

Analysis of Educational Themes and Listeners' Feedback to "Tinka Tinka Sukh", an
Entertainment-Education Radio Soap Opera in India.

by

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Abstract

The present paper analyzes All India Radio's (AIR) experience with "Tinka Tinka Sukh" ("Happiness Lies in Small Things"), a 104 episode radio soap opera that was broadcast in India in 1996-97. "Tinka Tinka Sukh" promoted issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, small family size, family harmony, environmental conservation, and HIV/AIDS prevention and control. A field experiment design with multiple methods of data-collection was employed to assess the effects of this highly popular radio soap opera in the Hindi-speaking region of India.

In the present paper, we provide a historical background of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", including a discussion of production processes and storyline. We analyze the educational themes depicted in "Tinka Tinka Sukh" and investigate the listeners' feedback to the radio soap opera through a content analysis of (1) its 104 episodes and (2) a non-random sample of 237 letters written to AIR by its regular listeners.

Analysis of Educational Themes and Listeners' Feedback to "Tinka Tinka Sukh", an Entertainment-Education Radio Soap Opera in India.¹

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The present paper analyzes All India Radio's (AIR) experience with "Tinka Tinka Sukh" ("Happiness Lies in Small Things"), a 104 episode entertainment-education radio soap opera that was broadcast in India in 1996-97. "Tinka Tinka Sukh" promoted gender equality, women's empowerment, small family size, family harmony, environmental conservation, HIV/AIDS prevention and control. Here we provide a historical background of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", including a discussion of its production processes and storyline. We also present results from our content analysis of the educational themes depicted in "Tinka Tinka Sukh" and investigate the listeners' feedback to the radio soap opera.

The Origins of "Tinka Tinka Sukh"

The idea for "Tinka Tinka Sukh" was mooted in a 1994 meeting by David Poindexter, President of Population Communications International, a non-profit organization head-quartered in New York, and Shashi Kapoor, Director General of All India Radio, New Delhi. Poindexter's organization had previously helped launch two popular entertainment-education television serials in India -- "Hum Log" ("We People") in 1984-85 and "Hum Raahi" ("Co-Travelers") in 1991-92 -- on Doordarshan, the Indian national network television. Both these TV serials had attracted large audiences in the Hindi-speaking areas of North India (with ratings of up to 90%) and both dealt with issues of gender equality, family harmony, and family size (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Mr. Kapoor was receptive to Poindexter's idea of launching a long-running family oriented serial on AIR, given that AIR's Central Educational Broadcasting Unit (CEBU) had in the past decade gained experience in producing socially-relevant radio serials. However, none of AIR's previous serials were commercially-sponsored and none were over 52 episodes in length. Mr. Kapoor entrusted the task of producing "Tinka Tinka Sukh" to Usha Bhasin, Director of Programmes at All India Radio and Director of CEBU, who had previously produced three highly popular and provocative radio serials at AIR dealing with issues of adolescence ("Jeevan Saurabh" in 1988), marriage incompatibility ("Jeevan Saurabh II" in 1989), and teenage sexuality ("Dehleez" in 1994-1995).

PCI helped conduct a workshop at AIR in June 1995 to share Miguel Sabido's methodology of producing entertainment-education soap operas. Miguel Sabido, a writer-producer-director at Televisa,

the Mexican national television network, had in the 1970s and early 1980s formulated a methodology for producing entertainment-education soap operas utilizing tenets of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Sabido's methodology called for the promotion of educational values through the use of positive, negative, and transitional characters who are appropriately rewarded or punished to promote listeners' identification with positive role models (Nariman, 1993; Singhal, Rogers, & Brown, 1993). During this workshop, PCI also shared with the AIR producers and writers a synopsis of existing research literature on family values, gender equality, and family size in India, which was useful in identifying the educational values for "Tinka Tinka Sukh".

This AIR workshop helped sketch the general outline for "Tinka Tinka Sukh", including the careful delineation of its educational values, the positive and negative characters, and the locale of its storyline. Usha Bhasin identified a core group of eleven writers and six producers for this radio series, several of whom had participated in the writing and production of the previously broadcast AIR radio series "Dehleez" (in 1994-95). The writing of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" began almost immediately after the PCI workshop at AIR; its production began in September, 1995. Based on feedback received from listeners' of previous AIR serials, it was decided that the radio serial would be "music-heavy". However, music had to be selected carefully to appeal to audiences in the entire Hindi-speaking belt. India's renowned poet Gulzaar, who is well-known for his lyrics of several Hindi film songs, was engaged to write the theme song for "Tinka Tinka Sukh". The famous Bombay-based music director Vishal Bharadwaj composed the catchy tune, and well-known playback singer Kavita Krishnamoorthy lent her voice.

Bhasin and her production team also decided to use a musical base for delivering the epilogues for each episode. An epilogue is a 30-second spot at the end of the episode, designed to stimulate the listeners' thinking about the educational messages presented in that particular episode. In order to distinguish the music of the theme song from that of the epilogues, and also to find a common musical base appropriate for the entire Hindi speaking area, the epilogues were written in the form of dohas ("couplets"). Dohas are universally popular in Hindi-speaking India and religious and educational sermons are commonly associated with this genre of song and poetry. The dohas for "Tinka Tinka Sukh" were written by Acchar Singh Parmar, who served both as a producer and an artiste for "Tinka Tinka Sukh". He was thus familiar with the storyline and the educational context for the radio serial.

Once the storyline was outlined and major characters were penned, several well-known artists from radio and theater were hired, including a few new artists. Writing tasks were divided among eleven writers, each of whom brought unique strengths to the storyline. For instance, a writer with a legal background was hired to write the episodes dealing with women's rights and divorce law. A radio studio

was hired outside of AIR and production began in September, 1995. A sponsor, Primetime, was found, who in turn sold the episodes to other commercial sponsors. Each episode of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", including costs for artists' salaries, studio charges, music, etc. cost about Rs. 20,000 (\$600 U.S.).

A great deal of pre-program publicity, lasting about six months, preceded the first broadcast of "Tinka Tinka Sukh". This pre-program publicity was carried out over radio, television, and the national, regional, and vernacular press. Promotional spots of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" with its catchy theme song, character voices, jingles, and narration were broadcast on all the 27 radio stations where the radio series was to be broadcast. In addition, these spots were also broadcast on the commercial channels of All India Radio, including Vividh Bharati, youth channel, and the national network radio channel. Similar spots were broadcast on Doordarshan, the Indian national network television, emphasizing the family-orientation of the radio serial and its long-duration (one year). Once the broadcast dates and times of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" were finalized, these were publicized in the radio, TV, and press publicity materials.

"Tinka Tinka Sukh" was broadcast from February 19, 1996 to February 15, 1997, over 27 radio stations of All India Radio, covering seven Indian states in the population-rich Hindi-speaking area of northern India: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi. Some 600 million people comprising some 100 million households live in these seven Indian states and the regular radio listenership here ranges from 30 to 40% of all households. "Tinka Tinka Sukh" is one of the most popular radio programs ever broadcast on All India Radio, and while no precise listenership figures exist, AIR sources estimate its regular listenership runs into the tens of millions.

What was "Tinka Tinka Sukh"?

"Tinka Tinka Sukh" ("Happiness Lies in Small Things") tells of how everyday rounds of common motion and ordinary acts of human interaction are what happiness is all about. Navgaon¹ is a farming community struggling to understand the value of modern traditions, coming to terms with their unattractive aspects and coping to move in progressive directions. Suraj², his father 'Chaudhri³' and mother 'Chaudhrian' represent an ideal family. Chaudhri and his wife have a good understanding of the role of traditions and some of the progressive ways that are humane and just and underlie the sustenance and progress of social order. Together they represent the cause of women -- anti-dowry, marriage and divorce, women's empowerment -- and the importance of creating an integrated harmonious community based on cooperation and self-sufficiency. They have raised their son Suraj such that he appreciates the

¹ Pronounced 'Naw-gao'; a Hindi word meaning 'new village'. Navgaon is a small village located near a city. Although progressive in certain ways, Navgaon maintains its rural character and upholds the close relation of man and nature.

² Pronounced 'Soo-ruj', a Hindi word meaning the sun.

significance of agriculture and man's relationship with his environment, particularly the community; and yet also recognizes the role of education and modernization in their appropriate contexts. This family's virtuous ways are extended in the loyal support they earn from their workers Jumman and his wife Rukhsana. A poor couple, Jumman is a farm hand in the Chaudhri's fields while Rukhsana helps with household chores.

Chacha⁴, his wife Chachi and their children Ramlal, Nandini, Sundar, Suman and Pappu are the antithesis of the Chaudhri's family. Chacha believes he is absolved of all parental responsibilities since he is the "breadwinner"; also he believes his wife is the more capable one in raising the children because she is smarter than him. Fact is, Chachi is domineering, coquettish, inquisitive, blindly traditional, and very vocal. Everyone in Navgaon knows she is the village gossip. As a result, she is blindly indulgent of her eldest son Ramlal who is a delinquent and anti-social, critical of her daughters and negligent of her younger children; because tradition holds that the eldest son will be the 'family light' when parents grow old. Her eldest daughter Champa quietly grows out of the family's shadows to become a famous singer with the help of her friends Nandini, Suraj and his parents.

The lives of Gareebo (a widow) and her daughters Nandini, Kusum and Lali narrate the trials of being a woman in a tradition-bound society. Gareebo feels societal pressure in getting her children married since they have come of age. Nandini, the eldest, will not marry until she becomes self-dependent and becomes 'a teacher'. Kusum gets married early and dies at child birth. Despite various pressures, Lali goes on to become a doctor, the first in Navgaon.

There is another tragedy in Navgaon - Poonam is abused and beaten to death by her husband and his parents for not bringing adequate dowry. On the other hand, Sushma, sister-in-law of Kusum, finds herself abandoned by her husband, also for dowry. Encouraged by Nandini, Champa, and Suraj and supported by her parents, Sushma overcomes her trials and establishes a sewing school. This opportunity gives her a sense of new-found independence.

Ramlal is transformed by the quiet determination and admonishment of Nandini. He realizes how his delinquent acts upset the peace and happiness of their community. When he becomes a Block Development Officer⁵, he opts to be located in Navgaon so that he too can contribute to his village. Champa starts an adult night-school while Sushma's school expands and creates opportunities for more women. Around this time, the residents of Navgaon are enthused by the return of Dindayal from abroad. Dindayal will build a hospital for his hometown and spend the rest of his life with his

3 Pronounced 'Chowdh-ree'; a Hindi word of respect for a leader and elder. His wife is called 'Chowdh-rian.'

4 Pronounced 'Chaa-cha'; a Hindi word meaning uncle, a relative who is the younger brother of your father. Chacha is a term used respectfully for any elder. Chachi (pronounced Cha-chee) is the feminine form of Chacha and refers to the wife of Chacha.

community. Dindayal's son and daughter-in-law also follow him and return to their village. This couple adopts Kusum's child after much reluctance from Satbir, the biological father. Everyone understands the significance of the situation and urges Satbir to do what is in the best interest of the newborn baby. All this also transforms Jumman who is momentarily swayed by urban glamour that causes problems in his family. He finally accepts his wife's view that life's happiness lies in small things. This is the central idea echoed throughout in various ways by every character, most noticeably by the positive characters and ultimately reinforced by the transitional and negative characters as they travel the path from ignorance to recognition.

Methodology

A field experiment design with multiple methods of data-collection was employed to assess the effects of this highly popular radio soap opera in the Hindi-speaking region of India. For this paper, we primarily rely on three sets of data sources: (1) personal interviews with the key personnel behind the production of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", including Mrs. Usha Bhasin, Executive Producer of the Radio Serial, (2) the 104 scripts and audio-tapes of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", and (3) a non-random sample of 237 listeners' letters in response to the radio serial.

Research Questions

Our content analysis of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" was directed by the following research questions:

Research Question # 1: To what extent were certain educational themes (such as gender equality, small family size etc.) emphasized in the radio soap opera?

Research Question # 2: To what extent did the central characters of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" portray pro-social/anti-social behaviors and with what consequence?

Research Question # 3: To what extent were certain program attributes (hooks for next episode, commercial advertisements etc.) present in "Tinka Tinka Sukh"?

Our analysis of the letters written to "Tinka Tinka Sukh" centered around the following additional research questions:

Research Question # 4: What were the salient characteristics of the letters (length etc.) and the letter-writers?

Research Question # 5: What were the reasons provided by the letter-writers for writing to "Tinka Tinka Sukh"?

Research Question # 6: To what extent did the letters explicate the educational themes highlighted in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”?

Research Question # 7: How did letter-writers react to certain real-life scenarios depicted in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”?

Research Question # 8: To what extent did the letter-writers engage in parasocial interaction with “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and its characters?

Content Analysis of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” Episodes

Before beginning the content analysis of “Tinka Tinka Sukh”, we had detailed discussions with Mrs. Usha Bhasin, Executive Producer of the radio serial. The meeting enabled us to refine our content analysis research instrument. She provided us with a list of educational themes promoted by the radio series. This document allows us to compare the content of the radio series as it unfolds versus the guidelines and aims that framed its creation. Our methodology involved both listening to audio-tapes of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” as well as reading the scripts used by the actors. This enabled us to thoroughly grasp the substantive content of “Tinka Tinka Sukh”. A total of 49 episodes were content analyzed by listening to the audio tapes while 55 episodes were examined by reading the actual scripts.

Educational Themes emphasized in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”

Research Question # 1: To what extent were certain educational themes (such as gender equality, small family size etc.) emphasized in the radio soap opera?

The educational issues “Tinka Tinka Sukh” attempted to deal with were varied and exhaustive (Table 1). On the whole, the soap opera did emphasize heavily on issues relating to women. At one level, the general status of women was examined from the individual perspective of her skills and capabilities. From this vantage point, the undergirding issue of women’s empowerment was addressed in 80% of all episodes. 86% of the soap’s episodes discussed ways to restore self-confidence in suppressed women. Women’s education was present in 51% of all episodes. Some 32% of all episodes addressed the subject of women becoming self-reliant. Women’s right to equal nutrition as men was dealt in 18% of all episodes and women’s right of equal access to health care as men was dealt with in 15% of all episodes.

The issue of women’s marriage is explored from many perspectives in the soap. Societal pressure (direct and indirect) on parents who have daughters of marriageable age is almost a social norm in Indian society. Some 27% of all episodes dealt with this issue in conjunction with the subject of women exercising the right to choose their own husband (9% of all episodes). The radio serial reflects the tensions within a close-knit rural community and difficult issue of the extent of society’s role in

influencing families and marriages. The participative role of society in Poonam's unfortunate death owing to marital problems is articulated by Nandini as the village mourns their tragedy. On the other hand, Champa, Suraj, Nandini and Ramlal debate the tradition of not marrying from the same village even though they have selected their spouses (implied and evidenced). Understandably, the soap can only evoke a debate on society's all-pervasive influence especially in small close-knit communities and cannot heavily emphasize self-selection of spouse as the better alternative. A related issue of 'not perceiving marriage as the be-all-and-all of a woman's life' is treated in only 28% of the serial's episodes. Clearly, the institution of marriage is upheld as important in a woman's life but current attitudes are held up for analysis.

Women's status after marriage is explored considerably - principally in the lives of Kusum, Poonam, Sushma, Gareebo, Rukhsana, and Batasho - through issues concerning dowry and relations between the daughter-in-law and the husband's parents. Traditional Indian society is still pegged on a joint-family system that is especially prevalent in rural communities. Although it is now illegal to give or receive dowry, the custom is still widely practised. The negative consequences of the dowry system are examined in 21% of the episodes. Specifically, the problem of the husband and his parents co-opting to torture the woman for insufficient dowry is emphasized in 25% of the episodes. Another way the daughter-in-law suffers in her husband's family is when she delays in conceiving, and preferably a son. In that situation she is harassed not only by her husband's parents but she also becomes the subject of community gossip, a part of which is also the concern of her husband's parents. Some 8% of the soap's episodes dealt with the issue of not victimizing the woman if she does not conceive according to expectations of her husband's family and the larger community. That harmonious relations can and should exist between the woman and her husband's parents and family is a distinctive topic in 41% of all episodes.

Regarding marriage and fertility, the bad effects of early marriage are argued by Nandini and Chaudhri in 22% instances particularly when Gareebo and others are planning the marriage of Kusum who is still a minor, even by legal standards. Undesirable effects of early pregnancy are underscored highly by in 17% of all episodes, reflected in Kusum's death at childbirth. Kusum's case serves as a living example for all and the lesson is loud and clear, not merely discussed rhetorically. That divorce is not a solution for family problems occurs in 10% of all episodes and is accentuated further by concrete legal advice on divorce procedures from a lawyer across 12% of all episodes.

Views on family life and communication are illustrated in two interesting ways. There is not only evidence of desirable and undesirable family communication, there is observation from children as well about desirable family communication. In 65% of the episodes, the role of both parents in the

upbringing of their children is demonstrated. Since personality development is one of the core themes, the occurrence of this theme does come across as a significant topic. The theme of significance of spousal communication covers 70% of all the soap's episodes. This is an important subject because typically the woman is the homemaker and is deferent to her husband's opinions and beliefs. As such, she rarely speaks her mind and is sustained in her mute-role by tradition that advocates quiet endurance in the interest of family harmony. Another important domain of family life is parental communication with children. In the Indian context, children do not have an open and frank relation with their parents. Consequently, they are in the dark about a lot of issues and their peers are in no better position either since they are all undergoing the same adjustments of growing to adulthood. 62% of "Tinka Tinka Sukh's" episodes advocate that parents should talk to their children on important issues such as their education, co-curricular interests, future plans and so on. In the rural context, where there is scarce modern media of family entertainment, eating together has been a long established tradition of socializing and communicating. Some 24% of the soap's episodes talk about this family communication context.

In keeping with its overarching themes of gender bias and personality development, the soap deals with the prevalent attitude of preferential treatment of male children versus female children in nearly 50% of all the episodes. Since female children are almost ingrained from early in life to a secondary status demarcated by domestic chores and putting the family first, "Tinka Tinka Sukh" is significant in proposing vocally in 29% of its episodes that sons should be prepared in all spheres of life and be willing to participate in domestic chores. This new attitude is espoused and demonstrated by Suraj, the model youth of the village and reinforced by his parents and friend Satbir.

Issues relating to family planning are not explicit at all. Three percent of all episodes mention family planning methods and two percent deal with the advantages of family planning. The disadvantages of not using family planning are contextualized in six percent of all episodes. Particularly demonstrated in scenes involving Chacha and Chachi's family and Jumman and Rukhsana's family is a loud and clear message on the disadvantages of having a large family (26% of all episodes).

Issues concerning motherhood, which relate to one aspect of women's empowerment, are not prominently running themes but wherever they occur the information is objective and direct. "Tinka Tinka Sukh" mentions the ill effects of repeated pregnancies on the health of both mother and child in only three percent of all episodes. Some four percent of the soap's episodes urge that pregnant women should be given adequate nourishment mainly from the progressive pro-social characters such as Chaudhrian as well as scientific advice from a doctor when Shanta is admitted to hospital because she is experiencing labor pains. There is only one instance concerning the importance of breast-feeding but

details such as that the mother should feed the first breast milk to the child or that breast-feeding should begin immediately after birth are not discussed at length.

Information on HIV/AIDS is provided in only three percent of all episodes. What makes it easy to understand is because the topic is treated from an ordinary person's perspective. Misconceptions are clarified situationally when Jumman, who has tested positive, is suddenly shunned and nearly ostracized by the community. Thorough information is provided on the subject, from the very basic such as the distinction between HIV and AIDS. Information on the prevention of the illness is given in two percent of all episodes but in all of them it is direct, clinical and undiluted - 100% focus of the situation and the characters.

Three problems connected with substance abuse are examined in the soap - alcoholism, tobacco and drug use. The bad effects related to alcoholism are treated in eight percent of the episodes. In 11% of the soap's episodes, the bad effects of tobacco and drug use are a dominant theme, especially emphasized are the events leading to Lagawan's complicity in the whole situation as a drug peddler and his punishment for the anti-social behavior.

Keeping with its personality development focus, "Tinka Tinka Sukh" takes up two general perspectives on youth issues. Some 72% of the episodes deal with reasons youth become delinquent. The importance of creating role-models for youth are suggested in 71% of the episodes. Evidently, both youth issues are taken up in a big way given the high frequency of appearance but, in fact, the messages are somewhat indirect.

Across all the episodes, one recurrent motif is that of harmonious community living. Pride in one's community is emphasized in 89% of the soap's episodes. That individuals should behave as responsible members of one's community surfaces in 80% of all episodes. Advocacy of the value that community members should help each other in times of need occurs in 80% of all episodes. The importance of volunteer service is a topic in 43% of episodes. Some 19% of the story deals with the bad effects of urban migration. The myths about urban migration are particularly shattered when Jumman is left stranded on the streets of the big city. The importance of adult education is represented vividly in six percent of all episodes through the regret of Jumman and Rukhsana's brother although other characters such as Chachi, Batasho, Chaman's mother and Lagawan also express their thoughts on the subject. Cleanliness as a desirable value is urged in 15% of the episodes. The significance of agriculture and the environment is emphasized in 17% of the episodes while the need for reforestation is discussed in less than 3% of the episodes.

Behaviors of Characters

Research Question # 2: To what extent did the central characters of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” portray pro-social/anti-social behaviors and with what consequence?

Characterizations in “Tinka Tinka Sukh” were clear to identify positive from negative social behavior (Table 2). In keeping with the general purpose of “Tinka Tinka Sukh”, namely women’s empowerment, gender equality and others, the central characters portrayed positive pro-social, anti-social or neutral behaviors. The neutral or transitional characters in “Tinka Tinka Sukh” are especially interesting in that they reflect the inner struggle that challenges any individual when faced by multitude of choices and problems but who are uninformed or weak to be morally and ethically decisive.

Among the positive role models, Chaudhri, his wife Chaudhrian and their son Suraj make up the ideal family. Each one of them behaves in a 100% pro-social manner although the consequences of their character salience vary in order for them to be real virtuous people (Table 3). The virtue of being pro-social is not only represented through their communication and behavior but also through their interaction with other characters. Thus, Suraj is rewarded for his pro-social behavior only 68% of the 38 valid cases. In the other situations, he is rebuffed, plainly unrewarded for taking a pro-social stand or even punished - as when another village youth Ramlal and his group of delinquent friends try to harm him by staging a fake accident.

Chaudhri (rewarded 80% of the time in 44 valid cases) and his wife (rewarded 75% of the time in 40 valid cases) are also counterfoiled in their positive behavior by interaction and circumstance that do not reward them for their virtue all the time. Thus, despite Chaudhri’s unambiguous pro-social character for which he is respected by all, there is Chachi, the village gossip, who criticizes him and tries to foment skepticism about his leadership and good character. The soap’s plot takes a dramatic turn when Chaudhri suddenly disappears and is not heard of for a long time. This twist was not handled deftly but the point was to show how, even for a temporary period, the doubting wags can have a field day accusing and criticizing.

On the other hand, Chaudhrian’s prosocial behavior is unrewarded when Chachi gossips about her. Furthermore, when she develops an ‘avoidance - touch-me-not’ attitude towards her hired fieldworker Jumman when he is diagnosed with AIDS, her sudden changed attitude deeply hurts Jumman and his wife who also serves in the household. Whereas earlier on both Jumman and his wife almost hero-worshipped her, her new behavior lessens her prosocial stance but this only makes her more realistic. Together with Jumman’s wife Rukhsana, Chaudhrian represents how happiness lies in life’s little things.

Jumman is well-meaning and pro-social in 64% of episodes in which he is present. His is an innate goodness of heart that is challenged by unexpected realities which become problematic and which he is not prepared to deal with. So there are times when he doubts himself and his worldview. His shifting stance leaves him more bewildered until he thinks the best way is to avoid confronting the issues and find solace in drink - which only makes him dependent on the drink and does not solve his problems. Against this upheaval is pitted the character of Rukhsana. Certainly pro-social in 97% of the episodes in which she is present Rukhsana deserves admiration for standing up to her moral and ethical beliefs despite their destitute situation. The breakpoint arises when she can no longer make sense of her husband's alcoholism (and his urban dreams) as it threatens to overturn her carefully built 'home'. After this storm blows over, Rukhsana is faced with another - Jumman is diagnosed to be HIV positive. Rewarded in only 57% of episodes in 30 valid cases, Rukhsana emerges the true hero and prosocial character.

The widow Gareebo and her daughters Nandini, Kusum and Lali portray some of the salient challenges of being woman in a traditional Indian society. Inspired by her late husband Gareebo is liberal-minded and truly wishes to empower her daughters, but she is also challenged by her personal sense of responsibility for her daughters' futures. So she is sympathetic towards her eldest daughter Nandini (rewarded in 68% of the 40 valid cases) who wants to be independent and self-reliant and establish a career for herself before she will marry. The three sisters are a study in contrasts. While Nandini is pro-social in 93% of the valid episodes, Lali is learning pro-social behavior (she was pro-social in 50% of all episodes), and Kusum is quite neutral. She does not strictly follow traditional ways such as being fatalistic or subservient or unquestioning. Her marriage is traditional and she appears to be well-adjusted in married life. However, her death at child-birth becomes an objective lesson on early marriage and personality development for all the other women.

Kusum's husband Satbir and his parents Shyamlal and Bataasho are another pro-social family. The character of Satbir is developmental in that he grows out of delinquent company of which he was not fully participative to become pro-social in 55% of valid episodes. His change is due largely to his father Shyamlal (pro-social in 91% of valid episodes). Although his mother Bataasho is not clearly mentioned, her attitude and behavior in other situations reveal that both she (pro-social in 82% of episodes) and her husband are right-thinking. This family and the Chaudhri's family demonstrate the significant role of parents in the right upbringing and personality development of their children.

If Chaudhrian represents the best in woman's empowerment, Chachi represents the nadir (anti-social in 71% of valid episodes. Well-known as the village gossip, Chachi is deservedly not rewarded in 90% of valid cases and in fact punished in 17% of the 52 valid episodes, which incidentally is also the

highest number of episodes for the appearance of any single character. Perhaps the worst punishment she receives is when she is rebuked by her own children, including her eldest son whom she blindly indulged for her own selfish reasons. Her husband Chacha, otherwise quite sensible in the company of other village men, becomes a cuckold in her presence. So he is rewarded only 17% in 30 valid cases for he is pro-social in 67% of valid episodes.

Their eldest son Ramlal starts out being anti-social (in 64% of a total of 20 appearances). Punished 23% and not rewarded 77%, Ramlal is eventually transformed. Throughout his delinquent phase, Suraj, the ideal youth, tries to educate him. Ultimately, only failure and the challenge posed by a person he admires provides the impetus to realization about his anti-social lifepath. His parents' neglect also impact the younger siblings particularly Sundar who after much struggle succumbs to drug addiction to escape his miseries. Seeing the growing degradation, his younger sister Suman is encouraged to grow from a silent observer to be a vocal critic of their family (pro-social in 82% of valid episodes). In contrast, the elder sister Champa, who is clearly prosocial from the very beginning (98% of all valid episodes), can only express her dissent by isolating herself in silence and non-participation at home. Supported by other pro-social friends such as Nandini and Suraj and his parents, she is rewarded by becoming a famous singer.

The case of Poonam is another lesson for the village. Her father Birju (prosocial in 71% of all valid cases) arranges her marriage the traditional way complete with a substantive dowry. Little did he anticipate that despite all his best intentions and faithful following of tradition, there is a gap somewhere in people's minds which really needs change. Poonam's husband and his parents torture and abuse her out of greed for more dowry. She is turned out of the house for no better reason than bringing inadequate dowry. At first she sees her situation as hopeless but is encouraged when the village court gives a favorable decision. Upon her return to her husband's home, she is tortured to death. The truth is, the entire village had failed her, as Nandini points out later on. Poonam's situation demonstrates how being pro-social in the traditional sense can be disadvantageous to the woman.

If Kusum's and Poonam's pro-social stance were lacking in some area of their environment, neither did they have insight or strength to overcome their fears. On the other hand, Sushma's prosocial character (in 80% of all valid episodes) emerges victorious in comparison (she was rewarded in 40% of the 10 valid episodes). She overcomes her husband's abandonment and becomes self-reliant by becoming an entrepreneur. Her sewing school opens new opportunities for other village women and is so successful that her husband rethinks about getting her back. In spite of the ill-treatment, Sushma waits for her husband and lives nostalgically. However, when he eventually offers reconciliation for

selfish reasons, she has gained self-knowledge and is empowered to refuse him. Her husband Chaman (anti-social in 83% of all valid episodes) is suitably punished in 67% of valid episodes.

Program Attributes

Research Question # 3: To what extent were certain program attributes (hooks for next episode, commercial advertisements etc.) present in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”?

Production-wise, the soap opera incorporated many programmatic features to sustain listeners' interest over 104 episodes, twice weekly for a whole year. Each episode started with snippets of highpoints from the previous episode. Unlike earlier radio and television soaps which had a narrator to provide the connections or a story-teller to narrate the epilogue, “Tinka Tinka Sukh” effectively used past reviews to anchor the developing drama. To sustain interest, every episode had a hook to create suspense and anticipation for the next one. On the whole, the soap was fast-paced (in over 69% of all episodes) which speaks for the creativity of production effort.

Out of 104 episodes, the theme “Tinka Tinka Sukh” was directly referenced in only 18 acts. One episode was devoted entirely to a direct representation of the metaphor of nesting which is what the term literally refers to. Again it is Rukhsana, and appropriately so as discussed earlier, who discusses the deeper implications of nesting and family. She has returned to her mother's home after the final straw. The woman is a poor working wife with a large family but she is happy because she possesses an inner stability of happiness and strength. However, after her husband persuades her to part with their son for adoption by rich uncle (she recovers her inner strength and regains possession of her son), and after her remonstrations on his alcoholism fall on deaf ears, once again tensions run high in the house as they cope with their personal problems of raising a family. Frustrated, Rukhsana goes to her mother's home. There, as she watches a bird's nest overturned by a storm, she reflects on how a woman invests all her emotions and happiness in building her family and home. She also recognizes how it takes two people to build a home and how nesting is a long and gradual process and not without difficulty. Each twig represents those little insignificant acts and ordinary moments that collectively invest the house with happiness and makes it a home. Although building is a long process, destruction does not take time. A storm, any upheaval of harsh acts and words can tear apart the carefully built nest. “Tinka Tinka Sukh” is not a straightforward story of any one individual. Rather it is an ordinary story of ordinary people whose heroism lie in ordinary acts of everyday kindness which is where real happiness comes from.

Analysis of the Letters written to “Tinka Tinka Sukh”

We estimate that approximately 125,000 to 150,000 letters were received by AIR in response to “Tinka Tinka Sukh”, during the one year of its broadcast. This includes letters from the approximately

6,000 registered listeners. A separate listener interaction program was created by AIR for “Tinka Tinka Sukh”. It provided an outlet for the selection, reading and discussion of some of the letters. Among the letters written to AIR, we were able to procure a non-random sample of approximately 5,000 letters. From this non-random sample, approximately 260 letters were randomly selected. These 260 letters were then quantitatively content-analyzed (and some were discarded) in an attempt to understand the subjective perceptions of the letter-writers regarding “Tinka Tinka Sukh”. Liebes and Katz (1986) suggested that any study of audience involvement, reflected in letter-writing, should: “Ideally have empirical data on how they (audience individuals) decode what they see and hear; how they help each other to do so; whether and how they weave the experiences of viewing into their social and political roles; and whether they have categories for criticism, and if so, what are these.” The present section focuses on why the listeners wrote the letters, rather than on who wrote the letters.

Audience members who wrote letters to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” are highly untypical and represent unique social characteristics (1) of all viewers, and (2) of the Indian population. The data from these letters cannot be generalized to the entire population of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” listeners in the Hindi Belt of Northern India. Nevertheless, the letters provide valuable data for understanding the effects of the entertainment-education strategy employed by “Tinka Tinka Sukh”.

Of the 260 letters some were discarded from our analysis: five letters were addressed to AIR but were not related to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and 18 letters were difficult to read and decipher. Therefore the sample size for this analysis is 237 letters.

Salient Characteristics of the Letters and the Letter-Writers.

Research Question # 4: What were the salient characteristics of the letters (length etc.) and the letter-writers?

Approximately 75% of the letters were postcards, 16% were sent in envelopes, eight percent were ‘inland’ letters and there were two poster-size letters. Almost 60% of the letters were less than 100 words in length and an additional 30% were between 100 to 250 words. All except two letters were written in Hindi.

Approximately 43% of the letters were from Uttar Pradesh, 20% were from Bihar and 14% each were from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Of the letters written from Uttar Pradesh, none came from Allahabad District, 15% were from Gonda District and the rest were from other districts in Uttar Pradesh. Some 70% of the letters were written from December, 1996 to January, 1997, approximately 10 months into the radio broadcast (Table 5).

Approximately, 67% of the letter-writers were men. Approximately 93% were Hindu and five percent were Muslim. Approximately two-thirds of the letter-writers were from villages in the Hindi Belt; only 12% of the letter-writers resided in cities (Table 6).

Approximately 40% of the letter-writers were registered listeners of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" and over half of the letter-writers insisted that their letter be included in the interaction program related to "Tinka Tinka Sukh". Some letter-writers expressed disappointment at their letters not being included in the interaction program and stated that they were willing to change the format of their letters so that they could be incorporated. One letter-writer threatened to stop writing unless his letters were included. Another stated, "I had decided I would wait till I heard back from before I wrote again, but "Tinka Tinka Sukh" is so interesting that I cannot help but write." Letter-writers whose letters had been included in the interaction program thanked the producers for doing so, a young girl from Haryana wrote; "Thank you for broadcasting my poem, if I could, I would write every single day, but unfortunately I can't since I have to spend some time studying."

Some 90% of the letters were written by individuals, and the remaining 10% were written jointly by family members, groups, and organizations. A male writer from Uttar Pradesh wrote on behalf of a group of organizations and described a conference where he served as the representative of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" viewers. Conference participants took the following oath at the conference, "We swear that to our very last breath we will work for the upliftment of women (self-reliance, courage). We will keep in mind the problems raised by "Tinka Tinka Sukh" and will work to eradicate these problems from our country. This is our decision, our right and our duty."

Almost half the letter-writers addressed their letter to the producer, writer or director of "Tinka Tinka Sukh", 35% did not use any mode of address or greeting and an additional 13% used an informal greeting and addressed their letter to "Dear Friend" or "My dearest sister/brother." Thus indicating a level of familiarity with the production staff of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" (Table 6).

Reasons for Writing to "Tinka Tinka Sukh"

Research Question # 5: What were the reasons provided by the letter-writers for writing to "Tinka Tinka Sukh"?

The letter-writers provided an average of 4 reasons for writing to "Tinka Tinka Sukh" (Table 7). The main reason mentioned by 78% of the letter-writers was to present their opinion on "Tinka Tinka Sukh" and its characters, and over 53% indicated that they were writing to present their opinion on the social issues raised by "Tinka Tinka Sukh". For example, a letter-writer from Uttar Pradesh ended his

letter: "Each and every episode attacks some social evil, "Tinka Tinka Sukh" is full of role-models and educates and increases our knowledge base. My congratulations to AIR, PCI and all the participants."

Approximately 42% wrote as a response to a question raised on the quiz or on the radio show. A majority of the letters were in response to questions related to Poonam's suicide and its appropriateness. All but one letter-writer blamed Poonam's in-laws' and husband's greed for dowry as the reason behind her suicide. The letter-writers felt that Poonam should not have committed suicide, for example, one letter-writer summed it up by stating:

"Dowry demands are indeed a curse in our society. There are many Poonam's in India today and we turn a blind eye to their plight. I feel Poonam should not have committed suicide, as Sushma has taught us she should have taken help from the legal system, gone to the police and lodged a formal complaint. This would have landed her husband and in-laws in prison and taught them a lesson. Dowry is illegal but so is suicide, so she should not have given up so easily."

Some letter-writers wrote in response to Rukhsana leaving Jumman and returning to her parents home, some letters provided detailed descriptions of the exact circumstances leading to Rukhsana's departure, and all the letter-writers identified Jumman's alcoholism as the root cause. Other writers wrote in response to questions related to Kusum's death at childbirth, which they felt resulted from to her early marriage and childbirth when she was neither physically or mentally ready for it.

Approximately 30% indicated that they identified with a particular character and that "Tinka Tinka Sukh" had had a profound affect on their lives. For example a female writer stated;

"It does not matter to me if I do not win the "Tinka Tinka Sukh" quiz. What is more important is that "Tinka Tinka Sukh" has inspired me to win the game of life. Nandini is my favorite character, she is my role model and my inspiration Women all over the world should decide that we will not tolerate abuse nor will we be abusive towards other women. Once we women take this stand, men will have to toe the line."

More than 27% of the letter-writers provided new twists to the plot and approximately the same percentage provided guides to individual and social action. A male letter-writer from Lucknow stated that:

"This program highlights some very important issues related to women not just in India but all over the world. My suggestion to all the women of the world would be to create a federation of by and for women. Membership to this federation would be automatic and all women would be members. As soon as the federation hears about ill-treatment of a woman they should intervene on her behalf. The reality of the situation is that when women face adverse conditions, lacking social support mechanisms they are forced to commit suicide or are killed by greedy in-laws. Also, women are the ones who sometimes create barriers for other women, for example, Rukhsana's sister-in-law who feels Rukhsana should not have come home to her parents house is very wrong. I strongly feel that Rukhsana did the right thing."

Explication of Educational Themes in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”.

Research Question # 6: To what extent did the letters explicate the educational themes highlighted in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”?

The letter-writers indicated that they had learnt about a variety of social issues from “Tinka Tinka Sukh” (Table 8). The main educational themes in “Tinka Tinka Sukh” highlighted by the letter-writers dealt with issues related to gender equality. Among them empowerment of women to develop the strength and capability to stand on their own feet in the face of adverse conditions was mentioned by approximately 40% of the letters, status of women before marriages were included in 24% and status of women after marriage was referred to by almost 20% of the letters. Responding to Poonam’s suicide one letter indicated that “Poonam had a number of options. She could have learned from the examples of Sushma who is running a successful sewing school, or Nandini who despite being born into a poor family is strong, brave and very firm her decisions or Champa who is doing so well in life.”

Approximately 10% of the letter-writers explicitly mentioned having learned to recognize preferential treatment for men and male children through listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and provided examples of the better treatment Ramlaal received in comparison to his sister Champa, some letter-writers suggested that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” should: “Show Champa gathering strength to stand up for her rights thus also portraying the importance of education for girls.”

Approximately 30% of the letters mentioned that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” has make them more aware of dowry issues, specially after Poonam committed suicide due to the dowry related harassment she faced. An additional 15% indicated that their knowledge about divorce, separation and legal issues related to marriage had increased as a result of Sushma’s actions. Child marriage, fertility regulation and family planning, and maternal and child health issues were mentioned by 23, eight and six percent of the letters writers respectively, specifically due to Kusum’s untimely death at childbirth.

Substance abuse, specifically alcohol was seen as a main educational theme highlighted by “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and the subject of approximately 25% of the letters As one of the letter-writers indicated: “Sundar abused his own parents after he had consumed alcohol, it is difficult to image a sweet boy like Sundar behaving in this negative fashion, this is what alcohol does to a man.” Almost six percent made mention of having heard about HIV/AIDS related information from “Tinka Tinka Sukh”. Some letter-writers connected alcohol with HIV/AIDS by stating that alcohol consumption made Jumman more prone to promiscuous behavior which in turn lead to his HIV infection, this made them express concern for his pregnant wife and children, and one letter-writer stated; “Rukhsana is a warm hearted and hard working person, it is unfortunate that she was married at an early age to a good for nothing man like Jumman.”

“Tinka Tinka Sukh” was perceived as dealing with problems and issues of central concern to youth by 27% of the letter-writers, who specifically pointed out that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” provided many role models for the youth of the country, one letter-writer called the serial the “heartbeat of the youth”, another letter-writer wrote the following in praise of Suraj: “He is living up to his name (which means sun) he is a source of great pride and joy to the entire village, I have learned a great deal from him.” Ramlaal’s conversion into a positive role model also inspired letter-writers, as one of them stated, “I admire Ramlaal, he has proven that one can achieve anything through hard work and patience.” “Tinka Tinka Sukh” was also perceived as a means to learn about community building and organizing by 21% of the letter-writers, for example:

“Tinka Tinka Sukh” is a perfect depiction of village life and indicates how one should live in a community through love, sensitivity and helping others. Like a lotus that blooms in muddy water and spreads its fragrance across the water similarly the radio serial “Tinka Tinka Sukh” is spreading its message across our society and teaching us how to live a better life as members of a larger community.”

Real life Nature of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and Audience Reactions to the Real Life Scenarios

Research Question # 7: How did letter-writers react to certain real-life scenarios depicted in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”?

Approximately three-fourths of the letter-writers indicated that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” reflected real life issues and situations (Table 9). The real life nature of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” lead one letter-writer to write: “The program is so realistic that sometimes I feel I am actually watching the entire show and the story is unfolding before my eyes.” According to other writers “Tinka Tinka Sukh” blurred the line between reality and fiction, as one letter-writer stated: “If Jumman and Ramlaal don’t mend their ways - I will have to come to Navgaon and teach them a lesson they will never forget” another requested: “I would also like to get some of the sweets that the Chaudhrai was distributing among the villagers.” Some letter-writers said that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” had an emotional impact on their lives, for example one female letter-writer stated: “When Kusum died at childbirth I felt as if someone I had known all my life passed away, I cried all evening.”

The real life issues portrayed on “Tinka Tinka Sukh” that appeared in a majority of letters included those related to marriage, planning a family, fertility, prevalence of alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, family communication, issues pertinent to gender equality and youth issues. Letter-writers reacted to the real life scenarios presented in “Tinka Tinka Sukh” by relating the serial to their personal experience (14%), by reconstructing the program to suit their needs and interests (32%). Some letter-writers summarized the episodes in their own words and provided information on how these episodes related to their lives and what other things could be incorporated into the show. “Tinka Tinka Sukh” had a

profound impact on some letter-writers and lead them to adopt personal changes (five percent) and take group action (three percent).

Some letter-writers provided personal examples to relate “Tinka Tinka Sukh” to their lives. One school girl from Bihar wrote, “I relate to Champa since my family life is very similar to hers. I had decided to quit school but after listening to Champa on “Tinka Tinka Sukh” I have decided to continue my schooling.” Another young man wrote:

“My village is very similar to Navgaon, I empathize with Suraj who wanted to complain against Kusum’s wedding as he felt she was too young to get married but he did not say anything since he was scared of the villagers’ reactions. This opened my eyes since I too have been silent on some of the wrong doings in my village. Recently Nandini commented that the village needed a new “Ram” one who would make his family and village proud this statement had a profound effect on me and I have decided that I am no longer going to remain a silent spectator, I am going to speak out for my own and others rights. The serial has given me the strength to realize that I can reach my goals in life”

The reconstruction of the program by letter-writers lead them to suggest numerous plot changes, including suggestions for incorporating pertinent social issues not covered by “Tinka Tinka Sukh” for example intercaste-marriages (five percent), traditionalism and superstitions prevalent in rural India (three percent). Changes in the storyline included guidelines for changing the behavior valence of several negative characters (nine percent) and promote positive characters as role models for society (seven percent). Other letter-writers requested that certain themes, like information on HIV/AIDS (seven percent) and education for girls (19%) be given greater emphasis. For example a female writer wrote:

“You should concentrate on female education. We are nearly in the 20th century there are people in our society who feel that women do not need to be educated. Even if a woman is not likely to need a job to support herself and make ends meet, education for girls is as valid as that for boys. When you educate a man you reach one person but when you educate a woman you educate a whole new generation, only an educated mother can be a good role-model for her children.

Still others suggested changes in production elements of the show. A number of letters indicated that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” should change the time of its broadcasts to one that was more convenient for the letter-writers. One letter-writer complained that: “In a few episodes you have been concentrating only one issue. I feel that each episode should have at least two or three main issues so that the interest of the listeners is maintained and they can learn about issues that are pertinent to them.”

Some of the personal changes adopted by letter-writers included decisions to abstain from alcohol, not take nor give dowry, question the traditional customs and superstitions in their villages, develop the ability to stand on their own feet and not get married before the legal age. Others undertook

group action including the decision to abstain from alcohol and not take not give dowry. A male letter-writer indicated:

“My brother got married recently and we did not bring up the issue of dowry. Our entire village has collectively decided to neither take nor give dowry. There have been three dowry-less weddings in our village in recent months. Some families wanted to take dowry but decided against it based on the education we received from “Tinka Tinka Sukh”.”

Parasocial Interaction with “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and Its Characters among the Letter-Writers

Research Question # 8: To what extent did the letter-writers engage in parasocial interaction⁶ with “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and its characters?

More than half of the letters mentioned that they looked forward to listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” when it was aired and 33% said that they rearranged their schedules in order to be able to listen to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” (Table 10). A female letter-writer from Madhya Pradesh wrote: “I listen to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” regularly. I might forget everything else but I never forget to listen to “Tinka Tinka Sukh”.” Some letter-writers claimed that they heard each episode twice. One viewer insisted that he arranged his day around “Tinka Tinka Sukh” broadcasts and listened to it daily through various stations across Uttar Pradesh. The reasons that letter-writers gave for wanting to watch “Tinka Tinka Sukh” regularly included; the perception that “Tinka Tinka Sukh” kept them company when aired (21%), “Tinka Tinka Sukh” covered the kinds of issues the letter-writers wanted to know about (30%), one letter stated that the writer was amazed how “Tinka Tinka Sukh” was always on target with what was on the listeners’ mind. Some letter-writers indicated that they could compare their ideas with those presented on the program (30%). As one letter-writer stated: “A few episodes ago, I disagreed with the Chaudhary and thought he was in the wrong, however, subsequent episodes have helped me understand and empathize with him. He is a great man and I apologize to him for mistrusting him and questioning his motives.”

Parasocial interaction with characters lead individuals to write that they viewed the characters as natural and down-to-earth people (17%), and they made up their minds based on the opinion presented by the characters on the show (19%), felt sorry for the characters when they made a mistake (21%), were comfortable when listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” (17%) and felt as if they were a part of a group

⁶ The concept of parasocial interaction was coined by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl (1956), who defined it as a perceived relationship of friendship or intimacy by an audience member with a remote media “persona”. Mark Levy (1979) developed seven scale items to measure parasocial interaction with television newscasters. Alan Rubin, Elizabeth Perse, and Michael Powell (1985) expanded the Levy scale into a 20-item parasocial interaction scale for local television newscasters. The 20-item scale was subsequently adapted for “favorite TV personality”, “favorite soap opera character”, “TV shopping personality”, and “favorite characters from a just-watched program” (Rubin & Perse, 1987; Perse & Rubin, 1988; Singhal & Rogers, 1989; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Grant, Guthrie, & Rokeach, 1991; Auter, 1992; and Turner, 1993). The content analysis of the letters adapted questions from the 20-item scale, however instead of focusing on parasocial interaction with any specific character the results indicated a high level of parasocial interaction with the program per se.

(13%). As one letter-writer stated: “Poonam’s suicide, Kusum’s death at childbirth, Sushma’s struggle to stand on her own feet and Rukhsana’s life and problems have filled my heart with sentiments, Nandini has taught me stick to my ideals and fight against injustice, Champa has inspired me to realize my inner potential, Suraj has taught me to be proud of heritage and culture.”

Conclusions

“Tinka Tinka Sukh” was a highly popular radio soap opera, broadcast by AIR during 1996-1997. It promoted educational themes, especially gender equality, women’s empowerment, and the importance of harmonious community living. Letters written by listeners indicate a high level of audience involvement with the story and with the lives of the characters. In conclusion, we present the remarks of two letter-writers on their perceptions of the meaning “Tinka Tinka Sukh” had for them. A 62 year old male audience member summed up the effects of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” with the words: “ “Tinka Tinka Sukh” entertains us and makes us laugh, at the same time it educates us that society should be made a safe, educated and healthy place, where individuals can find pleasure in the small pleasures of life. “Tinka Tinka Sukh” inspires us to make positive changes in our lives and surroundings.”

A young school going female listener wrote the following poem about “Tinka Tinka Sukh”:

“As the serial “Tinka Tinka Sukh” starts of in Navgaon,
It presents us with the problems facing our society.
Suraj shines forth, Ramlaal stumbles,
Many women (like Poonam) are scarified at the alter of dowry.
The problems in our society are very strange.
Alcoholics like Jumman are commonplace.
How will his family survive and progress in such an atmosphere?
Traditional norms force talented people like Champa to falter.
However, the pleasure of life lies in small things,
And I still believe that there is a ray of hope.”

Table 1: Presence of Educational Themes in "Tinka Tinka Sukh".

Themes	Percent of Episodes in which Emphasized (N = 104)
1. Women should be empowered	80%
2. Ways of restoring self-confidence in suppressed women	86%
3. Women should be allowed to receive an education	51%
4. Women should be able to earn own living	32%
5. Women and men should be allowed equal nutrition	18%
6. Women and men should have equal access to health care	15%
7. Parents should not be pressured to marry off their daughters	26%
8. Women should be allowed to chose their husbands	9%
9. Women should be empowered so marriage is not their only option	28%
10. Negative consequences of the dowry system	21%
11. Husband's parents should not torture daughter-in-law for dowry	25%
12. Women not to be pressured for son & treated well even if without child	8%
13. Harmonious relations between woman and husband's family	41%
14. Bad effects of early marriage	22%
15. Bad effects of early pregnancy	17%
16. Woman alone cannot be blamed for infertility	5%
17. Divorce is not the solution to family problems	10%
18. Legal recourse for social evils related to marriage	12%
19. Both parents have a role in children's' upbringing	65%
20. Importance of spousal communication	71%
21. Parents should talk to their children on important matters	62%
22. Families should eat together	24%
23. Boys and girls should be reared equally	50%
24. Sons should be prepared in all spheres and share chores	29%
25. Knowledge of specific family planning (FP) methods	3%
26. Advantages of using FP	2%
27. Disadvantages of not using FP	6%
28. Disadvantages of a large family	26%
29. Ill-effects of repeated pregnancies	3%
30. Pregnant women should be given adequate food	4%
31. Mothers should breastfeed for one year	2%
32. Women should feed first breast-milk to babies	1%
33. Knowledge of HIV/AIDS	3%
34. HIV/AIDS prevention	2%
35. Bad effects of alcohol consumption	8%
36. Bad effects of tobacco and drug use	11%
37. Some reasons for delinquency among the youth	72%
38. The importance of creating role models for the youth	71%
39. Pride in one's community	90%
40. Individuals should help each other in time of need	80%
41. Individuals should learn importance of voluntary service	43%
42. The bad effects of urban migration	19%
43. Overpopulation leads to depletion of resources	10%
44. Importance of adult education	54%
45. Importance of cleanliness	15%
46. Need for reforestation	3%
47. Agriculture and environment	17%

Table 2: Names and Description of the Characters in "Tinka Tinka Sukh"

Characters	Description
Suraj	Model youth holding prosocial beliefs, values and attitudes.
Champa	Female role-model who overcomes her parents' neglect, elder brother's abuse and the burdens of tradition to become a famous singer.
Chaudhri	Head of village, ideal husband, model father and community elder, upholds prosocial values, attitudes and knowledge.
Chaudhrian	Ideal wife, model mother and female elder, upholds prosocial beliefs and attitudes.
Jumman	Poor farmhand who wishes to be rich and change his family's lot. Addicted to tobacco and alcohol, and is momentarily swayed by urban glamour to make it rich quick. Diagnosed with HIV.
Rukhsana	Poor wife who works very hard to make ends meet for large family. Is sometimes assertive but mostly puts up with husband's alcoholism.
Gareebo	Poor widow who tries to be traditional yet open-minded in raising her three daughters.
Nandini	Female role-model youth who overcomes hardships of all-women family because of her determination, courage and perseverance.
Lali	Follows eldest sister Nandini's footsteps in self-determination and becomes the village's first trained medical doctor.
Kusum	Sister of Nandini who dislikes studies and dreams of leisurely life. Marries young, repents apathy and dies at childbirth.
Chacha	Cuckolded husband, negligent father of large family.
Chachi	Coquette, village gossip and blindly partial in raising her large family.
Ramlal	The village delinquent who troubles everyone, is pampered by his mother and is ultimately reformed by love.
Sundar	Neglected by his parents and loved only by his sisters, he tries to be self-dependent, fails and resorts to drugs; and is finally rehabilitated by his community's support.
Suman	Younger than Sundar, she is a confused witness to her parents' neglect but understands Sundar's affection and care for her.
Shyamlal	Store-owner who knows his bottom-line; also a responsible parent and committed community elder.
Bataasho	Shyamlal's wife who is more traditional than open-minded; easily influenced by vocal aggressive people.
Satbir	Loyal son who is momentarily swayed. Essentially good and kind-hearted, settles down to good marriage which is violently shattered when his wife dies at childbirth.
Laghawan	Village barber who is ambitious but confused; tries the easy way out by becoming drug-peddler. Punished eventually when he is caught.
Panditji	Well-respected village priest, representative of the strong hold of religion and tradition over ordinary folks.
Poonam	Tries to save herself from torture by husband and his parents over dowry by returning to her parents home. Succumbs to societal pressures by committing suicide.
Birju	Traditional caring father who hopes he has settled his daughter in marriage by large dowry but is disappointed that greed has no limits. Suffers when his daughter commits suicide.
Sushma	Tortured by husband and his parents for insufficient dowry, returns home with son, but bounces back with the help of parents, brother and community. Finds new identity in flourishing sewing school where she helps other women gain greater confidence.
Chaman	Greedy husband who later wishes reconciliation because his wife now runs a thriving business. Is rejected by wife.
Dindayal	Expatriate who returns to his hometown to start a much-needed hospital. Also inspires son and daughter-in-law to return with him.

Table 3: Characters in TTS their Behavior Valence and Consequences of their Actions

Characters	No. of Episodes in which Present (N = 104)	Percent of Episodes in which Prosocial, Neutral or Anti-social	Consequences
Suraj	38	Prosocial (100%)	Rewarded (68%)
Champa	40	Prosocial (97.5%)	Rewarded (60%)
Chaudhri	44	Prosocial (100%)	Rewarded (80%)
Chaudhrian	40	Prosocial (100%)	Rewarded (75%)
Jumman	33	Prosocial (63.6%)	Rewarded (46%)
Rukhsana	30	Prosocial (96.7%)	Rewarded (57%)
Gareebo	28	Prosocial (96.4%)	Rewarded (57%)
Nandini	40	Prosocial (92.5%)	Rewarded (68%)
Lali	16	Prosocial (50%)	Rewarded (69%)
Kusum		Neutral (65%)	
Chacha	30	Prosocial (66.7%) Neutral (26.7%)	Rewarded (17%)
Chachi	52	Antisocial (71.2%)	Punished (17%)
Ramlal	20	Antisocial (64.1%)	Punished (3%)
Sundar	20	Prosocial (85%)	Rewarded (55%)
Suman	28	Prosocial (82.1%)	Rewarded (54%)
Shyamlaal	23	Prosocial (91.3%)	Rewarded (44%)
Bataasho	27	Prosocial (82.1%)	Rewarded (44%)
Satbir	20	Prosocial (55%)	Rewarded (40%)
Laghawan	23	Prosocial (65.4%)	Rewarded (52%)
Panditji	15	Prosocial (53.3%)	Rewarded (47%)
Poonam	3	Prosocial (97.1%)	Rewarded (33%)
Birju	7	Prosocial (71.4%)	Rewarded (29%)
Sushma	10	Prosocial (80%)	Rewarded (40%)
Chaman	6	Anti-social (83.3%)	Punished (67%)
Dindayal	4	Prosocial (100%)	Rewarded (100%)

Table 4: Program Attributes of "Tinka Tinka Sukh"

Program Attributes	Percent Episodes Attribute Present in (N = 104)
Presence of hook for next episode	100%
Listeners encouraged to write to the program	100%
Presence of advertisement	100%
Reference to last episode	100%
Assessment of the pace of the episode	
Fast	69%
Medium	29%
Slow	2%
Total	100%
Number of times the words " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> " were used	16%

Table 5: Description of the Letters Written to "Tinka Tinka Sukh"

Description of the Letters written to "Tinka Tinka Sukh"	Percent (N = 237)
Type of letter includes: Post card Inland Envelope Poster ($n = 2$) Total	 75% 8% 16% 1% 100%
Size of the letters: <100 words 100-250 words 250 - 500 words >500 words Total	 59% 29% 6% 6% 100%
Language the letter was written in Hindi English Total	 99% 1% 100%
Was the Letter descriptive or evaluative? Descriptive Evaluative Both Neither Total	 13% 20% 57% 10% 100%

Table 6: Salient Characteristics of the Letter Writers

Salient Characteristics of the Letter-Writers	Percent (N = 237)
Gender of the Letter Writers	
Male	67%
Female	25%
Not clear from the letter	8%
Total	100%
Religion of the Letter-Writer	
Hindu	88%
Muslim	5%
Sikh	1%
Not clear from the letter	6%
Total	100%
Residence of the Letter-Writers	
Village	63%
Town	25%
City	12%
Total	100%
# of people who wrote the letters	
Individuals	90%
Family	6%
Group/Organization	4%
Total	100%
Who was the letter addressed to:	
Producer/Writer/Director	48%
AIR	1%
No one	35%
Formal Address (eg. Dear sir)	3%
Informal address (Sister, Brother)	13%
Total	100%
Had the letter-writer written to " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> " previously	
Yes	21%
No	79%
Total	100%
Was the letter-writer a registered Listener	
Yes	39%
No	61%
Total	100%

Table 7: Reasons for Writing to TTS

Reasons for Writing to " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> "	Percent who provided this reason* (N = 237)
Present opinion on " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> " and its characters	79%
Present opinions on social issues	54%
Response to one specific episode	42%
Response to questions raised on the quiz	42%
Feedback on how " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> " has affected their lives	30%
Identification with the characters	30%
To suggest plot changes	28%
Present guides to social action	26%
Wrote to present a complaint	22%
Want to register in " <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> "	14%
Response to questions raised on the show	12%

* Since the letter-writers often provided more than one reason the percentages are greater than 100, the average # of reasons provided for writing to "Tinka Tinka Sukh" were 4.

Table 8: Explication of Educational Themes in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”

Education Themes in “ <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> ”	Percent Mentioning the Theme (N = 237)
Learned about status of women in developing skills and capability	42%
Learned about dowry related issues	29%
Learned about youth issues	27%
Learned about substance abuse	25%
Learned about status of women pre-marriage	25%
Learned about marriage & fertility	23%
Learned about community living	21%
Learned about status of women post-marriage	19%
Learned about family life communication	16%
Learned about divorce and separation and legal issues	15%
Learned about preferential treatment for boys and girls	10%
Learned about family planning	8%
Learned about breast-feeding and pregnancy	6%
Learned about HIV/AIDS related information	6%

Table 9: Reality Presented in “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and Letter-Writer Reactions to the Real-Life Situations

Reality presented in “Tinka Tinka Sukh and Reactions of the Letter-Writers		Percent (N = 237)
Did “ <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> ” reflect real life?		
Yes		74%
No mention		26%
Total		100%
Was “ <u>Tinka Tinka Sukh</u> ” relevant?		
Yes		67%
No mention		33%
Total		100.0%
Did the letter-writers place themselves in the program?		
Yes		14%
No		86%
Total		100%
Did the letter-writers reconstruct the program?		
Yes		32%
No		68%
Total		100%

Table 10: Parasocial Interaction with “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and its Characters on part of the Letter-Writers

Indicators of parasocial interaction	Percent (N = 237)
Letter-writer looks forward to listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” when the program is aired	55%
Letter-writer rearranges his/her schedule to develop a regular relationship with “Tinka Tinka Sukh”	33%
Letter-writer compares his/her ideas with “Tinka Tinka Sukh” and its characters when listening	30%
“Tinka Tinka Sukh” understands and covers issues the letter-writer wants to know about	29%
“Tinka Tinka Sukh”/character keeps the letter-writer company when the program is aired	22%
Writer feels sorry for characters when something bad happens to them	21%
Letter-writer likes listening to the voices of the characters at home	21%
Character’s opinion helps letter-writer make up his/her mind	19%
Writer feels comfortable when listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh” as if he/she is with friends	18%
The letter-writer’s favorite character is a natural & down to earth person	17%
Letter-writer feels like he/she is part of a group when listening to “Tinka Tinka Sukh”	14%

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Notes

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