

EFFECTS OF CRIME REALITY SHOWS ON INDIAN VIEWERS - A STUDY

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Abstract:

Crime Reality Shows, a special genre of reality television format is trending these days by gripping the audiences across the world with various unique ways of providing crime based entertainment. And surprisingly, the popularity is growing deeper attracting all sorts of audiences and age groups. This enhances the scope of developing effects or various implications on the perceptions, thought process and behaviour of general viewers. The effects can be either positive or negative. The current research study primarily aims at understanding the viewing patterns of the audiences of crime reality shows in India and how the audiences perceive the programs. It also primarily focuses in analyzing the perceptions of audience towards Crime and Society; Law & Order and Judiciary; effects on psychology and the fear of victimization. The research paper also focused in identifying the gender differences, if any, in terms of perceptions, effects and expectations on Crime Reality Shows.

Key Words: Crime Reality Shows, Crime, Fear of Victimization, Law & Order, Perceptions

Introduction:

In the current scenario, mediated crime and violence through television is creeping into common rooms thereby into mindsets of audiences in an undistinguishable fashion. Crime Reality Shows, a special genre of reality television format is trending these days by gripping the audiences across the world with its unique and innovative methods of providing Information, Entertainment and Awareness on crime, criminals and the role of law and order in their own geographical circumstances and situations.

Surprisingly, the popularity seems to be universal touching various segments of audiences like children, young adults or old people, men or women, urban or rural. Several research studies have already concluded that constant watching of crime through prime medium at some level affects the thought process of people. The effects could be short run or long run or could be situational. Though evidences don't suggest that every viewer will become or behave like a criminal, the constant exposure to such crime related violent content may possibly make the viewers desensitized towards the crime or pain of others, treating it as the most generic issue happening these days.

On the other hand there is a high possibility of developing psychological stress, anxiety and certain fears like fear of victimization, fear of survival among the vulnerable audiences etc. As suggested by George Gerbner there is a chance of visualizing the problems at higher proportions than the reality and can treat our surroundings as the most unsafe place on the earth. This phenomenon is termed as Mean World Syndrome one

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of the main crucial conclusions of Cultivation theory developed by George Gerbner (Miller, Vandome & John, 2010).

Experiencing the fear can come in any form and volume depending on how much the content of crime reality shows is perceived as real – they can't act normal when they meet strangers; they don't trust strangers or even neighbors easily. Whenever they see a van passing from nearby them they get fear of getting kidnapped. When they go to an unknown place and are offered with a glass of water they have a fear of getting unconscious and get kidnapped etc.

In addition to, the regular news items on these issues that come either in newspapers or TV or Internet, enables us to cross check for accuracy, intensity and after effects of the problem. And when such issues are picturized in a more dramatic way with analytical narration through these crime reality shows the viewer can make an emotional connect and start visualizing the issue to his / her circumstances and situations. No doubt, this process of role identity or emotional involvement also helps the viewers to be aware of such heinous and unexpected incidents and be prepared to cope up with the issue.

There is a critical argument that crime reality shows gives new ideas to commit crime in innovative methods. This argument cannot be overlooked easily as a noticeable amount of such criminal cases that are considered to be inspired by crime reality shows are grabbing eyeballs these days in various places of India. For instance, a 33-year-old woman, who murdered three of her in-laws in Sohna, Gurgaon with the help of her domestic help Vikas, told police that they got the idea for the murders from crime-based TV shows like 'Crime Patrol' and 'Savdhaan India' (Pati, Hindustan Times, Oct 02, 2017). In a similar kind of bizarre murder case which had the police fooled too in the initial stages of investigation, an Indian woman in Vasco, Goa, Pratima Naik, was arrested for the murder of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Police also suspect Pratima Naik drew inspiration from a crime serial on TV and plotted the killings (The American Bazaar, Feb 4, 2015). These are only few glimpses of the dire situation.

Defining the trending genre "Crime Reality Shows":

The origins of crime reality television are intertwined with the birth of reality entertainment says Hill (2017), which is one of most significant and controversial developments in popular culture of media. Hill (2007) giving a holistic definition to crime reality television, explains that its inter-generic space works across the real-world space of crime and its connections with ongoing investigations, the dramatic space of crime reconstructions, and the television space of crime entertainment formats that create competition and imaginary scenarios of crime and the law. The author further adds that despite the global reach of talent shows, or docu-soaps about celebrities, crime continues to be a rich site of analysis for understanding the mixing of facts and entertainment, the politics of representation, and the controversial value of popular culture in reflexive late modernity.

The TV reality crime programs claim to present true stories about crime, criminals and victims. They are a hybrid form of programming, says Fishman and Cavender (1998), which resembles like news, but often designed to make them more exciting with dramatization to increase their ratings. To explain in a nutshell crime reality show is uncovering of real crime stories in a most convincing format, either fictional, non-fictional or semi-fictional, yet deals with factuality and high-powered drama that triggers empathy, emotions, fear of victimization, or schadenfreude i.e., taking pleasure at others' misfortune.

Henceforth, though these crime realities claim to present reality, the formats are blurring the lines between facts and fictions to present the content in most innovative methods. Say for instance, Crime Patrol (Indian program in Sony TV) portrays a series of vignettes in which the actors reenact the actual crime events with crime-sleuthing by police. Also the vignettes include interviews of victims, their family or friends, case analysis by police, some films or photographs of suspects or incidents. The narration of the program is further gripped to peaks by any popular celebrity host to add more dramatization and to stir emotions of the audiences. Some Foreign programs like “Hard Copy” cover real people often celebrities and their associated criminal activities.

What previous research says?

Research on crime dramas and reality shows have been steadily growing across the world over two decades as its popularity is growing deep rooted and effects are expected to be reflected in various means. As viewers watched more crime-related television, they were more likely to misperceive realities of juvenile crime and juvenile justice says **Goidel et al., (2006)**. This article examines the relationship between television viewing and public perceptions of juvenile crime rates and the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. Special attention was devoted to viewers of television news and shows like Cops and America's Most Wanted, where researchers expected a greater misperception of crime rates and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The results showed significant media effects on perceptions of juvenile crime and the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system in the expected direction (**Goidel, Freeman & Procopio, 2006**).

A similar kind of study in Pakistan by **Abdullah et al., (2017)**, insisted that a large number of people who are habituated to watch these shows may probably come out with negative behavioural outcome. Their analysis based on various existing and previous literature detects a special need for research to find out the effects of TV crime shows, especially on children who are at their behavioural developmental phase are more susceptible to adopt negative behavioural leanings. In another research paper titled “Exposure to Television Crime Shows and Crime Learning Behaviour of Adolescents: A case of Pakistani Juvenile Delinquents” by **Abdullah et al., (2016)** raises this concern in order to fully understand the dimension of how television crime shows impacts on the youth in the juvenile jail. Moreover, considering the case of Pakistan, the available research that analyses how television crime shows take part in teaching crime to adolescents is minimal. The importance of socioeconomic factors in juvenile delinquency cannot be neglected (**Abdullah et al., 2016**).

A report by **UNESCO (1997)** on the effects of television on children and adolescents however claimed that Television may contribute by teaching a criminal skill which may be used when the individual decides to commit a crime. It may trigger off an act of delinquency by feeding a child's aggressive nature. Or it may encourage delinquent behaviour by implanting an unreal idea of the importance of violent behaviour in solving human problems. But in any of these cases, television by itself cannot make a normal, well-adjusted child into a delinquent. This is the almost unanimous conclusion of research and clinical investigation.

While many studies focuses on what kind of effects it may have on audience, a very few studies focused on why individuals watch crime dramas and what exactly they do gratify from such programmes. **Brown, Lauricella et al., (2012)** study is one such kind that employed uses and gratifications theory to conduct an audience analysis on crime drama viewership. Three independent variables (age, sex, frequency of crime drama viewing) were tested against four dependent variables (curiosity/information, identification, social interaction, and entertainment), as well as all variables together (full gratification) in order to determine if they were

statistically significant predictors of each specific type of gratification. Results indicated that frequency of viewing crime dramas was a statistically significant predictor for only full gratification and curiosity/information.

Donovan and Klahm (2015) examined the portrayal of police misconduct in crime dramas, and how exposure to these portrayals affects perceptions of the police. They found that viewers of crime dramas are more likely to believe the police are successful at lowering crime, use force only when necessary, and that misconduct does not typically lead to false confessions. Similarly, a doctoral thesis by **Fedorek (2013)** on the “Impact of Crime-related television programs on students’ perceptions of the Criminal Justice System” proved that the amount of time spent watching crime-related programming had an impact on the perceptions of forensic evidence prevalence and fear of victimization, thus strongly supporting the Cultivation theory.

Crime Reality Shows and Indian Scenario:

Innovativeness, entertainment and the role identity are crucial factors that play a dominant role in the sustainability of reality shows in India, say **Subramaniam and Tiwari (2014)**. These television reality shows help participants to showcase their talents, help people to earn quick money, provide awareness on current and social issues and TV show hardly develop the qualities of talented people, says **Tiwari (2016)**. In his study, he strongly recommended that while conceptualizing reality show programs concepts should be based on information, science, sports and spiritual along with the entertainment and celebrity factor, which do not alter the moral values and sentiments of the viewers but rather gives the knowledge and inculcate their cultural and customary practices (Tiwari, 2016). The above recommendation adds an interesting observation that crime reality shows needs a special focus in terms of understanding and analyzing its content, treatment, and its impact on audiences as the theme is completely revolving around violence, real-life based crime events.

According to **Rajendra and Deb (2017)** today’s society is fascinated with crime and justice, and one is constantly engaged in crime talks because of the construction of criminality and criminal justice system by the mass media. Dramatised portrayal of real life cases and sensational crime stories from police files has evoked the audience interest. In a study conducted by the duo in Meghalaya, about 53% of respondents agreed that crime reality shows makes people aware of basic rights, law and regulations; makes people beware of the situations; teaches how to cope with after effects of trauma and triggers a voice to fight against injustice (Rajendra and Deb, 2017). While the effects of reality shows are multi-pronged, far reaching and unpredictable among common audience, the adolescents are most affected, says **Ayushi and Agarwal (2015)**. The study “Impact of Reality Shows on Adolescent’s Personality” conducted on 120 adolescents of both private and government schools of Lucknow proved that the students of private schools were more positively affected with reality than students of government schools. The researchers also concluded that not all reality shows are impactful but the ones which indulge in creating fake realities are the ones to blame the most (Ayushi and Agarwal, 2015).

Another interesting study by **Bhatt and Singh (2017)** on viewing habits among rural women of TehriGarhwal District of Uttarakand reveals that television has done an influential impact on the attitudes of rural women. Though the TV is making the women aware and alert, certain content like crime-centric serials and reality shows are becoming quite popular among these female audiences and its negative impact on family and social relations can also be clearly seen (Bhatt and Singh, 2017). **Malur et al., (2014)** critically examined the reason behind the viewers’ preference on watching reality shows among Bangalore. The study concludes

that the emotional dramatization has made an impact on the viewers and has become the prime reason to watch them. Emotion has become the USP of the reality shows to make the audience stick to be regular viewers. Another noticeable observation from the study is that the viewers have agreed that dominating programs have eradicated the space for many value based programs which has resulted also in losing morals and human values.

Premchandani (2015) did a discriminant analysis of viewers' perception towards Prime Time Television Shows with special reference to Indore. The analysis concluded that the viewers in low media consumption group enjoy the leisure time by watching youth shows like KhatroankeKiladi, Nachbaliye etc., and sports shows compare to high media consumption group. Surprisingly both low media consumption group and the high media consumption group watch crime shows and reality shows with equal priority. As these shows are full of excitement, pleasure, enthusiasm and thrill they have occupied a commendable space among Indore TV audience. **Sapra (2014)**, on the other hand, studied the impact of crime reality shows in India in the context of Cultural hegemony and materialism. As these reality shows are full of sex, conflict, shame, intoxication, narcissism they glamorize vulgarity and materialism and thus effect out way of thinking, says Sapra (2014). Shows like 'Savdhaan India', 'Crime Patrol', and 'Emotional Atyachar' have been contributing to the creation of new culture by super imposing its ideas on old culture (Sapra, 2014).

In contrary, an experimental pre-test and post-test research study by **Kewalramani and Pandey (2016)** proved that there is no significant impact of crime serials on the level of aggression of young adults. They have found that there is no significant difference in the pre physical, verbal, anger and hostility and in the post physical, verbal, anger and hostility. However, the study also significantly proved that majority of women who watch these crime reality shows feel worried of being victimized by the criminals or they get attacked by the criminals as most of these shows deal with women victimization (Kewalramani&Pandey, 2016).

The ongoing episodes of reality shows in India in different avatars on many different channels, both regional and national are hardly near to real life sentiments and the audiences are steadily becoming disillusioned about the slant in verdicts of the shows, says **Ravi (2013)**. Ravi (2013) argues that the programme content on a crime slot has inputs which tend to intrude upon the functioning of the police or the law & order. Deviation from factuality, the guessing game about who the culprit is, suspecting the most non-obvious, all of it misleads the investigating agencies. Media laws are missing on addressing the excessive expressions due to these episodes (Ravi, 2013).

Aim of the Study:

The crime reality shows are becoming very popular among the Indian audience and at the same time leading to a scope of developing effects or various implications on the perceptions, thought process and behaviours of general viewers. The effects can be either positive or negative. The producers of the shows say that this kind of crime programs exposes the society's underbelly (Mehrotra, 2012), help the viewers to stay alert in their daily life so that they can avoid themselves getting into such trouble (Kaushal, Hindusthan Times, 2013). The aim of these shows is to warn and inform people about crimes and the effectiveness of these shows depends on how it is perceived by the viewers, say the makers of these shows (Zee News, 2012) .

But research studies are meager to prove that making such crime shows help the public to get criminal ideas and that is harmful for others. Thus the current research study primarily aims at understanding the viewing patterns of the audiences of crime reality shows in India and how the audiences perceive the programs.

It also tries to answer the questions like what kind of impact is evidently being visible on them, what kind of inferences these audiences make from these crime reality shows etc.

Objectives of the Study:

The following objectives have been identified for analysis to have a comprehensive understanding on the effects of crime reality shows in India.

Objective 1: To develop audience profiles for crime reality shows in India.

Objective 2: To understand and analyze the general perceptions of the viewers' of the crime reality shows on 'crime and the society'.

Objective 3: To assess the perceptions of the viewerstowards Law & Order and Judiciary and Effects on Behaviour towards Police.

Objective 4: To understand and analyze the perceptions of viewers regarding the Psychological impact of crime reality shows.

Objective 5: To study the effect of crime reality shows on viewers with regard to 'fear of victimization' and 'sense of vulnerability'.

Objective 6: To delineate in detail the expectations of the viewers on Program Content and Presentation of the Crime Reality Shows.

Objective 7: To identify the differences in perceptions, effects and expectations between female viewers and male viewers, if any.

Methodology:

The study is a *mixed methodology with quantitative and qualitative analysis* administered with a survey method. *Purposive Random Sampling Method* has been adopted which means only those respondents who view crime reality shows have been encouraged to participate in the survey. The sample size is 50 and care has been taken that there is equal representation of gender i.e., 25 female and 25 male respondents participated in the survey.

A questionnaire has been designed through Online Google Survey tool and has been circulated across India by sharing the link of the questionnaire through email, Facebook and WhatsApp through *the method of closed networks* i.e., friends, friends of friends that enables access to maximum viewers who are connected through networks. With the help of this self-administered questionnaire, the researcher could able to gather information covering all the objectives mentioned for the study. The questionnaire is designed with the combination of both open ended and close ended questions for a holistic analysis. The opinions and the level of agreement or disagreement are measured using likert scale to understand direction of agreement as well as intensity of the opinion. The results are quantified using percentages and descriptive analysis.

Findings:-**Section – I: Demographic details of the respondents**

- Out of 50 respondents 25 are male and 25 are female.
- Majority of viewers fall into the age group 15-25 (i.e., total of 74%) compare to viewers who fall under the age group of 25-35 (i.e. , total of 8%) , 35-45 (i.e. , total of 6%), 45-55 (i.e. , total of 3%), 55-65 (i.e. , total of 8%) and finally 65 and above (i.e. , just 1%).
- No major difference is observed in age wise distribution of female and male viewers as 76% of female and 80% of male viewers are youth i.e., 15-25 age group.
- 76% of viewers are currently pursuing their education (80% male and 76% female).
- Regarding family status large majority of viewers falls in Middle class family status with 48% followed by 40% upper middle class families. Only 4% falls in upper class.

Section – II:Viewers' Profiles of Crime Reality Shows**a. The Most Popular Crime Reality Shows Among Indian Viewers**

- There is no significant difference in the show preferences among female and male viewers.
- 76% of female and 80% of male regularly watch CID.
- Gumrah is the next best popular crime reality shows for women (with 60% of regular viewership).MTV Webbed and Crime Patrol is third choice for women (both with 56% viewership).
- Formale viewers, MTV Webbed is the 2nd best choice (68% of regular viewership), followed by Crime Patrol (with 64% of regular viewership). And only 36% of men are regular viewers of Gumrah.

Figure 1: Popular Crime Reality Shows Among Female Viewers

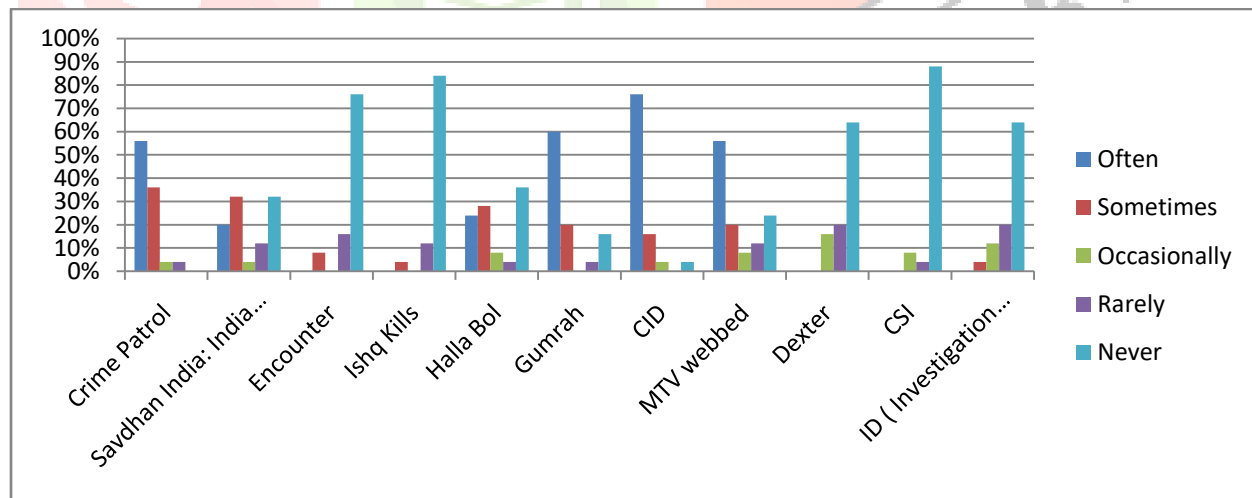
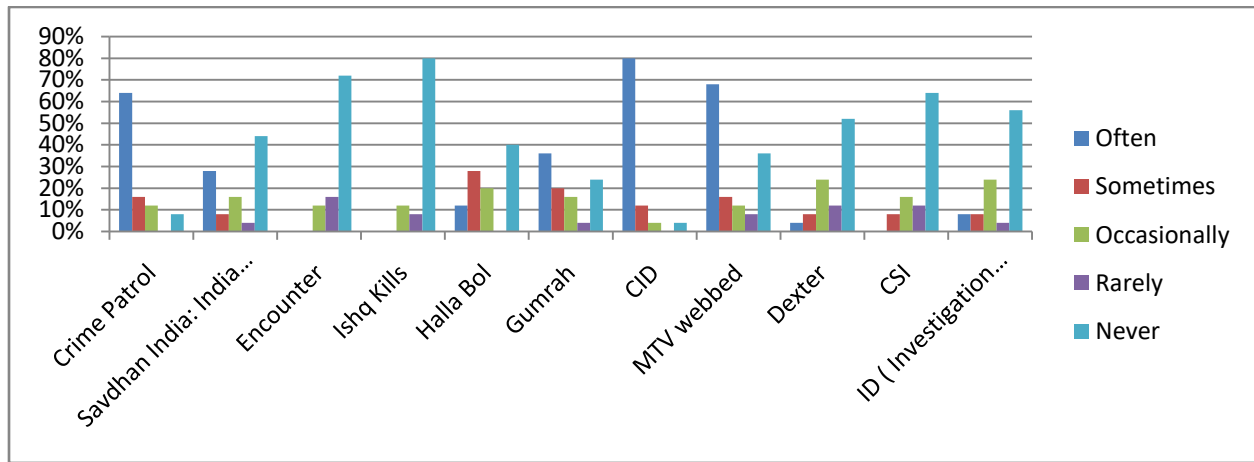
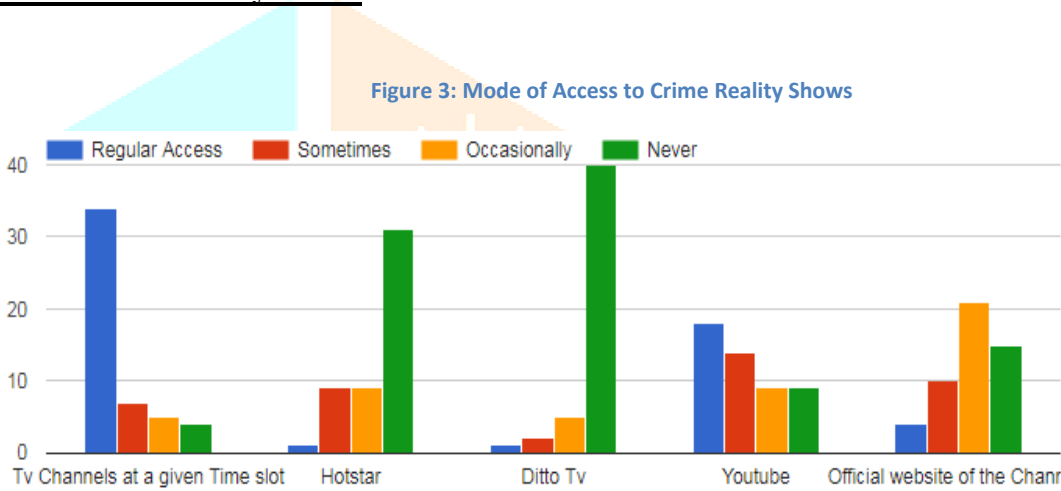


Figure 2: Popular Crime Reality Shows Among Male Viewers



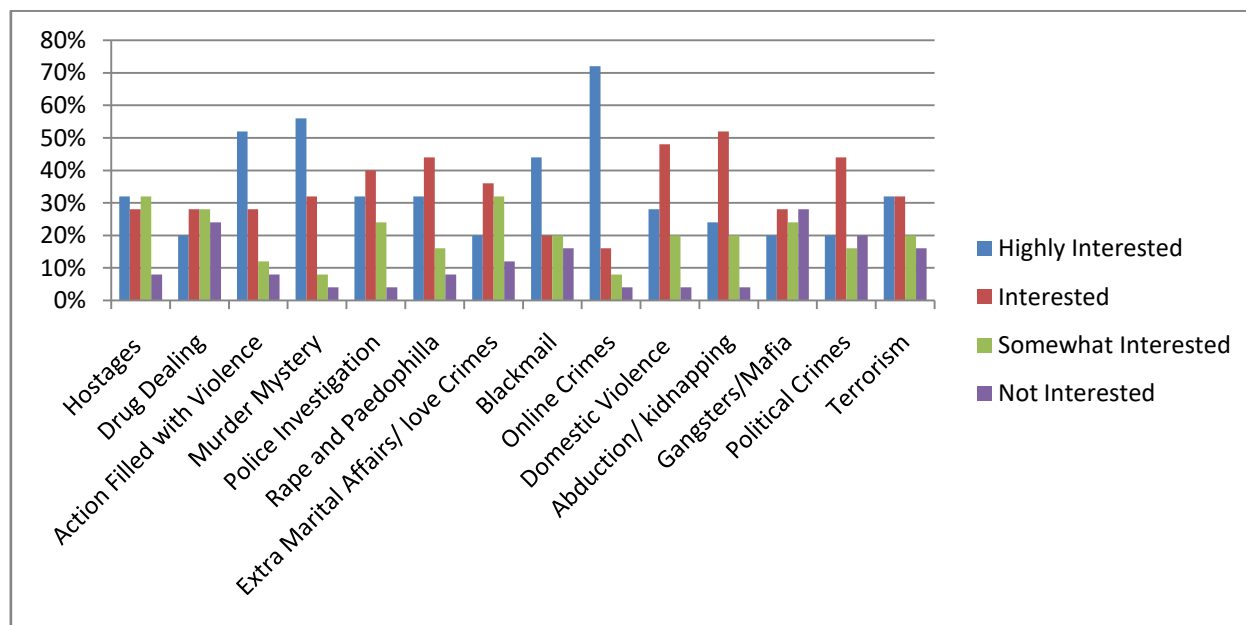
b. Access to Crime Reality Show:



- Crime reality shows are mostly viewed on television at their regular timings.
- YouTube occupies 2nd place in access as it enables to view the repeat shows.
- There is a slight observable difference in female and male viewers’ mode of access.
- 56% of female viewers regularly watch these shows on TV, and 76% of male viewers regularly watch them on TV sets.
- 32% of women and 44% of men are regularly depending on YouTube to view these shows.

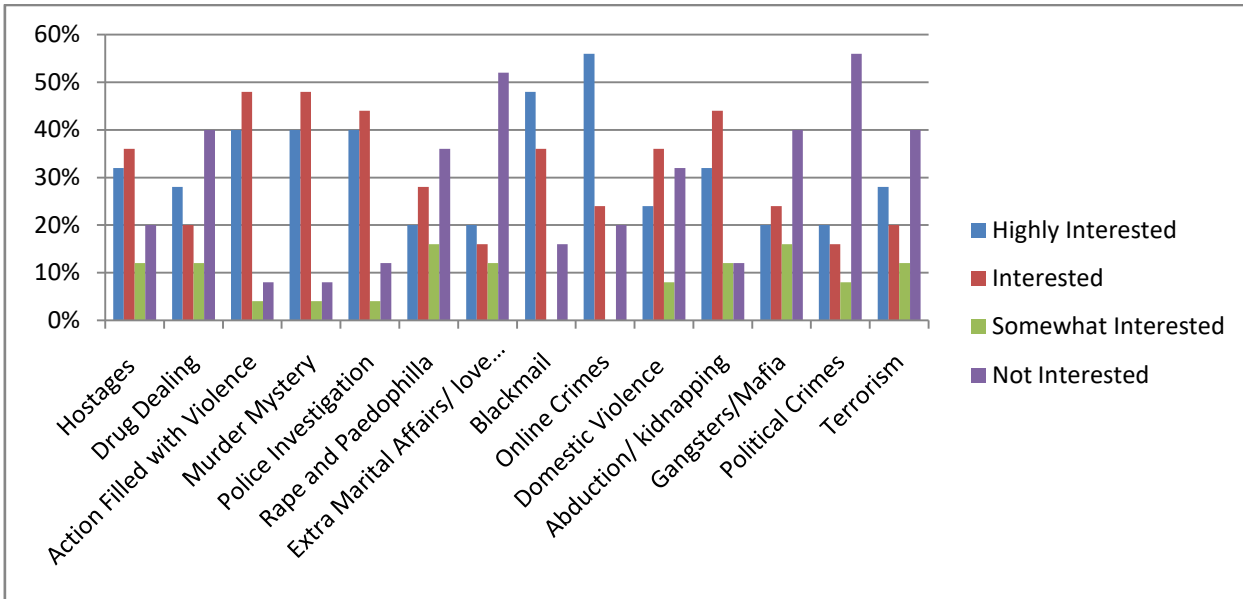
c. **The Popular Conventional Themes of Crime Reality Shows that Indian Viewers' Prefer:**

Figure 4: Popular Crime Themes among Female Respondents



- 66% of respondents (72% of female and 56% of male) are highly interested in 'Online crimes'.
- 50% are highly interested in Murder Mystery (56% female and 40% male).
- 48% are highly interested in Action filled with Violence (56% female and 40% male).
- Female viewers are showing more interest in online crimes, murder mysteries and themes based on action filled with violence compared to male viewers.
- Themes based on police investigation, abduction and domestic violence are also quite popular among viewers.
- A strong relationship between their interest of themes and the choice of programs is observed i.e., MTV Webbed deals with Online crimes and programs like CID and Crime Patrol deals with murder mysteries, action filled with violence, abduction, domestic violence cases etc.

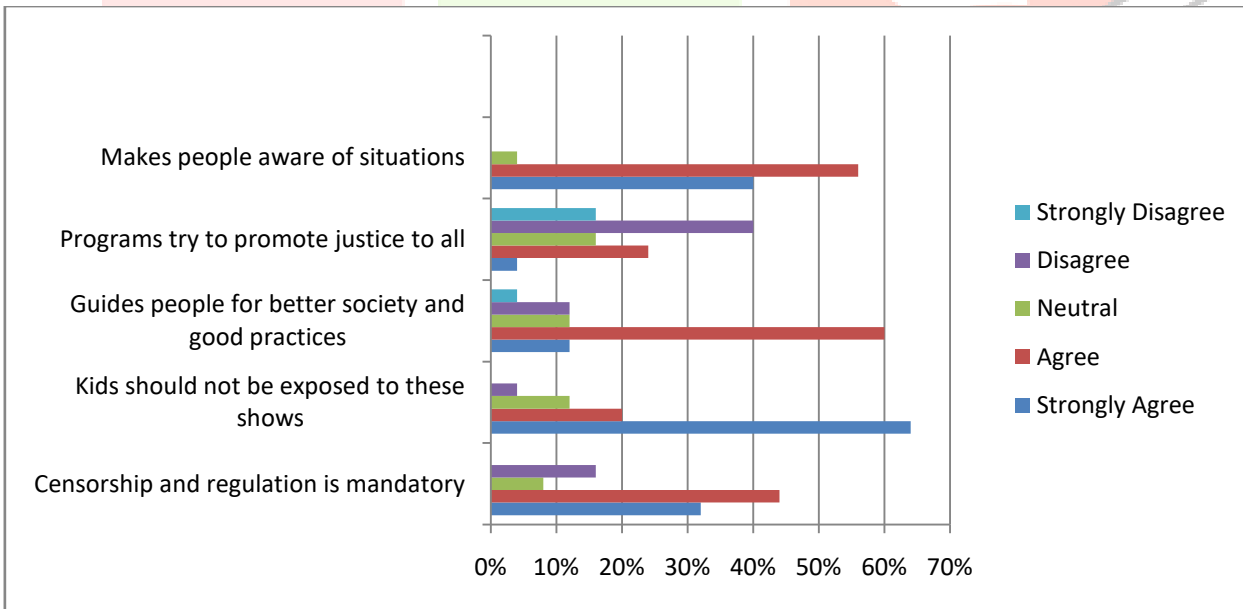
Figure 5: Popular Crime Themes Among Male Respondents



Section – III: Crime Reality Shows – Indian Viewers’ Perceptions and Effects.

a. Crime and Society

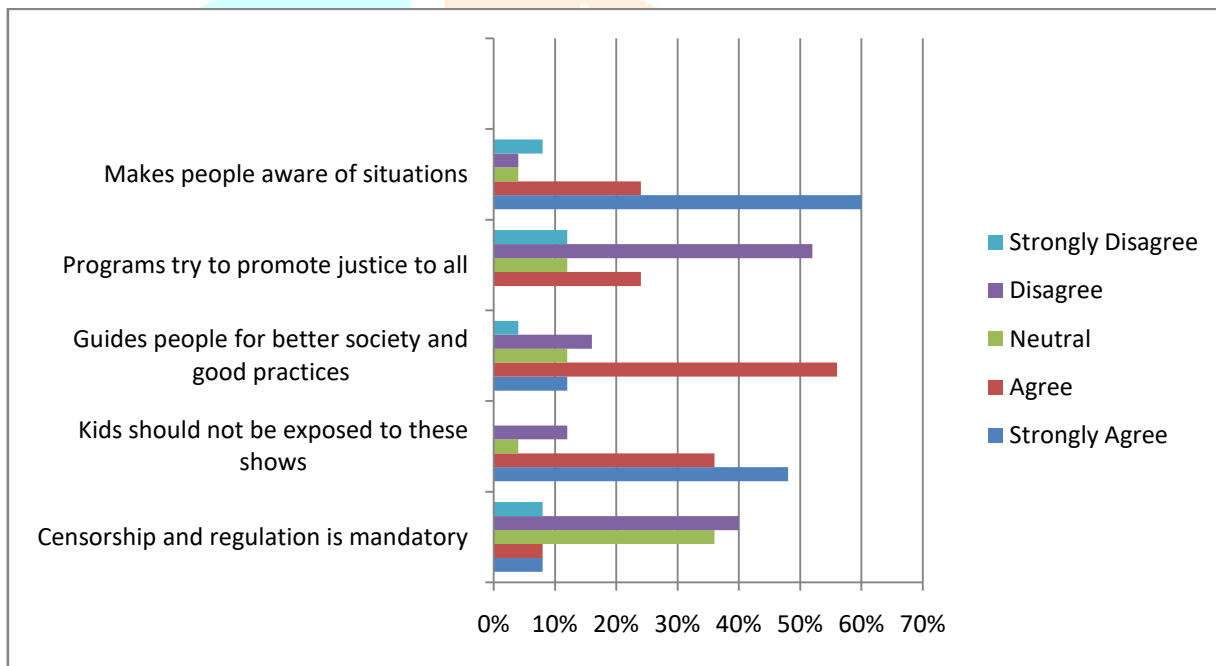
Figure 6: General Perceptions of Female Respondents on Crime Reality Shows



- There is a significant positive agreement from both male and female respondents (Female: 40% strong agreement, 56% agreement; Male: 60% strong agreement, 24% agreement) that *the crime reality shows have made people aware of the situations they need to be careful about.*

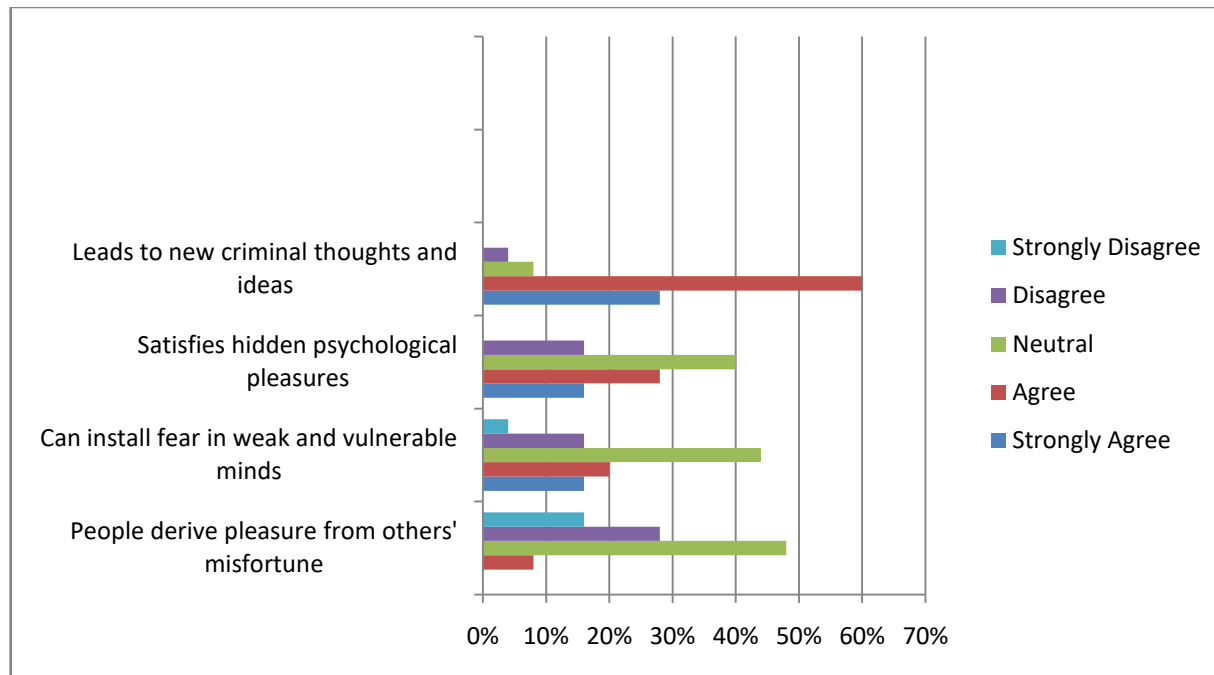
- Both female (overall 56% disagreed and 16% neutral) and male (around 76%) respondents have significantly disagreed to the opinion that ***“these programs are trying to promote justice to all”***.
- There is a significant positive response (Female: 60% agreed, 12% strongly agreed; Male: 56% agreed, 12% strongly agreed) for the statement ***that crime reality shows are good for the society in terms of creating awareness and guiding people with good practices.***
- ***It is observed from the study that the sheer awareness and guidance cannot promote a common justice to everyone in the society.***
- There is a common agreement from both male and female viewers that ***kids should not be exposed to these kinds of programs*** (Female: 64% strongly agreed, 20% agreed; Male: 48% strongly agreed, 36% agreed).
- ***Regard to censorship to be imposed on crime reality shows and regulations there is a conflict in the agreement between female and male viewers. While female agreed male partially denied censorship.***
- 32% of female have strongly agreed and 44% have agreed that Censorship should be more on TV than cinema since it is free viewership for adults and kids in a family on daily basis.
- Among men 40% disagreed and 36% could not decide anything regarding imposing censorship.

Figure 7: General Perceptions of Male Respondents on Crime Reality Shows



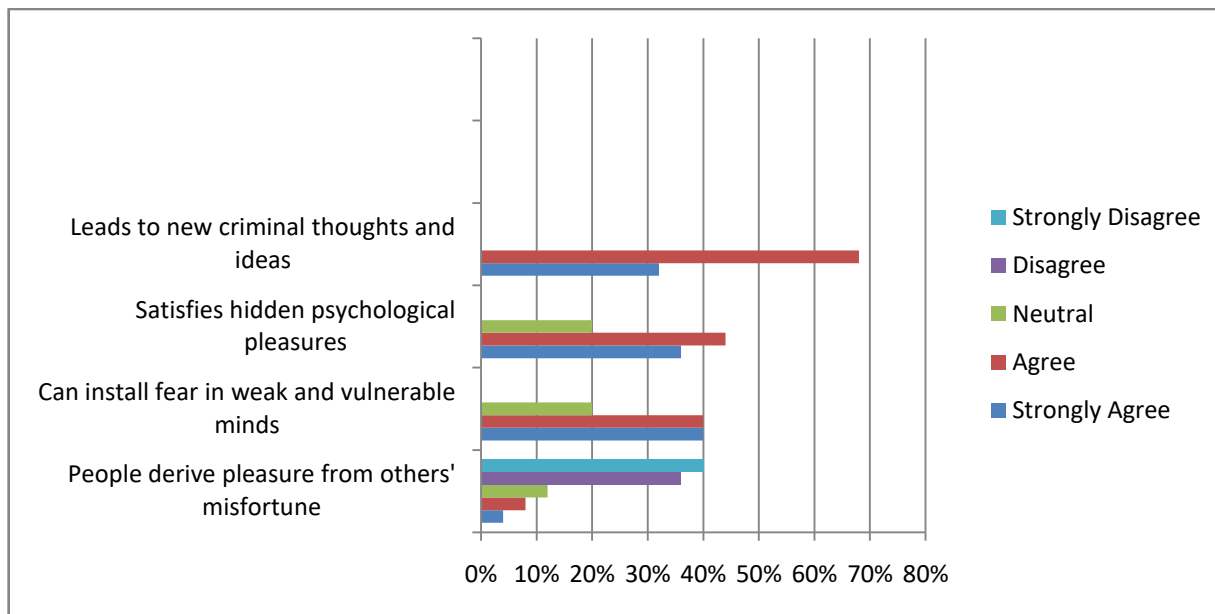
b. Crime reality shows and Psychological Impact

Figure 8: Perceptions by Female Respondents regarding Psychological Impact of Crime Reality Shows



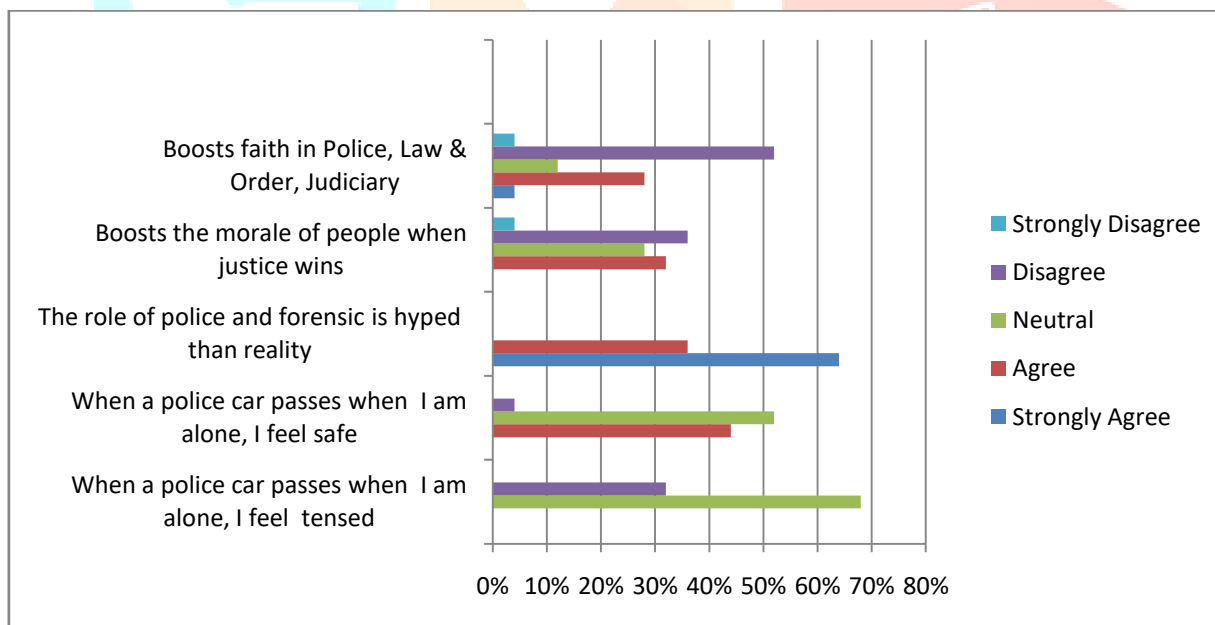
- With regard to psychological impact of crime reality shows a there is a mixed response from the respondents.
- Both female and male have significantly agreed (Female 60% agreed; Male 68% agreed) that *these programs lead to development of innovating criminal thoughts and ideas*.
- With regard to the impact factor that *these programs can install fear in the vulnerable and sensitive minds and harm their psyche*, overall only 36% of female have agreed.
- But a good amount of men folk i.e., 80% (with 40% strong agreement and 40% agreement) opined that these programs can install fear in weak minds.
- Similarly, there is difference in opinions among women and men folkwith regard to the opinion that *reality shows satisfies hidden psychological pleasures like jealousy, hedonism, intoxication, sex appeals, impulsivity*.
- Men i.e., around 80% have significantly agreed that these programs satisfies such pleasures (36% strong agreement, 44% agreement). However, a majority of women i.e. 40% are neutral on this.Only 44% have agreed on this impact.
- Around 76% of men have disagreed to the psychological factor that *'people derive sadistic pleasure from seeing other people's misfortune on the TV shows'*. Whereas, 48% couldn't decide on agreement or disagreement regarding this statement.

Figure 9: Perceptions of Male Respondents regarding Psychological Impact of Crime Reality Shows



c. Perceptions towards Law & Order and Judiciary and Effects on Behaviour towards Police

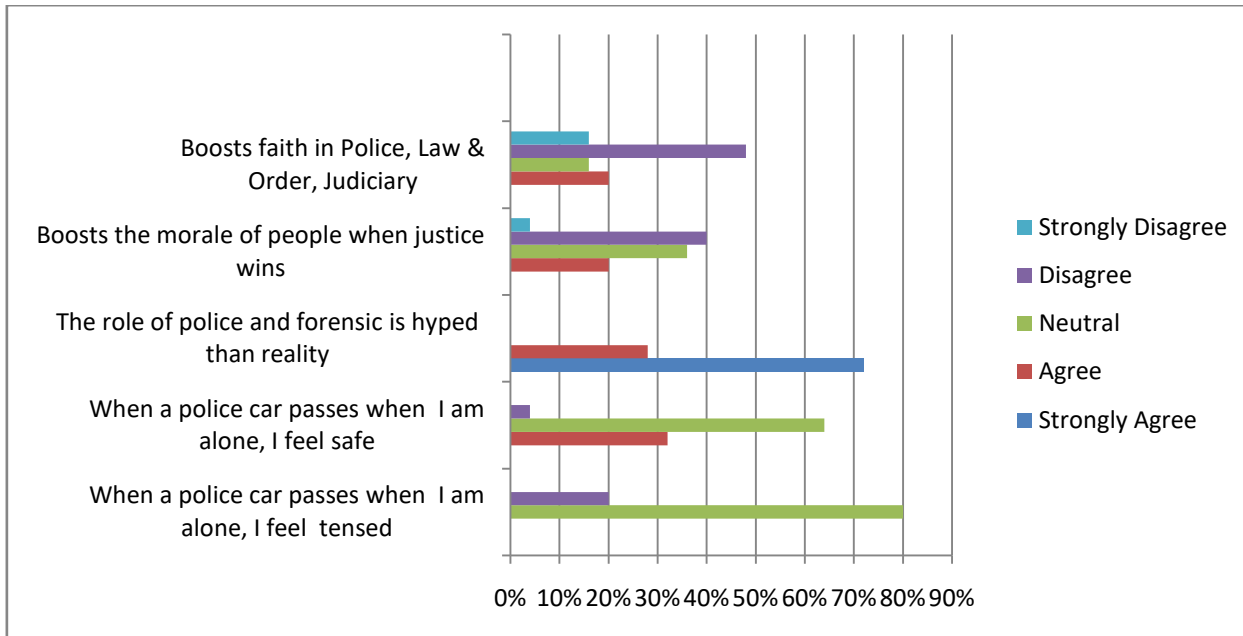
Figure 10: Perceptions of Female Respondents towards Law & Order, Judiciary and Police



- All the female and male respondents i.e., 100% have tremendously and significantly agreed that *‘the way the police and forensics are portrayed as “incredibly effective” is actually hyped than the reality’*.
- 56% female and 64% male disagreed that *‘these shows boosts up faith in Indian police, Law & Order and Judiciary’*.
- 40% female and 40% of male disagreed that these shows *‘boosts the morale of the police when a victim fights back, criminal is caught and justice wins’*. 28% of female and 36% of male are neutral on the statement.

- Around 68% of female and 80% of male could not answer whether they feel safe or tensed **when a police car passes by when they are alone**’.
- **The high percentage of ‘can’t say’ or ‘neutral’ approach towards police, law & order and judiciary shows how skeptical the minds sets are in giving a bold opinion.**

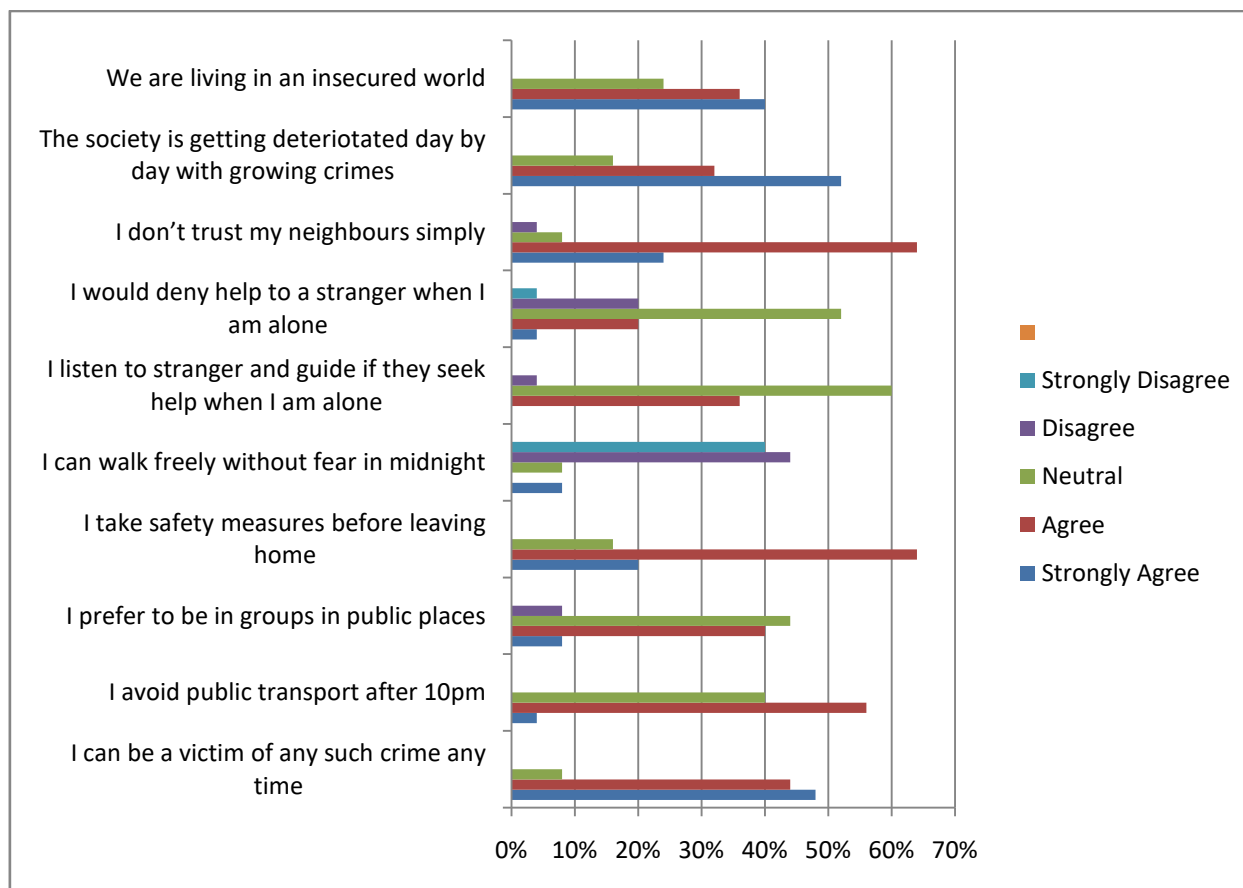
Figure 11: Perceptions of Male Respondents towards Law & Order, Judiciary and Police



d. Impact on Fear of Victimization and Sense of Vulnerability

- 76% of female and 56% of men (though not significant in percentage) have opined that **‘we are living in an increasingly insecure world’**.
- A great percentage of respondents (female: 52% strongly agreed, 32% agreed; male: 24% strongly agreed, 72% agreed) have agreed the **‘society is getting deteriorated day by day with increased crime rate’**
- Both the statements are proving the theory of **“Mean World Syndrome”** developed by the theorist George Gerbner.
- 92% of female (out of which 48% strongly agreed) 96% of male (36% strongly agreed) felt that **‘they can be victim of any such crimes anytime, anywhere, hence I need to be very careful to avoid such consequences.’**

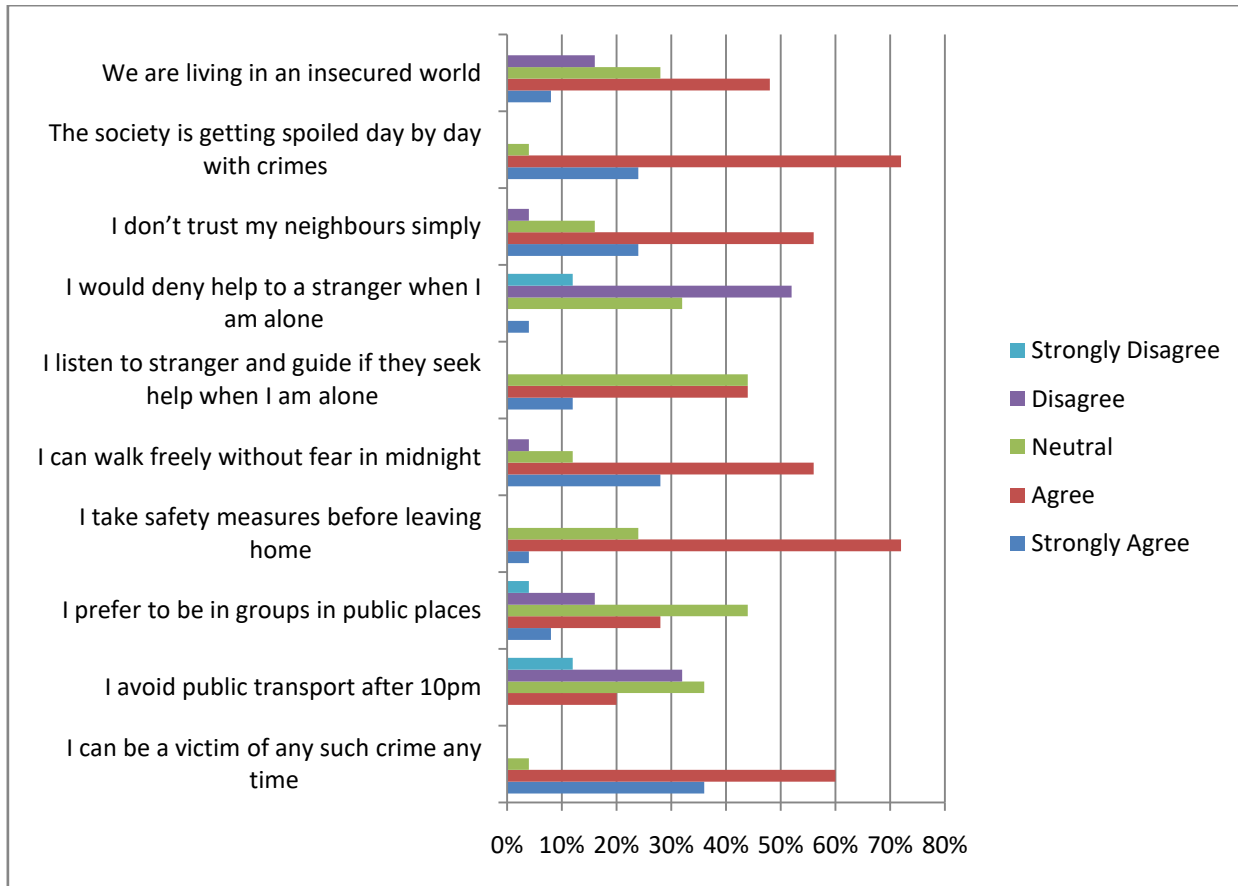
Figure 12: Effect of Crime Reality Shows on "Fear of Victimization" of Female Respondents



- Similarly both female (84%) and male (96%) respondents expressed that they *don't trust my neighbours, simply because they are my neighbours. They cross check their background and behavior before I proceed for anything.*
- 84% female (within 20% strong agreement) and 76% male agreed that *'they take minimum safety measures before leaving home like informing parents / spouse.'*
- *There is a drastic difference in agreement between women and men when they were asked whether they can walk freely even in midnight without any fear or precautions. And whether they take public transport post 10 pm. Women are more vulnerable to such risks and hence they avoid.*
- Almost 84% of women disagreed (with 40% strong disagreement) that they can walk freely in midnight without fear. In contrary 84% men said they can walk freely.
- 60% of female agreed that they *avoid public transport like buses, trains, autos etc, post 10 pm.* Only 20% men agreed that they avoid public transport after 10 pm.
- 48% of women *'prefer to be in groups in public places'*, and 44% could not opine on this. And in contrary only 36% of men agreed they prefer to be in groups in public places.
- Majority of respondents especially women remain neutral to the statements *"If a stranger approaches me for any help, when I am alone or in isolate I would deny help and leave the place immediately"* or *"I would listen him /her and advice to seek the help of police"*.
- Only 36% female said they would listen and help whereas 60% are neutral on this. 20% female said they would deny help and 52% are neutral on this.

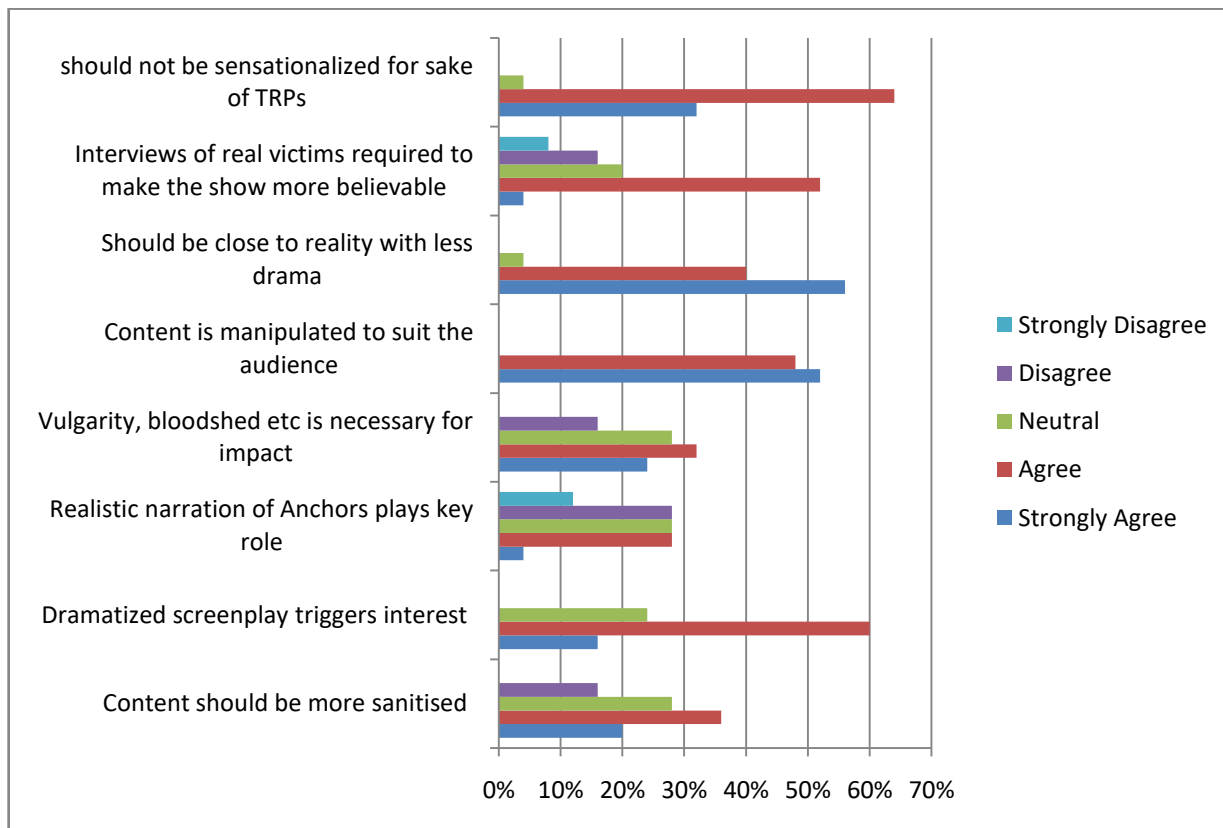
- With regard to men, around 52% agreed they would listen to stranger and guide them properly and 64% disagreed to the point that they would deny help.
- ***It is evidently proved that there is a strong fear of victimization among both women and men. However, personally many women feel they are not safe and more vulnerable to many risks at the given situations.***

Figure 13: Effect of Crime Reality Shows on "Fear of Victimization" of Male Respondents



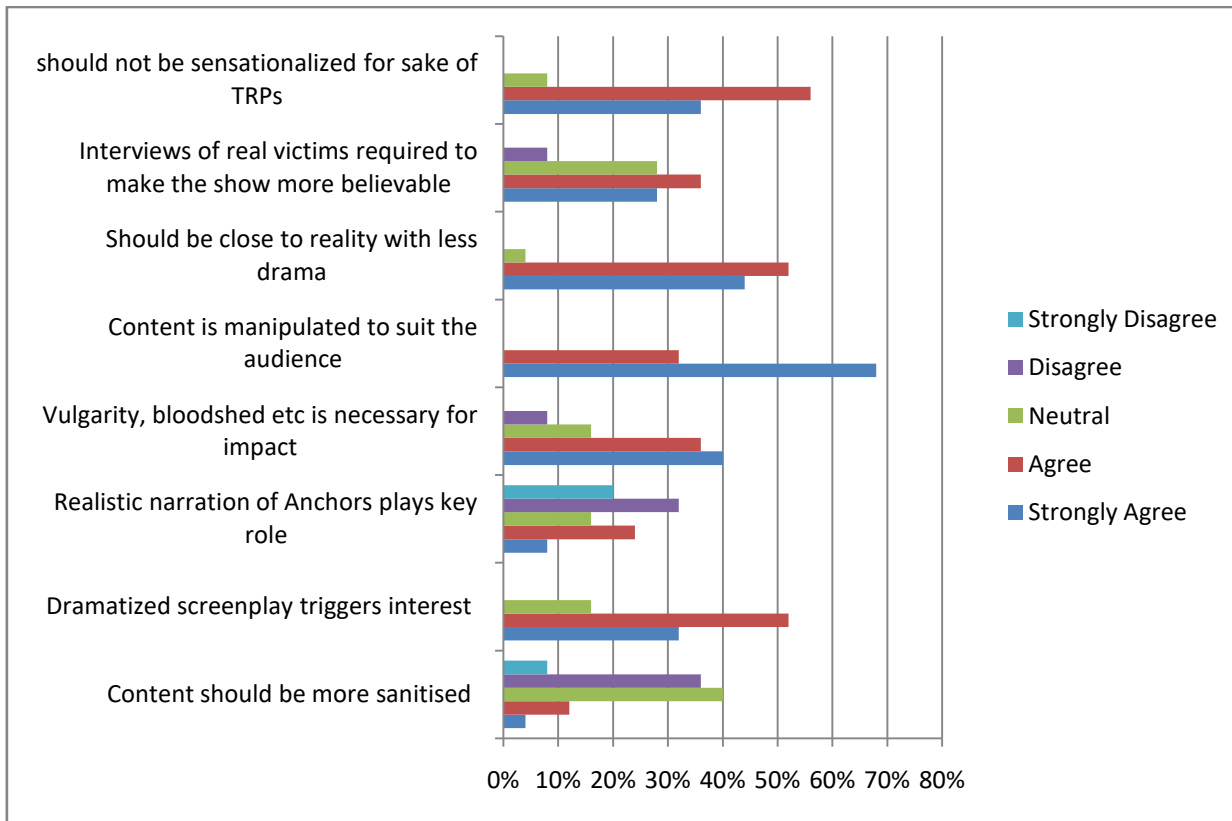
e. Expectations on Program Content and Presentation of the Crime Reality Shows

Figure 14: Expectations of Female Respondents on Content and Treatment of Crime Reality Shows



- A good majority of viewers i.e., 76% of female and 84% of male agreed that *'dramatized screenplay and sensational real life stories triggers the interest in audience'*.
- Similarly 76% of men and 56% of women have agreed that *'the depiction of vulgarity, usage of bad language, violence and bloodshed is necessary for a reality crime shows for most impactful and realistic presentation.'*
- However, a great majority of respondents yet agreed (Female: 56% strongly agreed, 40% agreed; Male: 44% strongly agreed, 52% agreed) that *'crime based shows should be kept as close to reality as possible with a balanced approach of dramatization'*
- A significant amount of respondents (100% Female and 100% Male) opined that *the cases they show are not shown exactly how they took but they are manipulated to suit the audience.*
- Regarding the role of narrators in the show, only 32% of female and 32% of male have agreed that *narrators boost the audience interest with their presentation style.*
- 56% of women and 64% of men wanted the shows to include *the interviews of real victims in order to make the stories more believable and make sure that their identity is hidden.'*
- 56% of women felt that the content should be more sanitized as TV comes into our homes. Men strongly contradicted this as only 16% of them agreed to this statement.
- Good majority of viewers (Female: 32% strong agreement, 64% agreement; Male: 36% strong agreement, 56% agreement) opined that *the cases depicted should not be sensationalized for sake of TRPs.*

Figure 15: Expectations of Male Respondents on Content and Treatment of Crime Reality Shows



Conclusion:

The crime reality shows are quite popular in India, and impactful especially among youngsters. As the television is the primary source of entertainment among various sections of society in India, middle and upper middle class are profoundly interested on TV based entertainment, and crime reality shows are not exception in this case. Though there is a tremendous growth in Internet, digitalization, and convergence of technology, Television remained the primary source to access these crime reality shows.

No major significant difference have been noticed or identified among female and male viewers in terms of perceptions, effects and expectations. More or less, they opined similarly. Viewers generally like to view the shows at given time slots so as to maintain the interest intact. However, YouTube is the second best source for the viewers to view the repeat shows. Themes like online crimes, murder mysteries, action filled with violence, domestic violence are quite popular among the viewers.

No doubt that crime reality shows creates awareness on growing criminality in the society, guides people what is good and bad and keeps us alert. Yet viewers are not under impression that this would bring an easy solution or justice to all the sections of people in society. Regarding the content and presentation of crime reality viewers though agreed that manipulation happens in these shows, they expect to keep these shows more realistic with balanced approached of dramatization. The viewers feel that kids should not be exposed to these kinds of programs can install fear and lead to other psychological impacts. However, youngsters feel that 16 years is an ideal age to view these shows as young adults are more vulnerable to such crimes. While women

viewers are expecting some sort of regularity in content of crime reality shows, men are contradicting this opinion.

The study also proved the impact of crime reality shows on various psychological factors and opinions that lead to the construction of social reality. The viewers are under strong impression that these kinds of programmes would lead to the development of innovative criminal thoughts and ideas, and male viewers opine that these shows could satisfy certain hidden psychological pleasures like jealousy, hedonism, intoxication, sexualities etc.

It has been found from the research study that there is a negative correlation with regard to portrayal of police, law and order, judiciary and forensics onscreen and the real life situation. Somehow these shows fail in boosting the morality of police and system. As explained earlier, too much of dramatization, hyped role of police, sensationalisation of the issues etc have created a negative image on the real police. In fact many respondents are neutral in their approach regarding their personal trust and belief on police.

The research study also significantly proved the fear of victimization among both male and female viewers. As theorized in the concept of *Mean World Syndrome* developed under Cultivation Theory by George Gerbner, the viewers of crime reality show are under strong opinion that the society is getting deteriorated day by day because of growing crime rates and they can be victims of such crimes anywhere, anytime. Hence they feel that people should be very careful in dealing with situations and mingling with other. There is a lean trust even on neighbours. Also many women viewers feel they are not safe and more vulnerable to many risks at the given situations proving the fact of higher sense of vulnerability due to crime reality shows.

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