

THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN TV MELODRAMAS ON ARMENIANS

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## Abstract

Considering the current public discussions and the Armenians addiction towards the TV melodramas the research is conducted to find out in what level the foreign soap operas influence on Armenians behaviour. There are some concerns that foreign soap operas advertise their cultural values, traditions, overall their country via soap operas. I examined the Brazilian TV melodrama O' Clone and the four Indian TV melodramas (Ինչ կոչելի այս սերը- Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon, Թռիչք- Udaan, Հարսիկը- Balika Vadhu, Մերժվածը- Uttaran) that are broadcasting now.

I measured the degree of the influence of foreign soap operas by two separate surveys, interviews with the professionals and the focused group interview conducted with six students who have examined the foreign and Armenian TV melodramas.

For my research I have conducted interviews with professionals, focused group interview and conducted two different surveys concerning to the four Indian and Brazilian O' Clone TV serials.

I have discussed my topic with Sergey Sargsyan and Emma Sargsyan, asked their opinion about broadcasting foreign soap operas in Armenia and the possible influence of the foreign TV serials on Armenians.

During the focused group interview the participants shared their opinions about the possible influence on Armenians by the foreign TV serials and shared four interesting real-life stories where people representing different age groups were influenced by the foreign TV melodramas.

## Introduction

By the degree of efficiency with which television turns off the human nervous system, it has few competitors. The average person spends about 1642 hours a year in front of the TV - 15 years from the natural active life we have released. People do not need to take everything seriously and copy everything they see on the TV melodramas. Getting to know and be informed about others traditions and cultural values is useful, but being targeted from the TV melodramas and trying to act like the main characters of the soap operas is not normal. Definitely, a person can like one's appearance and how he/she acts in a given scene, but for that changing your attitude and daily life is going to become an addiction.

Regarding the TV melodrama, the scenario of it mainly consists of storylines that tend to include real, everyday stories that are close the viewers. It includes scenes experienced by almost everyone; like marriage, relationship problems, unemployment or a successful person, domestic violence, and so forth. Mainly the stories include specific parts that are similar to regional daily difficulties.

For Armenians, it is relevant and exciting to be informed about everything, which is one of the points why they tend to watch foreign TV melodramas. Mainly that melodramas include all the exciting parts of the foreigners daily life. Starting with when they wake up, all their preferences (food, clothing, music, and so forth), their cultural values, traditions,

everything. In some cases, people become interested and attracted by the TV melodramas and began copying whatever they do. A few years ago, in Armenia, there was a Brazilian soap opera O' Clone, which became so popular among Armenians that it was broadcasted twice.

First it was broadcasted in the beginning of 2000s and later the second time it was broadcasted in 2013. Officially the number of episodes of the TV melodrama is 221 with variable durations. For the international viewers the number of episodes were enlarged up to 250 with the fixed duration of 45 minutes (En.wikipedia.org, n.d.).

Moreover, now the new trend among the Armenians are the Indian TV melodramas. Currently broadcasting Indian TV melodramas are the following: Ինչ կոչել այս սերը- Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon, Թռիչք- Udaan, Հարսիկը- Balika Vadhu, Սերժվածը- Uttaran.

“*Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon*”- was first broadcasted from 2011-2012, has 11 seasons and 398 episodes (En.wikipedia.org, 2018).

“*Udaan*”- was first aired in 2014, consists of 2 seasons and 1039 episodes as of May 5 2018 (En.wikipedia.org, 2018).

“*Balika Vadhu*”- originally ran from 2008-2016. the TV serie has 2 episodes with 2245 episodes. It was broadcasted in Armenia by the Shant TV (2017)(En.wikipedia.org, n.d.).

“*Uttaran*”- the TV melodrama is one of the longest TV series by episode count

(3 seasons with 1549 episodes), that ran originally from 2008-2015 (En.wikipedia.org, n.d.).

In recent months, three of Armenia's leading TV channels, Armenia TV, ATV and Shant TV has started showing Indian television series, which are widely discussed and often criticized by social network users.

Complaints from Indian production TV series say they are "low quality," they are "primitive," and most of the leading TV companies have airtime for these soap operas. Television criticisms are contrary to the fact that Indian television series have a high demand and a high rating. Also, private TV companies have no obligation to form aesthetic taste, just like the states.

Life.panorama.am contacted the Armenia TV and ATV public relations department, which is part of the Panarmenian Media Group, to find out the motives for showing Indian soap operas.

Armenia TV and ATV offer multi-format programs, from political projects to own TV series, which are the most viewed and rated in the media industry.

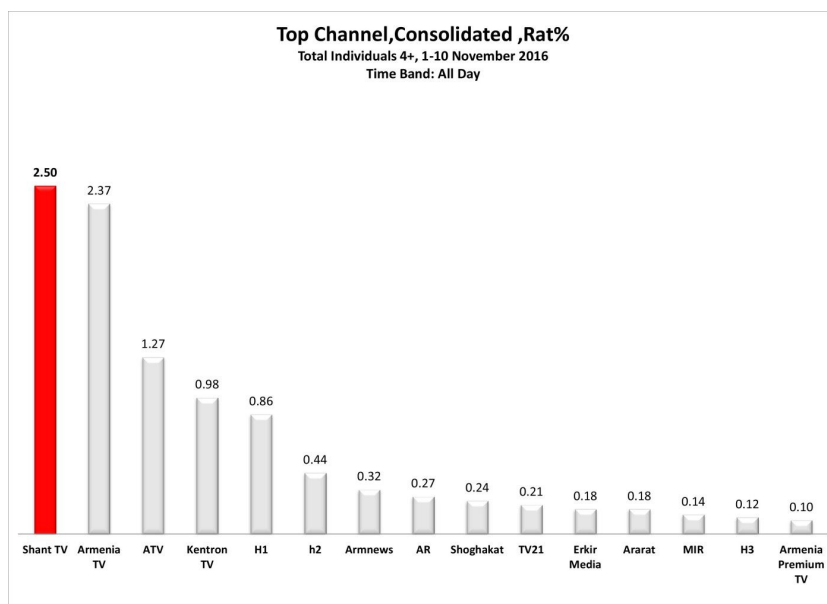
Indian TV serials are no exception; they have a high rating in many countries around the world. Armenia TV now has two Indian TV shows, Ինչ կոչել այս սերիը- Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon and Թռիչք- Udaan. Udaan Indian TV serial has won the whole world; it was in top ten of the Indian soap operas last years, quotes Panarmenian Media Group.

The TV company mentioned that they have cooperated with Globo TV for over ten years, as a result of which the top TV channels, "O' Clone," "Brazilian Avenue," "Brave Woman," and so forth were broadcasting on Armenia TV (Սեփրոնյան, 2017).

With the help of interviews and surveys are done, I aim to find out whether the foreign soap operas influence on Armenians behavior, lifestyle or not. If there is an influence than will clarify whether it has a long-term or short-term influence on Armenian behavior.

According to the data of "Admopher Armenia" International Telecommunication Measurement Company, in the first decade of November 2016, Shant TV had the highest viewing capacity in Armenia with 2.50 percentile, which indicates that on average Armenians prefer to watch more Shant TV programs than any other TV channels. The second place is occupied by "Armenia" with 2.37 percentile, and in the third place is the "ATV" with 1.27 percentile.

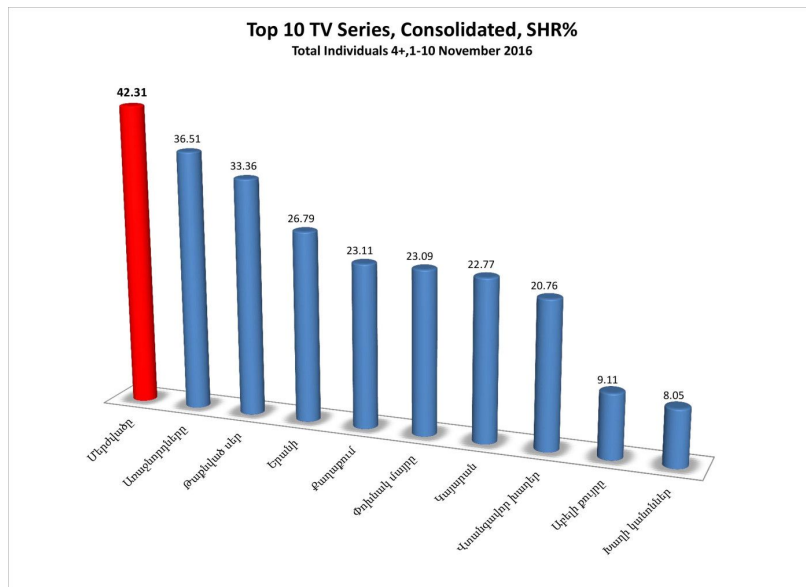
### Most viewed TV channels, see picture 1 (Top Channel)



The majority of TV series was watched by the Shant TV series "Սերժվածը-Uttaran" (42.31%), followed by "Armenia" TV

with the TV serial "Առաջնորդները-Leaders" (36.51%), "Shant" TV with "Թաքնված սերը- Hidden Love" (33.36%) TV serial.

### Most viewed soap operas, pic.2 (Top 10 TV Series)



The "Մեր ժամանակը- Uttaran" soap opera has received a wide public response and is actively debated in social networks as well. It should be noted that according to "Trends" Google search engine, the most searched word in the last month is

"Մեր ժամանակը" (National.am, 2016).

Based on the interviews done with professionals from different fields and two surveys I aim to find out whether the influence of the foreign TV melodramas has a long-term influence, or it has a short-term influence and by the arrival of the new soap operas the old ones lost their influence on Armenians.



## Literature Review

TV melodramas are one of the types of diversion, unique about other TV shows. There are appropriate contrasts among the serials themselves that are different in format, content/ significant components, and the group of viewers. As the crowds of the audience have changed throughout the years, so has the substance of TV melodrama, all the more for creating mode, which has stretched out marvelousness and excitement to this television arrange.

A critical area of mass media research is the degree to which TV impacts watchers ideas of social reality, Gerbner and Gross (1976) contend that TV is the focal social arm of American culture serving to socialize individuals into institutionalized parts and practices. TV becomes the introduction of fundamental assumption about the way life is and what esteems are vital.

“There appears to be an important relationship between what a person watches on TV melodrama. What he or she believes to be true about those aspects of the “real world” which tends to be portrayed with exaggerated frequency on soap operas” (“Women and Soap-Operas: Popularity, Portrayal, and Perception,” 2017).

As in many countries, in Armenia as well the “tastes” have changed. People are always looking for something new, exciting. Some other style of a serial which will give them new topics for discussions and copying. Back in 2000s Brazilian TV melodramas were leading, for instance, O’ Clone.

Undoubtedly, the taste of the people in TV melodramas has changed in 2017. For now, the "leaders" in Armenian TV channels are Indian TV melodramas, and of course, it has an impact on Armenian audience. To know how long the influence of Indian TV melodramas will last we still need some time.

A Brazilian TV melodrama, *O' Clone* (2004), together with Moroccans and Brazilians as the main characters were broadcasted in the post-Soviet Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstani town of Bazaar-Korgon, the serial become very popular among the population. The viewers were so addicted to the serial as it was the first TV program that featured Muslims as the main characters during the post-Soviet period. Meanwhile, the orientalized images featured in the serial can be read as highly stereotypical, Bazaar-Korgonians nonetheless utilized the soap to widen conceptualizations of what "true" Muslimness could be. Some even used it to support their efforts at religious piety. The TV melodrama was certainly not a religious object. Nevertheless, residents utilized it in explicitly religious projects. These forces us to consider the role that such ambiguously classifiable objects-those that fall outside of the undeniably religious/non-religious dialectic-play in "doing religion."

"Watching the serial was a chance for them to see how Muslims "really" lived. As they collectively viewed the program or analyzed episodes with friends and acquaintances, *O' Clone* becomes a part of the daily discussion in the community over the nature of Islam and Muslimness" (McBrien, 2012).

Following this example, we can assume that the same reaction could be seen in Armenia as well. The TV melodrama O' Clone was broadcasted in Armenia in the 2000s and later in 2010. Back in the 2000s, the O' Clone was the main discussion topic for everyone.

The source I found about O' Clone is a reflection of what was going on in Armenia during the time TV melodrama O' Clone was shown and the result of it. So based on this example and my research I am planning to clarify what impact the TV melodrama has on Armenians during broadcasting the opera twice. Television will clarify what reaction the Armenian viewers had back then in the 2000s and 2010.

What changes has it had between that two periods of time?

Besides the fact that it changed the market (unique clothing, accessories, and so forth, were sold connected with the main character's outfit), in Kyrgyzstan it became a foster for political changes as well.

“The main dilemma of the program does not require a Muslim presence to make it tenable. Nonetheless, the writer decided to add a “Muslim twist” to this tale. Perez’s serials are known including social issues like drug, alcohol abuse. While she was thinking about the theme of O' Clone, she said she chose to comprise Muslims to make the program a multicultural one” (McBrien, 2012).

With this point in mind, one of the leading questions become evident, which shows that the serial was not meant to teach or spread Muslim culture via the TV melodrama. It is merely the style of the serial director.

A question needs to be clarified: What influence the “entertainment,” Muslimness, had on Armenians behavior?

“The perception of the Orient in Armenia seems corrupted, or it is duplicated in the most tasteless ways and means. It is saddening for me to note that it is TV melodramas, with their Brazilian and Oriental motifs, which dictate fashion in Armenia. Our Armenian women are so taken with these TV melodramas that after each broadcast the whole of Yerevan’s filled with Asian dancers or girls who look like they just came from a Brazilian beach. I remember when girls used to put on shawls and dream of becoming “Jade.” Moreover, it was not just the dress sense that was copied but also the music, the way of life – everything” (Fashion & Nazaryan, 2017).

This article shows that despite the fact that Brazilian serials are no longer shown on Armenian TV channels it left its impact on fashion sphere. The report was published in 2007, which means that almost after four years the O’ Clone still has its influence on Armenians. Now, if you ask some about O’ Clone or Jade, Said, they can quickly answer to all of your questions without having any doubts. A question raises: is O’ Clone still here, in Armenia?

In the field of TV melodrama, a new era has begun. Instead of Brazilian serial the Indian once are almost in every Armenian TV channel. Now

Armenians tend to use phrases common to Indian nation and began listening to Indian songs.

Being a less expensive and furthermore an available item, and additionally involving necessary components of sentiment and human connections, desires, and encounters, Indian TV melodramas catch the purchaser market of different nations, including Armenia.

“Some of the Indian TV melodramas today attempt to keep the old TV melodramas’ legacy, and, for example, depict some social problem or another in a small rural environment. Also included are universal themes: love, hate, adultery” (“Soap Operas from India to Armenia,” 2017).

From this article, it becomes clear that one of the reasons for showing Indian serials in Armenia is that it is cheap. The next step that needs to be done is to identify why Armenian TV channels show Brazilian TV melodramas.

Indian TV melodramas emphasize the process of decision making and share the daily problems that advance the plot line. The other way of reading Indian serials is that there you can see how male value the fabric of women’s lives. The genre of TV programming is a useful tool for raising awareness about the main changes in the society (“Women and Soap-Operas: Popularity, Portrayal, and Perception,” 2017).

## Research Question

My primary research question is to clarify whether the foreign TV melodramas influence Armenians. Which in its term has a follow up a question that needs to be clarified whether the influence that the international TV melodramas have has a long-term or a short-term influence.

With this, it will be clear if the only reason for choosing Brazilian and Indian TV melodramas is the price and quantity of episodes of the TV melodramas or there is another reason behind that.

The second sub-question is: If other countries PR (advertise) their customs, beliefs, common phrases, via TV melodramas or it happens unconsciously.

My research is going to concentrate on Brazilian TV melodrama O' Clone and four Indian TV melodramas. With this sub-question, it will be clear whether the conscious or unconscious advertisement of country influence on Armenians or not.

## Methodology

Because of not having enough valid sources connected with the influences of TV melodramas in Armenian, I decided to use examples of other country researchers. Based on the example of other countries have made my survey question types, visited Indian exhibition held in Armenia, interviewed professionals from different fields, and TV channels.

I have prepared two different types of survey; one for Brazilian O' Clone TV melodrama and the other one for Indian TV melodramas. The survey is divided into five aging groups. I have conducted two survey types: online and face to face. The survey questions were shared overall among 130 people.

The survey consists of 5 different question types:

- Yes/No
- Open-ended (no more than three sentences)
- Age and gender-based
- Multiple choices
- Levy scale questioning: ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

The purpose of my survey is to understand what interested more Armenians in foreign TV serials and why they spent almost all their free time on TV melodramas.

If there is an influence, there will be a need to find out whether it has a short-term or long-term influence on Armenians. The two foreign country TV melodramas that I have chosen for my research is the Brazilian TV melodrama O' Clone which includes Muslim and Brazilian elements in it.

The other country TV melodramas are the Indians which become popular this year (2018) including all Indian traditions.

After having the approval of survey questions from the instructor the survey was shared in the Armenian language.

The two survey questions are divided into three sections.

- The first section includes general information:

a) Age

b) Gender

c) Profession

d) Whether they have watched Brazilian O' Clone/Indian TV melodramas or not.

Based on the last question of the first section of the survey they answered to the second or third part.

From the first part of the survey, it will be easy to find out how many male and female participated in the survey, approximately what age they are and what is their profession. Where after choosing the profession it will be clear who prefer watching TV serials.



- The second section is for the ones who watched or are watching the melodramas. The questions are the following:

- a) Before watching Brazilian/Indian TV melodramas how much were you informed about the country and traditions?

This question will show whether they watched the TV serials by having some background about a country or they watched it with the purpose of "learning" something about them.

- b) Several Indian TV melodramas are broadcasting now. Which ones do you prefer? (four different Indian TV serials are broadcasting on Armenian TV channels.

This question is to see how many of them the majority of Armenians prefer to watch; all of them or only one.

- c) While watching Indian/Brazilian TV melodramas, have you learned something about their country and traditions? If yes, please choose all the possible answers.

These two questions are to clarify whether the information in the scenarios of the TV melodramas is enough to raise the awareness about a country, its traditions, culture or not and what exactly they learned from it. That will automatically answer the question whether including scenarios specific to a

country are for targeting the audience to watch the serials with interest or for advertising their country, for instance for increasing tourism there.

d) Why do you watch the Indian/Brazilian TV melodramas? Can you, please, write down a few phrases you learned from Indian/Brazilian television series? These questions fit the best to find out the purpose of watching foreign TV serials. After which with the help of the second follow up question will see how attentive the viewers were while watching the TV serial.

e) Comparing both countries' TV melodramas, Brazilian O' Clone and Indian TV melodramas, which one do you prefer?

Considering the fact the viewers already have a little information about Indian TV melodramas and the Brazilian ones, they can give their preferences whether both country TV serials, none of them or one of them. That will show which country TV serial is more influential and preferable for Armenians.

f) Which country's TV melodrama would you like to broadcast more often? Is there a particular country TV melodrama that you would like to watch? After finding out which country TV serial, from the ones that Armenians have already watched, they prefer, there is a need to see what country TV serials they expect the Armenian TV channels to broadcast next.

- The third section is prepared for those who have not watched TV serial.

The third part includes the following questions:

- a) Is/Was the public discussing events and actors that were happening in the Indian/Brazilian TV melodramas?
- b) Was it disturbing seeing things related to O' Clone TV melodrama at the markets? (for Brazilian TV melodrama survey)
- c) Did the public discussions about the melodramas rise interest in watching them?
- d) Was it disturbing when others use Indian phrases while talking? (for Indian TV melodramas survey)
- e) As a result of everyday discussions about Indian/Brazilian TV melodramas, have you learned something new about the country and its culture?
- f) Can you write down a few phrases you learned from Indian/Brazilian television series?

This section questions are mainly for knowing whether the public influenced by the TV serials made others interested or influence others to find it interesting to go and watch that TV serial or not.

I have conducted **interviews** among the professionals from 3 different fields, including a focused group interview with students who have examined the Armenian, Indian and Hispanic TV melodramas.

- 1) *Armenian TV Channels*: Armenia TV, Shant and ATV.

From TV channels I could contact Hasmik Manukyan, who is the Head of Program Departments at ATV.

I have talked to her and asked with what criteria they make decisions on which country TV serials they are going to broadcast next. Whether they choose to broadcast Indian TV serial because it is cheap and consists of too many series?

2) Contextual replacement or Opinion-making. From this sphere I contacted Sergey Sargsyan who is the Goodwill ambassador at World Vision Armenia; Honorary Ambassador at Repat Armenia; Lecturer at AUA; Host, the scriptwriter at ATV Armenian Television; and Works at ArmComedy.

The main questions of interviews were:

- Their opinion on broadcasting TV melodramas from different countries.
- What they think about the possibility that Armenians become influenced from TV melodramas.
- What hidden message the TV melodramas have?
- What idea they can give a person about a specific country?

3) From the advertiser I contacted Emma Sargsyan who is a lecturer at American University of Armenia, Director at Yerevan Outdoor Advertising Festival, CEO at SAEGE Consultants and Former Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant at World Bank.

With her I have discussed the main issue HOW and CAN the TV serials advertise their country via specific scenarios, or they do it unconsciously.

Besides interviewing professionals, I have also done a focused group interview with five students. Within the frame of group projects for one of their classes, these students paid attention to the Armenian, Indian and Hispanic TV serials and make by screening a short parody video they compared and showed the similarities and specific scenarios of those country TV melodramas.

During the focused group interview, the students shared their opinions and personal stories, why they decided to concentrate on the TV serials and made a parody video for their project. They shared four real-life stories to which they become beholder. The students who participated the focused group interview were: Anna Ispiryan, Maria Zakaryan, Irma Gasparyan, Nane Arushanyan, Ani Jilavyan.

## Research Findings

During my research, I have conducted focused group interview during which the participants told real-life stories they have faced concerning the four Indian TV serials and the Brazilian O' Clone TV serial.

These stories real-life stories point out that both the Indian and the Brazilian TV serial consciously or unconsciously influence on Armenians behavior and grabs their attention and thoughts.

Story 1: Once Maria was at a beauty salon. After entering she noticed that the workers and the clients were watching Indian TV serial with addiction. Everyone was discussing the point that Ichha (one of the characters of Indian TV serial) was death. Almost ten minutes there was the same scenario of how the characters were crying and the viewers were watching that scene by feeling sorry for Ichha. She added that there were not only elderly people. There you could find people of different ages. Mainly there were females, but later when a male entered he also joined the discussion.

During their research, the participants of the focused group interview, for the project, the participants of the focused group interview tried to find the essential elements of both Armenian and Indian TV serials common points (clothing, music, accent, makeup, traditions and so forth).

By summarising the collected information, Irma noted that even by watching only one serial from the Indian TV serials everything became clear and easy to guess what can happen next.

Story 2: Anna shared a video which she captured while her grandmother from Javakhq and her Persian-Armenian friends were discussing what happened during the previous Indian TV serial. Her grandmother was talking in the Javakhq dialect and the other two elderly people in their dialect. They could hardly understand each other, but with the help of hand gestures and common phrases learned from Indian TV serials they could find the “middle language” to continue their discussion.

Story 3: The story that shared Irma is about a little girl, one of their neighbors. There was a scene in one of the Indian TV serials where the main character collects all the golden/silver accessories they have and hide them in the garden. The following day the little neighbor does the same. She collected her accessories and hid them in the same way in their garden.

While following their group discussion about the Indian and Armenian TV serials they made interesting conclusions that vary from each other. Perhaps Armenians prefer watching Indian TV serials because they are simple and easy-going, which makes the viewers watch them after coming home from their job. Taking a look at the homeworkers/ homemakers perspective, we can conclude that while doing their job they continue watching them and later discuss the serials with their neighbors.

The targeted audience is not only the elderly people but the representatives of the younger generation as well.

The Indian TV serials have some hypnotizing parts in it, like the background where it continually repeats the same word “hudana-hudana.” Armenian compared with Indian TV serial we can say that the scenarios in Armenian TV series get changed faster than in Indian ones. There are more criminals and dramas in both country TV serials, than happy scenes. With the help of that dramatic scenes, people get relaxed by thinking that they live in better conditions than the characters of the TV serials. In Armenia elderly people always like making comments while watching the serials. They become a part of the serials and “live” with the characters all the emotional parts.

From the perspective of the other participants/analyses, they have done for their group project, of the focused group interview they added that in Indian TV serials everything is very dramatized and exaggerated than it is. They also added that from their perspective the Indians do not show their everyday life. They do not wear clothing like in the TV serials, don't do everything by singing or dancing. They combine all their traditions and show to the public. Because of which sometimes people observe not what happens in their everyday life but the traditions including the negative parts of the TV serials.

“The point that my family members are watching the Armenian and Indian TV serials makes me think what makes that TV serials so interesting



and attractive that everyone watches them.” - To satisfy her interest towards this question Ani (one of the focused group interview members) decided to watch one of the Indian TV serials. She found the scenarios very funny, whereas others take it seriously and care about the TV serial characters. Everyone has its observation of it, which differs from generation to generation.

Mainly the viewers are elderly people, and when something happens in their daily life, they compare it with the scenarios of Indian TV serial. Both Armenians and Indians tend to keep their old traditions and seeing how Indians keep their traditions in the TV serials make the elderly people watch it and become inspired by them. Elders are used to the discipline shown in the Indian TV serials, which will be hard to find in Armenia now. In Armenia, the younger generation still respected the elders and tradition, but now they learned to think out of the fixed boxes.

Through the Indian TV serials, elders remember the past and see themselves in the Indian characters. Whereas the younger generation does not give a try to find similarities between their lives and the characters lives. They clearly understand that it is nothing more than a TV serial.

Story 4: By remembering the past, one of the participants in the focused group interview Maria mentioned a story connected to the Brazilian TV serial O' Clone. When she was at a kindergarten, the O' Clone was broadcasting for the first time, and everyone was addicted to that TV serial starting from children and ending from elders. The main and famous characters of that TV

serial were Said, Jade, and Lucas. Jade used to put much jewelry, and at Maria's kindergarten, there was a girl who had jewelry as Jade has. With her jewelry, that little girl was famous among her friends and every girl who was watching the O' Clone was jealous. They were asking their parents to buy accessories like the main character Jade has. After hearing the story, the other members of the focused group interview noted that even if their parents did not buy the accessories, they somehow made something similar to that accessories and wore clothes like Jade and started to dance. Even the ones who have not watched that TV serial copied their friends for being a part of their games and discussions. They even remembered a phrase from O' Clone, which in English will be "I like gold jewelry very much."

The amount of the influence of Indian TV series is not precise how long will last, but the Brazilian O' Clone TV serial has a strong influence on Armenian and the ones who have watched the TV serial still remembers about it.

Jasmin Manukyan who is the Head of Program Departments at ATV commented about the fact/idea "Armenian TV channels broadcast Indian TV serials because they are cheap" and said that the ATV specialist tried and found out that there is a demand for Indian TV serials, so we made decision to air them.

The interviewee Sergey Sargsyan has done research concerning to the targeted audience of the TV serials and found out that they are the homemakers,

housewives and the younger generation.

As he had already done research, he commented on the topic, that the Foreign TV serials Influence on Armenians. Also said that today Armenians get the information about a country through the serials and the first thing the viewers do is that they compare their social norms and their life to the life of people in India, Brazilia, Mexico and so forth. That is how they form their opinion about foreign countries.

Whereas, Emma Sargsyan commented about the target audience of TV melodramas and said that they shape the behavior. Starting from the little kids and ending with the elderly people. If a little kid is asked a question about an Indian character Ichha or something else, they will answer to all your questions precisely. "I tend to think that each soap opera or a program that is broadcasted always lefts in influence on people,- said Emma S.

O' clone was a continuation of other brazilian TV serials. It is totally different from the other Brazilian soap operas, it was something new. It brought so much change in behavior. She added that back then when the O'clone was bradasting everyone was copying them. Armenians were wearing similar clothes and jewelry, even doing the same make ups, which leads with the behavioral change. When E. Sargsyan was a kid she also watched the O' Clone. "Maybe I was targeted. I cannot say that it shaped my behavior, but I could see how it shaped the behavior of everyone around me." You could find everything similar to the O' Clone. They used the main character faces in the cover of

many products, because the Jade (the main girl character) was nice, the Said or other male characters were sexy and everyone loved them. So it was a good strategy to attract people to buy their products, this is how everything is always done, public policy.

During the interview S. Sargsyan remembered a joke from 1990s concerning an old US TV serial “Santa Barbara.”

The joke is the following: An Armenian was planning to move to the US, and he was asked where he was going to live, and he answered: “I am going to Santa Barbara.” To the next question why Santa Barbara, he said that he knows everybody there.

By being impressed by the serials, people get to know how they live, how correctly things work there and that makes the viewers emotionally connected to that country.

From his perspective/research housewives watch TV serials to get distracted. Because it is so unlike Armenian reality, they watch Brazilian ones to see, like an alien how life on Mars is. To them, it is something which takes them away from their problems, daily chores. They just cut themselves from the reality, and for an hour they dream and see how people are using their cupboards and every detail in their homes.

People watching TV serials pay attention to the smallest things, and they just get distracted from the reality; “serials are like a drug.”

The TV serials are influencing the pop culture during a short period of time. It influences the song styles, names, even the jokes. People use it in their everyday conversations.

For instance, one of the common phrases taken from Brazilian TV serials is “Do not be like Ramesh or a classic Diogo from 1990s.”

While interviewing E. Sargsyan she said that, If you do not like it, it does not mean it does not have a target. The scariest part of all this is that kids are watching these TV serials. If you try to watch one episode you will see that there is so much violence in it. Kids have nothing to learn from these TV serials except the violence. “I will never let my kid watch TV. I never let her do it, the TV is switched off whenever I am not at home. Because I have seen what is going on. This is bringing up children to grown up to violate people. They try to resemble life as much as they can, but i think the part of exaggeration is so big in the Armenian soap operas. Just to give some drama, show component, but they don’t consider the fact that the exaggerations are watched by children and children just absorb whatever they see or hear.”

Daily Yellow pop culture influences on national mentality and the language (slagon). The superficial pop culture is like a song Despacito or Gangnam Style, they influence the society. The society copies their norms, and they make jokes about the word songs. Whereas a year later they forgot about them and they were replaced with new “Despacito’s.”

Nowadays the most frequent one reference to the TV serials in Armenia is “Ram” from the Indian TV serials.

Both S. Sargsyan and E. Sargsyan has never watched the Indian TV serials. S. Sargsyan added that people now swear on Ram when they are joking, and they say that they are sincere. One of his students said the following: “I have done the homework, I just forgot it at home. I swear to Ram.” It is part of pop culture, funny pop culture but not very deep.

From E. Sargsyan’s perspective it has a short term influence. Whenever the TV serial is placed with other country TV serials, people automatically forget about the old one and will switch to the new TV serials. As we can see we are having a lot Indian soap operas, also it depends on the rating. If you broadcast that has no rating, nobody will want to give an advertising in that soap opera and they will just stop broadcasting it. Back in 1990s people had nothing to do that is why they were watching these soap operas. Now we have a lot of thing to do but still they are watching them.

At the end of the interview S. Sargsyan added that he never watched those TV serials but become aware through public discourse at work, and when he does not get it others always asked the same question, “oh, you do not watch Indian TV serials?”

“Now it is in my brain.” It influences much more significant part of Armenians. Even those who have not watched them are aware of what is happening in the TV serials. However, it has never had a severe and

long-lasting influence.

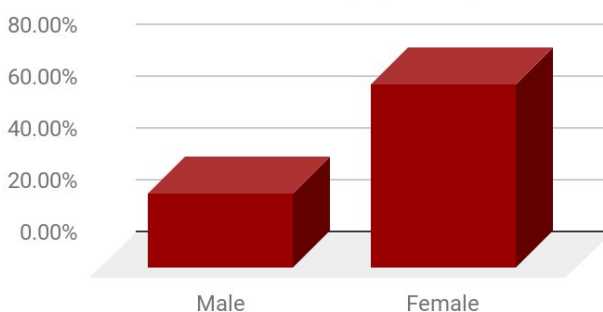
The last comment of E. Sargsyan was the following: Nothing is done by accident, it is a public policy. Foreigners try to advertise their country, values starting from Indian soap operas ending with the O'Clone. We know all the muslim tradition, like we know when you three times say “Ես հրաժարվում եմ (I do not want you anymore) then you are divorced.

E. Sargsyan thinks that this is a very carefully structured program to educate their values to others. “Unfortunately, We, Armenians, like to see what others do”, we have to change our mindset.

Compared with other country soap operas, Armenian soap operas do not try to advertise our country we tend to show more drama.

The two surveys (for Indian and Brazilian TV serials- ITS and BTS) were divided into two sections; questionnaire for those who have watched and who have not watched. The surveys were conducted among 130 people in the result of which the statistics show the following results:

Indian TV serials Gender (capture 1)

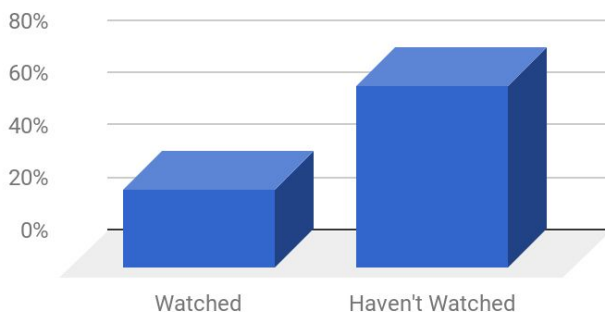


For the Indian TV serials survey mainly the survey takers age were scaling from 19 to 25 (41.1 percentile) and 41 to 70 (27.8 percentile).

From the capture 1, we can see that the dominant gender was female with 71.1 percent and the male represents the 28.9 percent.

From the survey it becomes clear that the majority of Armenians (70

How Many of Them Watched ITS?(capture 2)

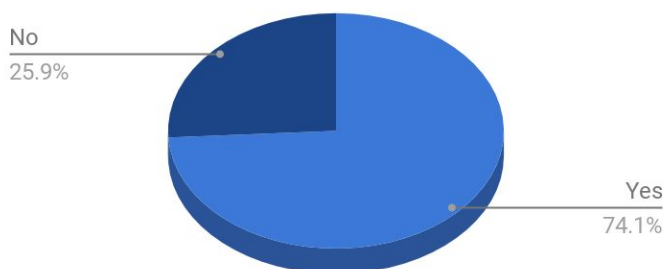


percentile) have not watched the Indian TV series. Whereas the ones who have watched them (30 percentile) have watched all the four Indian TV series: Ինչ կոչել այս սերը- Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon, Թռիչք- Udaan, Հարսիկը- Balika Vadhu, Մերժվածը- Uttaran.

To the question why they were watching, the two dominant answers were: 1) they had nothing to do, 2) it was interesting to know what will be next.

To the ones who have watched the Indian TV series, to the question whether

Learned something from ITS or not? (capture 3)

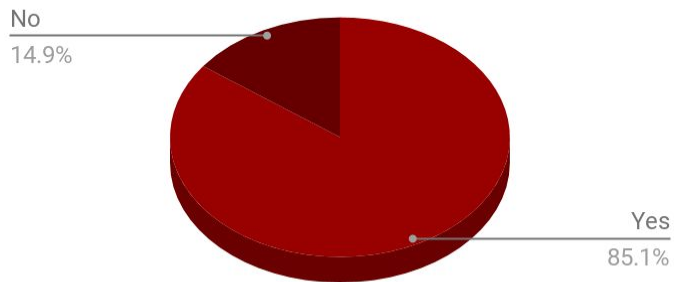


they have learned something from them or not the majority (74.1 percentile) answered yes.



Passing to the next survey section, which was made for those who have

Were the public discussing ITS? (capture 4)

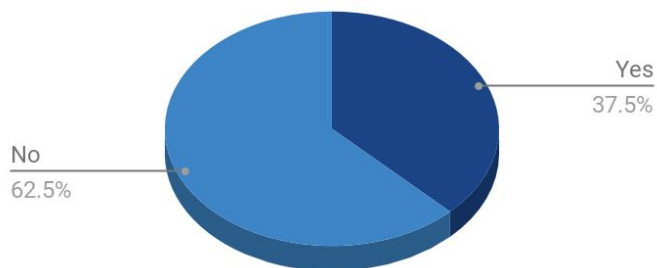


not watched the Indian TV serials, to the question whether the public was discussing the Indian TV serials or not, the 85.1 percentile of survey takers answered yes. Besides, the 77 percentile of the survey takers said

that they did not become attracted from the public discussions and never wanted to watch them.

To the contrast of the percentile of those who answered that the public

Have you learned something new about India from



was discussing the Indian TV serials (85.1 percentile), the majority of them (62.5 percentile) said that they had not learned something new from the everyday discussions. Mainly the

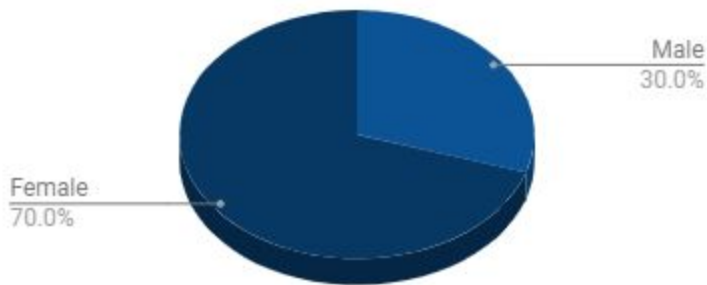
responses about what they have learned were the traditional values and the cultural characteristics.

At the end of the survey, both the ones who have watched the Indian TV serials and the ones who have not were asked to write down phrases they learned/remembered from the Indian TV serials. The phrases/words that the survey takers have remembered are "let Ram help me," Namaste, Namaskar,

Bhabi. The most remembered phrase was "let Ram help me," almost every second person mentioned that phrase.

The second survey was done based on the Brazilian O' Clone TV serial.

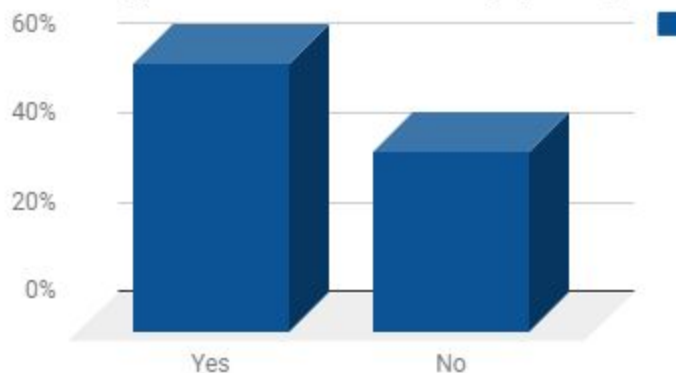
Gender (capture 1)



takers were female with 70 percentile, and the other 30 percentile were male.

To the question have they watched the Brazilian TV serial O' Clone the

How many of them watched O'Clone? (capture 2)

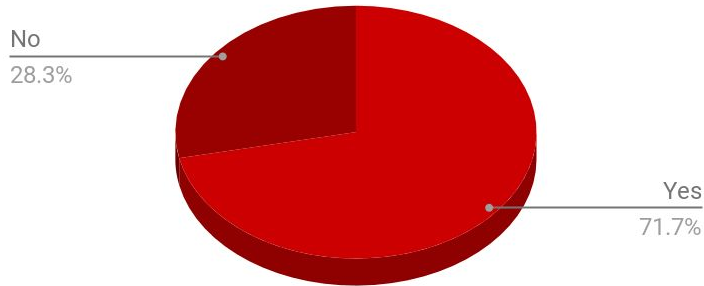


majority (60 percentile) answered yes and 45 percentile out of the ones who have watched O' Clone had no idea about Muslim. In fact, the O' Clone was mainly based on the Muslim culture. It shows

that Armenians could become attracted from the new "informative" TV serial that could provide them all the details about Muslim countries.

Having no information or understanding about the Muslim, the 71.7

Have you learned something from O' Clone? (capture 3)

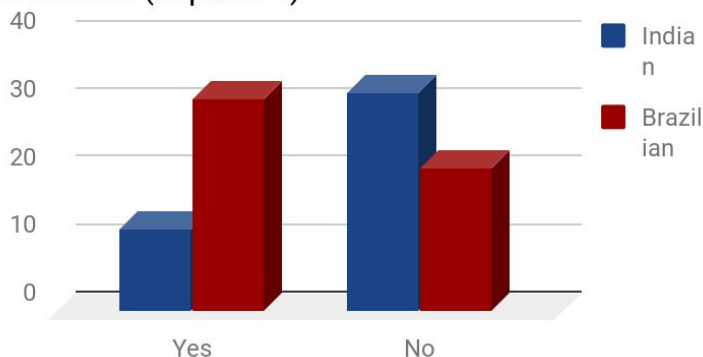


percentile of the viewers (capture 3) learned a lot. The main three things that they have learned or were impressed were the cultural values, customs and their way of living. In addition they

added that they were watching the Brazilian O' Clone TV melodrama because it was interesting and they were willing to know what will happen next.

Later in the survey takers were asked to give their preference one of

Which country TV serial do you prefer? Indian or Brazilian? (capture 4)

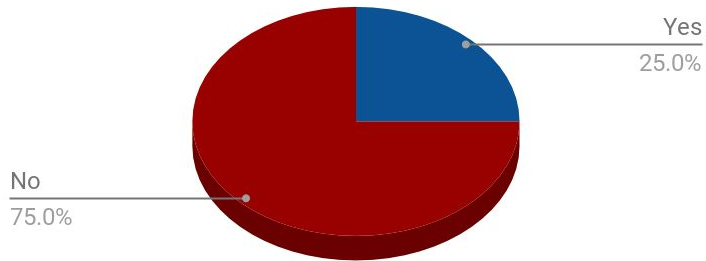


these two country TV serials. From the capture 4 we can see that despite the fact that Armenians are watching the Indian TV serials, they give their preference to the Brazilian TV melodramas.

The second section of the Brazilian TV melodrama survey concerns to the ones who have not watched the serial.

To the question whether the public were discussing the Brazilian TV

Were the public discussion make you interested in the BTS?  
(capture 5)



serial O' Clone or not, the majority (75 percentile) answered "no". Whereas the remaining 25 percentile who answered to the question "yes" have learned a lot from that discussions. The main

thing that they have learned from the discussions were the Muslim traditions and their cultural features.

Combining the responses from both sections for those who have watched O' Clone TV melodrama and the section for those who have not there were two questions asked both sections:

1) Giving their preference towards the given nine country TV melodramas.

- Out of the nine county TV melodramas (Armenian, Brazilian, Indian, Korean, Turkish, American, Russian, Mexican and England) from the votes of all the survey takers the three dominating country TV melodramas that Armenians prefer to be broadcasted in Armenia are: American, Russian and Armenian ones.

2) Both sections were supposed what they have learned during watching TV melodrama O' Clone or during the public discussions. There were quite many responses, but the dominating phrases were:

- Իշ Ալլահ (Ish Allah), Հարամ է (it is a sin), Ալիհամդուլիլահ (Alhamdulillah), Ես ոսկեղեն շատ եմ սիրում (I like gold very much).

The most used/typed answers were Իշ Ալլահ (Ish Allah) and Ալիհամդուլիլահ (Alhamdulillah).

Analyzing the two country TV melodrama based surveys it shows that the TV melodramas have influence on Armenians and the two main points that the viewers are impressed, not taking into consideration the remembered phrases, are the two countries' traditions and their cultural features.

Almost every year Armenians spent their precious time on the Indian exhibitions held in Armenia. 2018 was not exception, this year indians also



visited Armenia which lasted 5 days.

"Indian companies regularly organize such fairs in Armenia, trying to occupy a certain area for Indian

products in the local market," says Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Armenia Suresh Babu (Սուրաշյան, 2015).

In 2018 at the Indian exhibition spice, jewelry, decorative cloths, costumes, tableware, handmade wooden figures were sold.

After talking with few of the traders it become clear that this year the



bestseller is the hair oil "Amla." They said that it is a good product and helps to heal the hair and make them glow. All the given information by the seller can be right. Maybe last year was not bestseller, but this year including the photo of Ichha in the cover of the product, who is the main character of one of the four Indian TV

melodramas that are shown in Armenia, it become more popular among the Armenians. The rest of the products were not covered with some famous Indian TV melodrama characters, but from the amount of people at the exhibition was a fact that people are interested in buying Indian products. It is been years that Indian exhibitions are organized in Armenia. So Armenians are aware of Indian product/market and if there is a demand for Indian product there will always be such exhibitions.

The cover of the hair oil with Ichha face can be only an incitement to make people buy their products, as the others products that were without such covers also had a demand.

## **Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

During my research I have faced some difficulties and lack of information which somehow limited my possibilities to present more detailed and precise statistics. Basically, the written informations are the result of personal research, which needs more time to find and collect.

It was hard to get the statistics about the TV melodrama viewership, which in my opinion would make my research topic more precise. I was able to find/contact a person who could provide me that information, but because of some circumstances the information was not sent to me.

The next thing that I wanted to add to my research was the interview with Armenian TV melodrama directors. In this case the only problem was the lack of time. In my timeline I decided to contact them in the middle of the semester which in the result was too late. For conducting interviews or meetings you need to start them as soon as possible not to face with problems with managing your time.

## Conclusion

Surprisingly, at the beginning of the research, the different of the responses was drastically huge, the result was undefined. In the end, by summarizing the results of the surveys, interviews and the thoughts of the experts, comparing with the sources found based on the other country researchers, the puzzle was complete.

In the result, it becomes clear that Yes, the foreign TV serials do influence Armenians, and Armenians by understanding the consequences still watch them with the same addiction.

The majority still remembers some basic facts about the Muslim countries; learned from the Brazilian TV serial O' Clone. They are still impressed from their traditions and cultural values and remember phrases common the Muslims. To say that it changed Armenians will be wrong. The periodic changes happened while the TV melodrama was broadcasting. Now Armenians remember some facts about Muslim.

Getting to nowadays Indian TV melodramas that are broadcasting now, we can conclude that now Armenians are addicted to them, and at every corner of Armenia, you can hear the discussions about Indian TV melodramas and/or people using phrases learned from the soap operas. As Emma Sargsyan said, with the arrival of new country TV melodramas, the “taste” and preferences of Armenians will change. So, Yes the foreign TV melodramas influence on Armenians behavior, but it has a periodic influence on them. What lefts, after the TV melodramas are finished, is the information, concerning to the foreigner culture and customs they have learned from the TV melodramas.



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[%B7%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6%D5%B9%D5%A8-%D5%AF%D6%80%D5%AF%D5%AB%D5%B6-%D5%A5%D6%80%D6%87/](http://www.national.am/4238-02/)

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