nature. It has its own socio-political perspective. However, critical discourse analysis can be used to question social inequality by discussing the role of power in dominance. How elite institutions and groups exercise power, resulting in social inequality (Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2001). Inequality manifests itself in many forms, political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial, gender, social and many others (Young, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991).

The way speech, text, communication, verbal communication, non-verbal communication and interaction takes place is just a copy of the different ways of speaking based on power relations. Dijk (1993) explains that "Specifically, critical discourse analysts want to know which structures, strategies, or other features of text, speech, verbal interaction, or communicative events influence these repetitions" (p. 250).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is related to psychology because it studies the human mind through language. When used for communication, it has psychological effects that have yet to be explored and undermined. Different people around the world communicate without understanding the psychology of communication and language. In a sense, critical discourse analysis (CDA) removes linguistic biases. Prejudice against any marginalized community. The focus is only on research through language use when there is any kind of discrimination.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) gains its meaning in a social context. It is about society, sociology, socio-economic forces, social goods and socio-cultural, socio-political scenarios. This is not just about linguistics and its sub-branch which is sociolinguistics (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1998). This is a question of search and interest for all members of society. Language is about acquiring it from society through communication. It is acquired by society to function in society (Vygotsky, 1978; Halliday, 1978).

Language is not just about following language rules using set patterns, but rather a natural way of using language in different genres, being creative (Bakhtin, 1986; Gee, 2014). Dijk (1993) states that "unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take a clearly socio-political stance: they articulate their perspectives, positions, principles and goals both within their discipline and within society." (page 252). Dijk (1993) argued that "in this sense, critical discourse theorists should also be social and political scientists as well as social critics and activists. In other words, CDA is relentlessly normative: all criticism by definition requires applied ethics.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) not always can be authentic, as Fairclough (1985) states: "The criteria for its adequacy are not simply perceptual, descriptive or even explanatory" (p. 253). To judge how effective it can be, relevance can be an authentic parameter. It can be said that critical conversation analysts are the most effective agents of change. Dijk (1993) elaborates that "this became particularly clear from processes of great change such as class struggle, decolonization, the civil rights movement and the women's movement". Discourse analysts are constantly engaged with persistent problems of oppression, injustice, and inequality. Such are the interests and research of discourse analysts. Dijk (1993) explains that although social inequality is evident, discourse analysts approach it by emphasizing the role of discourse in "reinforcing and challenging dominance, because dominance is defined as the exercise of social power" (p. 250).

## **Material and Methods**

Qualitative research is adopted because it deals with the theoretical aspect of critical discourse analysis which is suitable for analyzing the drama *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*. Since all episodes of the drama are available on YouTube, the speech is available with subtitles and analyzed keeping in mind the cultural, social and psychological factors. The methodology deals with analyzing the behavior of the drama *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* towards the character of Bhoola. Then create the relationship of a character like Bhoola with other similar characters in our society and how they suffer with their family. The content analysis of the drama then deals with the element of prejudice because it is an important subject of stereotyping towards the marginalized community of the country.

## **Introduction of Bhoola Character**

Bhoola is the protagonist of the drama *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* who suffers from aging which is a form of mental illness. But the diagnosis is not obvious because his treatment is

not considered properly. But he is presented as a person who is naive and funny, but at the same time he does not fail to amaze with his intelligence.

### **Noori's Character**

Noori is another character in the drama, *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi*, who shows in his true form how not all people are angels or demons. The drama revolves around the unusual love story of Noor and Bhoola. They constitute the characteristics of both, because life is learning. Noor is presented as a disillusioned girl with bigger goals in life. Noori belongs to a poor family. His parents live by collecting garbage from the streets, so he is not comfortable around them. He rejects his parents' lifestyle and hopes for a better and respectable life. To fulfill this wish of hers, she moves to a city and starts a respectable living by working in a factory.

### **Results and Discussion**

A critical discourse analytic approach was employed to identify the discourses drawn upon to construct versions of mental illness, the strategies through which these versions are constructed, as well as the functions of these specific depictions of mental illness (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Philips & Jorgensen, 2002).

### **Stereotypical Discourse**

Evidence:

Episode 1 to 3

'Tum toh choray ho' 'Haath dho baar baaar'

### **Analysis**

*The people who work for garbage collection and removal of waste in Pakistan are referred to as 'Chora', and this type of employment is looked down upon with such disdain. Noori as a character is shown to be part of the section belonging to that class and caste. She hates the humiliation she gets, as it is apparent in the first 3 episodes. People should be treated with dignity regardless of any profession. It is mostly the Christian community in Pakistan that is in the profession of garbage collection and removal although that's not the case in the drama.*

### **Humiliating Mental Illness**

Evidence:

Episode 2 'Allah lookein'

Bhoolay is referred to as 'Allah lookein'

### **Analysis**

*As someone who has no common sense and that unfortunately is the case with anyone fighting the battle of mental illness in Pakistan. Even the attempts to show sympathy towards such people lacks the sensitivity with regards to which they should be addressed in order to avoid labels or stigmas of all, or any sorts. It is not necessary that people battling with mental health illnesses are always innocent, and they can rather be really wise, exhibiting signs of intelligence*

### **Power Dynamics; Socio-Economic Inequality**

Evidence

Episode 10, 15-17 mins.

### **Analysis**

*The Chacha of Bhoola is a greedy character, and is not getting him the right kind of treatment in order to occupy his part of the wealth. The concept of joint family system and family politics is evident from the drama as it is part of the culture in Pakistan. Also, traditionally, instead of treating people struggling with mental health issues, they were tied to ropes on their charpai (sort of a bed used in rural areas). People around them who were related to them would exercise power amongst them based on their understanding of the mental health dilemmas, and that understanding was/it still is very rigid and shallow.*

### **Transgender Inequality**

Evidence

Episode 4, 25-28 mins.

### **Analysis**

*Bhoola has a friend who is shown to be a transgender and does circus for livelihood. He has his own set of struggles belonging to the marginalized group of the community. The struggle for the rights of transgender is real and there hasn't been much noise for their rights until now*

### **Theory of Politeness**

Evidence:

Episode 20

'thora jhala hai mera beta'

### **Analysis**

*The mother of Bhoola is trying to cover up his innocence by saying that he is stupid as that's the perception people tend to have for people struggling with mental health disabilities. Again, the intellect of people struggling with mental health is almost always questioned. Although, that's not the case that anyone and everyone suffering mentally is stupid.*

### **Humanizing Mental Illness**

Evidence:

Episode 23

In the end, Bhoola doesn't want his child to become like him but his wife said she would love it to have such an innocent soul like him.

### **Analysis:**

*Acceptance and tolerance for people struggling with mental health challenges through glorification of the relationship and grasping the audience through emotional attachment. People related to the mentally ill people have a huge role to play.*

### **Rhetoric Art of Speaking**

Evidence:

Spoken throughout in many episodes

### **Analysis**

*In many episodes, 'Aaye Aaye Mazzay', 'Aaye Aaye Mazzay' – the dialogue that got so popular as it was said in a manner that represents the art of speaking in a manner such people usually do, it kind of became a part of the Popular Culture*

## **Discussion**

The behavior of our society in relation to mental health issues is conveyed by the drama, *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* in the strictest sense as it shows how the populist narrative against the stigma of mental health is contested. Bhoola's character develops empathy in people so that people really gravitate towards him. One can criticize what is seen in the drama on the subject of forced marriage or adultery, how Noori is forced to marry a person she later has feelings for.

The concept of marital rape is also so ingrained in the culture and society in which it operates that it has been shown to be justified by default (MacKinnon, 1989; McMahon & Hayden, 2002). This research also aims to criticize the drama of forced marriage and marital rape. Social inequality and patriarchy are so deeply rooted that it is conveyed through media and communication, although it also questions the role of the two women in strengthening Bhoola's character. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to challenge social structures based on unequal power relations.

The relationship between language, mental health and social power structures is also discussed. It aims to reveal the ways in which society oppresses individuals and their families. Critical discourse analysis unpacks discursive strategies to reveal the ways in which narratives, perspectives, and power relations are expressed through language (Gee, 2014; Fairclough, 1995)

## **Conclusion**

Media promotes mental health issues with exaggerated, inaccurate and comical images that they use to portray people with psychiatric disorders and distort mental health issues. The media itself allows a vague idea of the situation and the craziness of it all. Stigmas and taboos are the real scum of society, but unfortunately they exist and reappear every day. This is their real life - so many people with intellectual disabilities are disturbed. It is a brilliantly composed drama that is equal parts artistic and mentally challenging. Characters like Bhoola have taught us so much that they don't want our pity because it doesn't serve them, they are tough as anyone in the world should be. Mass media, because of its enormous reach and constant exposure, has a unique ability to change perceptions and influence the opinions of many people. In fact, the media shapes our thoughts and understanding of various issues and events. The often negative and inaccurate portrayal of mental health problems in general and people with psychiatric disorders in particular reinforces misconceptions and myths about mental health problems. This is made worse by the exaggeration and sensationalism of the unusual behavior of the mentally ill. Efforts are being made to create awareness regarding mental health illness in Pakistan but there is a lot that needs to be done. There is a national health crisis and an emphasis should be on the establishment of the mental health hotline (Duffy et al., 2018; National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2020).

## **Recommendations**

The study is important for the critical discourse analyst because it aims to challenge social practices that discriminate and control a marginalized community.

In general, the media is equally responsible for presenting extremely distorted versions of mental illness, questioning the insanity of some people with mental illness by portraying them as aggressive, alien, threatening or violent (Hoffman, 2007; Wahl, 1995).

Then, as a result of such representation, the reactions of other people in society to such people are contemptuous.

Instead, what is commendable in a drama, *Ranjha Ranjha Kardi* - they have given a new perspective in such people which is compassion, empathy and tolerance.

Awareness should be created that discusses the harmful tendencies people struggling with mental health challenges may or may not have (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Stuber et al., 2008). It should be conveyed through the awareness campaigns that how significant it is to be sensitive towards the rhetoric about mental health. The understanding of the struggles of marginalized communities in Pakistan in particular can contribute to reducing the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health problems

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