

ANIMATING MEANING: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF CULTURAL SIGNIFIERS ON INDIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ANIMATION SERIES

M. Viji  

¹ M.A. M. Phil (Ph.D.), Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, SDNB Vaishnav College for women, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India



Corresponding Author

M.Viji, viji.padmanaban@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The animation industry in India is booming. It's creating an increasing number of animation programs to children. Although the majority of animations are originally made in Hindi, they are later translated into other Indian regional languages. Analyzing the cartoon series' content critically is crucial as 'Children' are watching these animation series. This study adopts Roland Barthes' semiotics to analyze the animated children's television series in India. Barthes suggests the death of the author/the creator of the text to witness the birth of the recipient allowing him to interpret, read, and produce a wide range of meanings which are a form of semiotic production that is oriented to observation an analysis of the media's messages and discussions to open the eyes of the semiotic researcher to the complexity of semiotic interpretation and new methods of using signs within the social and cultural context of the media. Applying Barthes' semiotics to television cartoons allows us to examine how meanings are formed, conveyed and understood within the cultural context of animated series. For this study, the researcher selected episodes from the three Indian animated television series Shiva, Rudra: Boom Chik Chik Boom and Selfie with Bajrangi. The Tamil dub versions of these animation series are analyzed here.

Keywords: Semiotics, Animation Series, Cartoons, Indian Animation, Barthes, Television

1. INTRODUCTION

The content of the children's television programs, in particular animation programs aimed at children, must be studied; because they have a huge impact on the youth. More than 17 cartoon channels are available in English and regional languages for children in India, which include a variety of content such as cartoons to educational programs. While India's children have long been familiar with popular international cartoons, which are often translated into Hindi and other regional languages, the Indian animation industry has begun to produce animated television series. According to Wartella and Robb, children in the twenty first century often grow up before a screen from an early age (Calvert & Wilson, 2008). Watching television is the most popular way for people to spend their leisure. Before they can walk or talk, children begin to watch. When kids get home from school, they turn to television for entertainment, frequently watching until bedtime, with a break for meals. These tendencies are still in people's lives (Signorinelli & Bacue, 1999). In this study, semiotics was used to analyse the ideological messages of the Indian television animation series.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) Analyze the content of Indian children's animated television series.
- 2) Identify the portrayal of culture in the Indian children's animated television series.
- 3) Exploring the underlying ideology in the content of Indian children's animated television series.

1.1.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the basic plot of all the series?
- 2) What is the narrative structure of the episodes?
- 3) How the characters are represented?
- 4) What sort of cuisine, clothing, and religion are portrayed in the series?
- 5) How does the series portray childhood?
- 6) What are the auditory elements?
- 7) What do the visual and auditory elements signify?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Barthes expands the "empire of signs" to include film and photography, music criticism, writing, and reading. Many pieces are deliberately didactic. Barthes contends in "Rhetoric of the Image" that "natural" reality is not fundamentally encoded or encrypted, but rather that it is reproduced in a visual image, which encrypts it and imposes cultural meaning on it. Visual media are thought to represent reality, but they actually create it (Heath, 1977).

The three aspects Charles Peirce refers to as first, second, and third are explained by the author Marcel Danesi. As a sensory structure, or as something that replicates the sensory characteristics of an object, a sign initially exists. Then, even though the actual thing is not physically present for the senses to see (secondness), it is employed by the sign-user to forge a connection to the object. Once a sign is accepted into a culture and made available for widespread use (thirdness), it turns into a source of knowledge about the world. In essence, cultures are "sign preservation" systems that disseminate signs to humans for a variety of utilitarian purposes. The author explained; things like speech, clothes, music and gestures are included in that code. These sets of indicators, with certain characteristics that can be used multiple times to encode and decode texts and messages, may be described as verbal, visual, gestural or other signals.

The research article, "Language, Media and Ideology: CDA of Animation, "The Donkey King", explored the hidden ideologies in the film. Quyum et al have argued that the real social and political players are capable of pretending to be animals or illogical creatures in animation, doing whatever they want with an audience, transmitting all sorts of reality and ideology into spectators' consciousness. They have cited Soares's (2017) statement, which goes, "Animations can be used as weapons to create beliefs and realities, even if they are safe and non-toxic." Animations are incredibly popular and constantly engrossing. Animations are not always neutral and objective, as multiple studies have demonstrated. It is more likely that these works are employed as instruments to fabricate reality for the advantage of a specific social class. They could also be employed to disseminate knowledge and deliver messages regarding political, social, and linguistic ideals.

Author Natrajan discussed Hindutva hegemony in the current state of affairs in his research article, "Racialization and Ethnicization: Hindutva Hegemony and Caste". In today's India, Hindutva hegemony is seen as authoritarian populism. The major subject of this article is Hindutva's cultural ideological efforts to create "people" by fixing meanings around the socially formed identity. Dalits are viewed as an "internal" Other (to be absorbed) and Muslims as an "external" Other (to be exterminated) by Hindutva. The "racialization" of Muslims and the "ethnicization" of Dalits are the two methods it uses to accomplish this (Natrajan, 2021).

The cultural diversity in children, along with multiple factors, including television, may have an impact on children's development. The effects on children's social development and relationships with others, as well as the effects on children's cognitive development, are two major areas to be taken into account. The development of favorable attitudes toward other cultural and ethnic groups is one of the social impacts that is crucial. Children should be raised in a culture

that teaches them that there are many valid ways to live and that there is no absolute right or wrong because, at this time, pluralism and tolerance are gaining the status of new norms and effective communication in the globalized society is becoming impossible without tolerance and multicultural awareness (Gladkova, 2013).

Media undoubtedly play a significant role in our lives, and numerous academic and empirical studies conducted globally highlight their immense influence. Visual images, which serve as a language that can be dissected, form an endless stream of messages. Consequently, it becomes imperative to semiotically examine and comprehend the functioning of these media images, unravelling the underlying meanings they convey. Barthes proposed that the analysis of visual signs should encompass both denotative and connotative levels of meanings (Jensen, 2007).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Semiotics refers to the study of signs, symbols and their meaning in a particular cultural environment. Barthes argues that the image is connected to aesthetic and ideological elements, which are open for interpretation at connotative level, in order to clarify how meaning can be derived from intricate semiotic interactions. Therefore, to inform the audience about what they need to analyze and develop meaningful texts and designs, semiotics in media studies use a wide range of text such as photographs, advertisements or movies. In order to open the eyes of the semiotic researcher to the complexity of semiotic interpretation and new methods of using signs in the social and political sphere, this is a form of semiotic production that focuses on observation and analysis of media messages and discussions. The qualitative technique of semiology, which is used for media research, helps the researcher to discover hidden meanings in visual texts such as movies, advertising and posters (Bouzida, 2014).

3.1. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

3.1.1. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The cartoon series which has a protagonist around the age of 7 years to 11 years old are selected for this study. According to Jean Piaget's (1936) theory of cognitive development, the 7 – 11-year-old age group is said the development of logical thought. Children's thinking will become much clearer and more reasoned at this stage of development. This is a critical stage, but it also acts as an important bridge to the later stages of development in which children are expected to develop more abstract thinking skills. When it comes to the specific issues, children at this age are more rational and they have trouble with abstract questions. There are many Indian animated series available for children. From those, several series have been dubbed in many Indian regional languages including Tamil. The parameters adopted to select the population of the study are:

- 1) The Indian animated series which are all dubbed in Tamil language.
- 2) Those series that are on the air from the year October 2019 to the year September 2022.
- 3) The series in which the protagonist is a boy or girl who falls under the age group of 7-11 years old and which is aired in the above mention period.

Accordingly, the following nine series are selected as a population: Bhaagam Bhaag, Chhota Bheem, Golmaal Junior, Keymon Ache, Little Singham, Roll no 21, Rudra Boom Chik Chik Boom, Selfie with Bajrangi and Shiva.

SAMPLE SELECTION

There are many seasons and episodes to each of these shows. Therefore, the study was conducted in a multistage sample method combining purposive and lottery samples at each stage of the studies. This approach allows for a balance between the need for specific, relevant information and the advantages of randomness and representativeness. The selection of the series and seasons shall be carried out by a purposive sample. For the selection of episodes, the lottery method shall be used.

SELECTION OF SERIES

The chosen series are those that air on multi television channels and OTT platforms. Accordingly, Shiva, Rudra: Boom Chik Chik Boom, and Selfie with Bajrangi are selected.

SELECTION OF SEASONS

There is a total of 7 seasons in Shiva, 7 seasons in Rudra, and 3 seasons in Selfie with Bajrangi. 5 seasons of Shiva, 5 seasons of Rudra, and 2 seasons of Selfie with Bajrangi are selected.

SELECTION OF EPISODES

Shiva: There are 26 episodes in season 3, 52 episodes in season 4, 63 episodes in season 5, 48 seasons in season 6, and 96 episodes in season 7. Lottery method is used to get one episode for every 50 episodes. Accordingly, one episode from S3, two episodes from S4, two episodes from S5, one episode from S6, and two episodes from S7 are selected.

Rudra: Boom Chik Chik Boom: There are 26 episodes in S2, 33 episodes in S3, 32 episodes in S4, 7 episodes in S5, and 4 episodes in S6. Lottery method is used to get one episode for every 50 episodes. Accordingly, one episode from each season was selected. Season five of Rudra is not available in the Tamil language. As all the seasons have episodes below 50, the researcher selected season 3 from the lottery method. Hence, two episodes from season 3 are selected.

Selfie with Bajrangi: There are 156 episodes in S3 and 49 episodes in S4. Lottery method is used to get one episode for every 50 episodes. Accordingly, 3 episodes from S3 and one episode from S4 are selected.

Hence, 17 episodes are selected as samples.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analysed the visual and auditory cues of the data. Consequently, nomenclature, representation of characters (features and traits), dress and dress colours, house models, place, food, the background music are analysed.

4.1. PLOT OF THE SERIES

Shiva	Rudra: boom chik chik boom	Selfie with Bajrangi
Shiva, a 9-year-old child who attends ordinary school and enjoys spending time with his friends, is the main character of the novel. With the arrival of conflict brought on by danger from villains, the tone of the story is changed, and Shiva, with the use of his Super Gadget cycle, fighting prowess, and intelligence, will aid in saving the town and those in peril (Colours, n.d.).	A magical city, Sun City! Everyone, and we do mean everyone, is a magician here, going about their regular lives with a little bit of magic, love, and kindness thrown in. Our 9-year-old hero is Rudra. Jai Singh, his grandfather, teaches him new wizardry. However, not everything is ideal, as the evil and strong magician Shakaal frequently causes difficulty in order to prevent Rudra from using his true abilities (Colours, n.d.).	Ankush's meet a strange nine-year-old boy called Bajrangi, who is completely invisible to him and that encounter has changed his life. As a group, they become aware of the value of unity. (Selfiewithbajrangi, n.d.)

4.1.1. EPISODES SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

To understand how a cartoon creates significance and disseminates messages about culture, it is necessary to examine the structure of stories.

Shiva	Rudra: boom chik chik boom	Selfie with Bajrangi
<p>Monkey Don: A monkey, known as "Don," steals from Inspector Ladoo Singh and is strong enough to strike anyone. Shiva discovers the monkey's role and captures them.</p> <p>The headphone: A group of people, including Shiva's</p>	<p>Summer camp in joy land: Advanced Magic Academy students arrived at summer camp, using their powers to trouble Maira and Varun, who were dumped in a river. Rudra saved them with his magic.</p> <p>Evil cake of Shakleena: Shakleena created an 'Evil cake' to</p>	<p>Movie night: A village leader, Prabanj, planned a movie screening, but his assistants manipulated it, leading to Ankush discovering the truth and assisting Bajrangi.</p> <p>Ladies cricket match: Ankush's mother Geeta and Ranga's mother Mainadevi organized a</p>

<p>grandparents, visited Gnani Baba's ashram and were given headphones by a travel employee. The headphones allowed Gnani Baba to communicate and hypnotize others. The employee stole belongings while they slept, and Reva, who didn't wear headphones, called Shiva to intervene. They caught the Gnani Baba and handed them over to Ladoo Singh.</p> <p>The network jam: A new mobile network business in Vedas City was established, but an old firm tried to harm its reputation by hiring a tampering expert.</p> <p>Caveman clash: A doctor administered medicines to a caveman and a tiger for research, which Shiva discovered and handed over to Ladoo Singh, who safely sent them with scientists.</p> <p>Shiva saves Smarty: Smarty, a classmate of Shiva, dislikes him. His wealthy father arranges a picnic for Smarty and his friends. Shiva and his companions, like nomads, defend Smarty against ninjas and kidnappers. Smarty's father encourages him to get along with Shiva.</p> <p>2000-year-old watch: Shiva, Reva, Udi, and Adi discovered a watch while playing and wore it to the Vedas city 2000 years ago, as it is a time travel watch. They defended people from mafia gangs and helped King Besan Singh.</p> <p>Pied Piper: A "Pied Piper" entered Vedas City, hypnotizing people with flute music and stealing money and jewelry. Shiva and his friends caught the piper, and Ladoo Singh was given the stolen items.</p> <p>Attack gang: A princess in Vedas requested Ladoo Singh to monitor an attack gang, and Shiva assisted, saving her jewels and handing over the gang.</p>	<p>turn Varun and Maira against Rudra, but it reversed their actions. Rudra rescued Jenny and Joddy, and Shakleena prepared a 'Good cake' to restore normalcy to Varun and Maira.</p> <p>Black mermaid: Shakleena created an 'Evil cake' to turn Varun and Maira against Rudra, but it reversed their actions. Rudra rescued Jenny and Joddy, and Shakleena prepared a 'Good cake' to restore normalcy to Varun and Maira.</p> <p>Jungle Magician: Principal Kannugo and students were turned into slaves by a jungle magician, but Rudra, with Librarian Alazaar's help, fought back and saved his teachers, friends, and principal.</p> <p>Magical Christmas tale: Sun City's Christmas celebrations were disrupted by Shakaal, who stole a Magical Christmas tree and kidnapped Jaisingh, but Rudra found and rescued everyone.</p>	<p>cricket match, with Geeta's team consisting of her neighbors, and Ankush trained them, leading to a win.</p> <p>Gadget Ganesh to the rescue: Bajra kidnaps Ankush in Ramayan, kidnapping Bajrangi. Ganesha aids Bajrangi with gadgets, leading to his rise to power and defeating Bajra.</p> <p>Lemonade thief: Renu, with Ankush's help, established a lemonade stand selling for one rupee. Ranga, with the help of his assistants, stole his belongings, but Ankush intervened and punished Ranga.</p>
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4.1.2. PORTRAYAL OF CHILDHOOD IN THE SERIES

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation
<p>1. Kids always fight with antagonists. 2. One scene of playing 'Soccer'. 3. One scene of playing passing/throw ball. 4. A boy carries a cricket bat. 5. There are no scenes about education, domestic aid or</p>	<p>The episodes do not depict scenes or narratives involving typical childhood experiences like play, family interactions, or healthy activities.</p>	<p>Connotatively, children's perceptions of identity and societal norms may be influenced by the lack of exposure to healthy lifestyle choices or family relationships that can reinforce unrealistic notions. In</p>

good health. 6. There are no scenes of children playing with friends or spending time with their parents.		fact, the depiction of football may indicate elements of modernisation and urbanization as it is frequently linked to urban environments and contemporary young people's culture.
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4.1.3. NOMENCLATURE OF THE SERIES

Denotation:

Shiva	Auspicious; pure; benign; An important Hindu god
Reva	River; a star; agile; quick; another name for Kaali and the river Narmada
Uday	Uday as a boy's name is of Indian origin, and the meaning of Uday is "To rise and Blue Lotus".
Aditya	The sun; Relating to the Sun god; a class of solar gods. Aditya also means belonging to, or coming from Aditi (the mother of the gods). Aditya is also believed to be a name associated with Lord Krishn
Ladoo Singh	In different South Asian and Southeast Asian communities, the surname Singh, middle name Singh, or title Singh all have the meaning "lion". Once exclusively employed by the Hindu Kshatriya caste, it gradually spread to other groups, including the Rajput, Jat, Bhumihar, Charan, Rajpurohit, Koeri, Dusadh, Gurjar, Yadav, and Sikh populations.
Gnani Baba	Knowledge, wisdom, and one Armed with Knowledge are the meaning s of Gnana. Baba is used to appreciate an older man by some South Asians.
Vedas	The sacred writings known as the Vedas are what Hinduism is based on
Pedram	Pedram is a Muslim boy name that is originated from the Persian language. Pedram name meaning is "successful in life"
Acharya	Indian: Hindu (Brahman) name, from Sanskrit ācārya 'one who knows or teaches (right) conduct', i.e., a spiritual guide or teacher. The term was also applied as an honorific title for a man of learning. It has also been adopted as a surname by some non-Brahman communities
Glamour parlour	In Vedas city there were shops in the market. The shop of beauty parlour name is 'Glamour'. It sexually objectifies the women and shows the stereotype.
Medha Singh	Medha means intelligence, goddess Saraswathi in Sanskrit.
Rudra	Sanskrit, Hindu, Indian - one who drives away evil/ name of Lord Shiva/ Roarer/God of storms.
Maira	Hebrew in origin, Maira is predominantly a feminine name that means "of the sea" or "bitter"
Jaisingh Chauhan	Hindu (Rajput) and Sikh names

Alazar	Christian name – God is my helper. Hebrew origin
Varun	Varun is a boy's name of Indian origin. A derivative of "Varuna," this classic name means "water god" and is called after an ancient Hindu deity
Shakaal	successful, joyful, freedom lover
Chingli	Meaning not available
Rangeela	Muslim boy name/ meaning –the happy mood
Gora	Gora is a mountain's name. The name Gora is a symbol of strength and power. Hindi word
Shakleena	Origin is Ukraine (Russia). Christian name.
Jenny	White wave. English origin
Joddy	'praised' in Hebrew
Madam Kannungo	The meaning of the given name Kanungo denotes charisma, a timid demeanour, dream, incoherence, and enlightenment
Bajrangi	A title given to the Hindu god/deity Hanuman. Having a robust structure that resembles steel.
Ankush	Ankush is a popular name for boys that has "Indian" origins and meaning "Check; an instrument used for
Geeta	Hindu name and has Hindi as its primary origin language. Song and the Hindu holy text are the meanings of the name Geetha
Renu	Renu means "Born of dust; earth" in Sanskrit. Indian origin and Hindu by religion.
Mainadevi	bird
Vinod	"Hedonism" or "The Hedonist" in Sanskrit. It also means happiness and joy

Connotation: All the protagonists' and their friends and parents' names are from Sanskrit and Hindu religious names.

4.1.4. CULTURAL SYMBOLS

Visual elements	Denotation	Connotation
In various episodes, characters wear Rajasthani Marwari, Mangal sutra, bindi, and other traditional Rajasthani attire. In 'Monkey Don', jewellery owner Settu wears a Rajasthani Marwari dress. In 'Shiva Saves Smarty,' Shiva and friends wear no-mads' traditional Rajasthani attire. In 'The Headphone', Gnani Baba wears a green dress with beads and a sun background. In 'Movie	These cultural symbols denote particular religious and ethnic culture of India.	There's no diversity of culture here. It's a depiction of inequality.

Night', five women wear Rajasthani attire.		
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4.1.5. AUDITORY ELEMENTS

Denotation	Connotation
Shiva: The title song describes the power of Shiva. It is in Hindi language though the episodes are translated into Tamil. Shiva and Renu's speech is clear and assertive whereas all other characters' speech is doubtful, fearful, and ignorant.	The power of the hero is described by Shiva's title song as similar to that of Hindu God Lord Shiva. The song's got lyrics, like a lightening on the hand and an air of feet that looks Hindu Lord Shiva. Lightening on hands and air on feet is similar to God Shiva. The 'Shiva Shiva' background music during the action scenes of Shiva is similar to the Hindu God Lord Shiva's chant. All the series' auditory cues connote the predominant heroism and particular religious portrayal.
Rudra Boom Chik Chik Boom: The title song describes Rudra's skills in magic. It is in Hindi even though episodes have been converted to Tamil. The protagonist's voice is clear and persuasive, whereas his friends Maira and Varun or Team Chingli and Rangeela's voice is always doubtful and frightened.	
Selfie with Bajrangi: The protagonist, Ankush's voice and speech are monotonous whereas antagonist Ranga's voice is croaky. Bajrangi's voice and speech is clear and confident. All other characters' voice and speech is doubtful, in fear, and ignorant. The title song repeats the words 'Bajrangi! Bajrangi! Selfie with Bajrangi'.	

4.1.6. PLACE AND HOUSE MODELS

Visual elements	Denotation	Connotation
<p>The house models in the 'Vedas' city, Vedas Bank, Vedas School, and jewellery shops. 2. Rudra's Palace and Advanced Magic Academy. 3. Ankush's house and city.</p> <p><i>Figure 1 Shiva's house</i></p>  <p>(Shiva, n.d.)</p> <p><i>Figure 2 Rudra's Palace</i></p>  <p>(Rudra: Boom Chik Chik Boom, n.d.)</p>	<p>These visuals denote the economic status of the characters.</p>	<p>The urban and upper-class lifestyle is portrayed here.</p>

4.1.7. FESTIVALS IN THE SERIES

Festivals	Denotation	Connotation
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No festivals are shown in these episodes except in Rudra Boom Chik Chik Boom. There's a Christmas scene in the episode Magical Christmas Tale.	There are no festival scenes in all these selected episodes except one.	The Christmas festival scene connotes the cultural diversity.
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4.1.8. CUISINE

Food items	Denotation	Connotation
<p>Bread, burger (Figure 3), pizza, juices, Samosa, Laddoo, and Chapati, Falooda, Cake, Pastry, Croissants, Samosa (Fig 4), Cookies, Roti, Dal, Kheer, Laddu, Egg, French fries, Noodles, Pulao (Fig 5). In the episode, '2000-year-old watch', fruits and chicken are shown.</p> <p><i>Figure 3</i></p>  <p>(<i>Shiva</i>, n.d.)</p> <p><i>Figure 4 food in Rudra</i></p>  <p>(<i>Rudra: Boom Chik Chik Boom</i>, n.d.)</p> <p><i>Figure 5 Food in bajrangi</i></p>  <p>(<i>Selfie With Bajrangi</i>, n.d.-b)</p>	<p>The cuisine of these episodes shows the Western and Asian food.</p>	<p>Cultural diversity and globalisation of culinary preferences in today's Indian society can be attributed to the inclusion of both Western and Asian cuisine. It takes into account the influence of global food trends and the availability of diverse cuisine in urban areas. It's also a reference to socioeconomic status and lifestyle choices. It also connotes predominance of vegetarian food.</p>

4.1.9. DRESS COLOURS IN THE SERIES

Visual elements	Denotation	Connotation
<p>The protagonist and his sidekicks wear red, yellow, blue colour dress. Female characters (protagonists' sidekicks) wear blue, pink, purple and yellow. The antagonist's dress is in green and grey.</p>	<p>These colours denote stereotype.</p>	<p>These colours connote the stereotype and particular religious representation.</p>

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The narrative structure shows the stereotype and action genre of the cartoon series. All the main characters, his team members and a few antagonists have fair skin in all these episodes. But the assistants and housekeeping women are shown in dark skin tones. And the physical feature is also made in hugely different. The protagonists are good-looking

and strong whereas their friends and antagonists are obese, slender, and with a hunchback. Children who watch this continuously may have such an image of the people who have that features. In the episode 'The Headphone' the story is about Gnani Baba, a saint who cheats on people and steals their money and jewellery. Here, the baba is in a green dress. Hindu saints wear saffron or orange colour robes. Green has traditionally been a colour linked with Islam. It reflects the Sufis/Fakeer/Miskeens in Islam, but not a Hindu saint. The Gnani baba's attire and accessories connote an Islam saint (Fig 6 and Fig 7).



Figure 6 Gnani baba 1, (Shiva, n.d.)

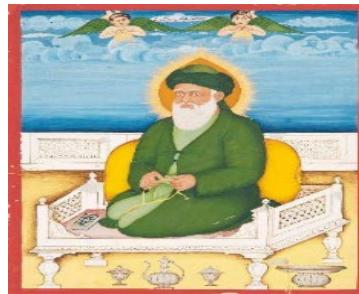


Figure 7 Sufi saint, (*A PORTRAIT OF THE SUFI SAINTS 'ABD AL-QADIR JILANI*, n.d.)

The satire of religion is obvious in the dress code. The children who view this image will have negative perceptions of saints wearing green clothing. The socio-cultural backdrop is used to analyse the foods depicted in these episodes. Here, vegetarian cuisine predominates. The majority of the cuisines are Western junk food and north Indian chat dishes. This demonstrates poor eating habits and cultural stereotypes.

6. INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is used as an analytical method in this study to investigate the textual allusions. In the series Shiva, the protagonist is named after and modelled by Lord Shiva, one of the principal Hindu deities. Shiva in the series has his own distinct attributes and experiences, yet the name and some of his traits are reverence to the Hindu mythological character Shiva. Examples are: Shiva every time says, 'I'm Shiva. My name is Shiva' and the background score is, 'Shiva Shiva'. These both refer to Lord Shiva and his chant. Shiva's grandfather name is 'Acharya'. In Hinduism, the meaning is a spiritual teacher. For instance, In the Indian epic Mahabharatha, Dronacharya is an Acharya for archery. Shiva practices a martial art in the episode 'Monkey Don.' The colour of his dress and the actions are intertextual with the traditional martial arts of the state Kerela, 'Kalaripayattu' (Fig 8). Kalaripayattu is a martial art involving weapons and combative methods that is exclusive to Kerela. It was created for the old battlefield (the word "Kalarippayattu" means "battlefield") (What Does Kalaripayattu Mean? n.d.) (Fig 9). This is connected with the Hindu God Shiva. The mention of martial arts in Vedas provides evidence that martial arts have been practiced in India for more than three thousand years. It is thought that Lord Shiva created the Kalaripayattu art of fighting, which was eventually taught to people in South India by his disciples (Kumar, 2021).



Figure 8 Shiva kalari, (Shiva, n.d.)



Figure 9 Kalari, (Kalaripayattu - Bing, n.d.)

The series Rudra Boom Chik Boom, the protagonist's name 'Rudra,' itself contains intertextual references in cultural and religious connotations. His grandfather's name 'Jai Singh Chauhan' refers to Hindu Rajput. The Rudra story and characters are similar to the story of Harry Potter. The Harry Potter movie series is based on J. K. Rowling's series of books with the same name. In Harry Potter movies, the protagonist has magical powers and fights against the antagonist using those powers. The children in the movies study in a school that teaches magic. In Harry Potter, the protagonist has two best friends, a boy and a girl.

Next, in Selfie with Bajrangi, the intertextuality in the episode 'Gadget Guru Ganesha to the Rescue' is the epic 'Ramayan'. 'Bajrangbali' is a term used to refer to Lord Hanuman, one of the Hindu mythological characters. Lord Hanuman plays a vital part as Rama's loyal companion and important ally in the epic Ramayana. In this series, Bajrangi comes a companion to the protagonist Ankush and helps him to solve all kinds of issues. In the episode Gadget Ganesha to the Rescue, the Bajra is shown as a character of Ramayana and he had been from Kishkintha. In the same episode, Ganesha gives a gadget to Bajrangi named 'Vajradal'. It means The Sanskrit words for "vajra" signify "thunderbolt" and "diamond," respectively (Vajrayana | Tantric Rituals, Mantras and Mudras, n.d.).

7. CONCLUSION

The series depicts stereotypes such as people with dark complexions keeping a low profile, obese people being senseless, and youngsters from wealthy socioeconomic backgrounds possessing superpowers or divine powers. This will have a significant impact on children's thoughts about their own identity as well as those of others. In the Indian animated children's television series, characters are portrayed in a biased way toward those with higher socioeconomic status and ethnic background. Minority and underrepresented groups are not presented in such a way. This may create inferiority in their identity among the children.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Indian animated television series' producers and content creators should avoid ethnicity, and religious stereotypes in their content.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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