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Viewing Preferences and Perceptions Towards Drama in Private TV Channels: Insights from Audiences of Mymensingh Division in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Television drama is considered as one of the most popular genres in media production. In BTV era, many popular TV dramas increased viewers' engagement. In private TV channel era, started in 1997, TV drama has been continuing its top position. Keeping this in mind, the study has investigated the viewing preferences and perceptions from audiences' viewpoint using questionnaire survey, FGD and IDI on 384 viewers of Mymensingh administrative division. Both male and female audiences have been taken by using convenient sampling technique. The study found that 50% of the respondents liked TV drama. The majority of the respondents (40.6%) opined that drama viewing frequency is decreasing. Interestingly 82.5% of the respondents mentioned the TV drama maintains standard. The perceptions were determined through 19 sub-factors in six factors such as storytelling, quality acting, entertainment, costume, appropriate set and quality airing. The findings from FGDs indicate that the viewers prefer TV drama but they are concern about maintaining the quality. In responses to 19 sub-factors, many respondents have shown negative and neutral attitude. However, viewers' preferences, mind set and attitudes have indicated the situation as somehow positive. According to the majority of respondents, perception on TV drama is not entirely satisfactory. Considering the findings, the producers, content creators should come forward to improve in storytelling, acting & casting, entertainment, makeup & costume, set & art direction and quality airing. The producers could also make TV drama of local dialect maintaining its quality.

JEL Classifications: D83
Keywords: Preferences, perceptions, private TV channel drama, audiences, storytelling

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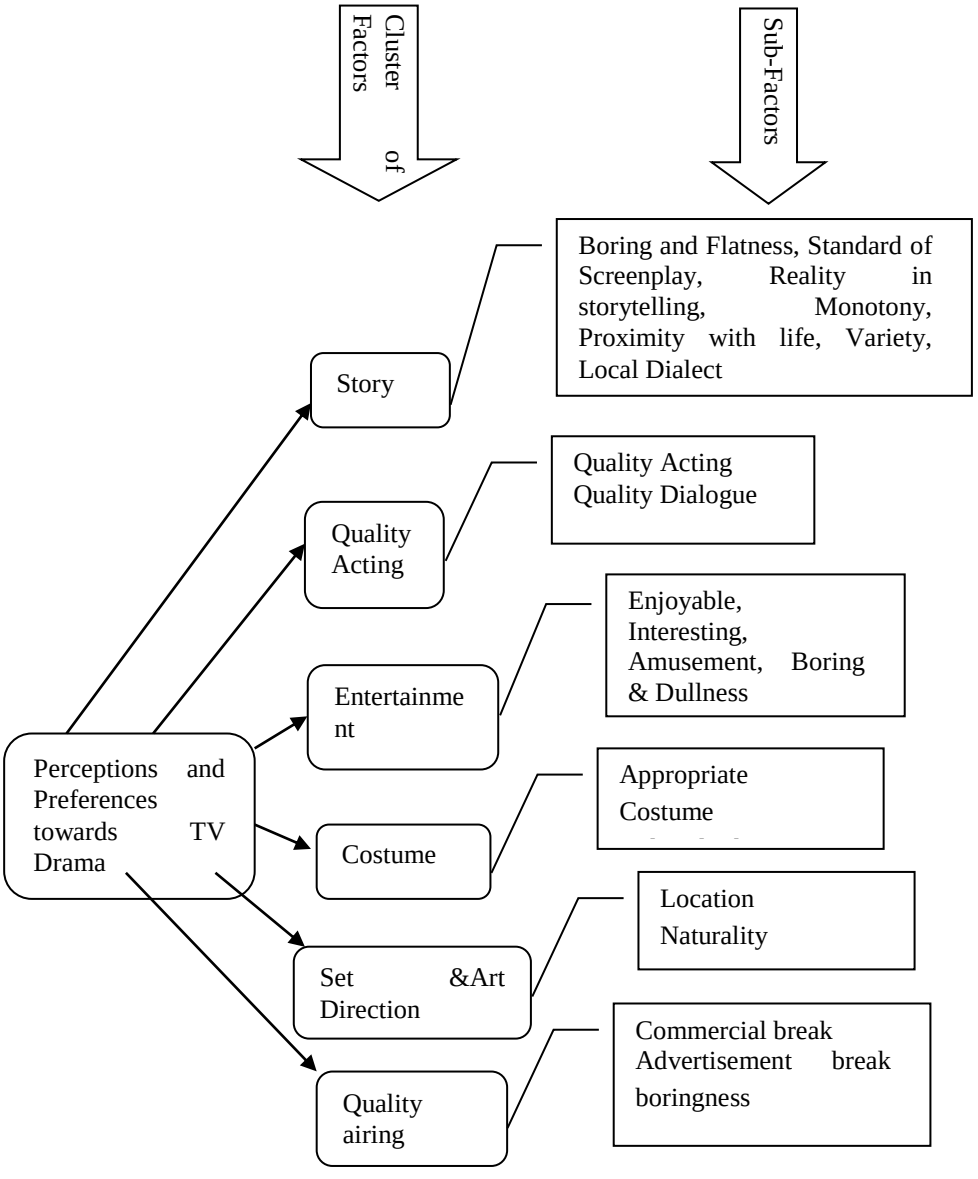
INTRODUCTION

Television, as an integral part of mass media is a popular medium in Bangladesh. It is the most popular medium (Rahman, 2012). The role of television to the society is to inform, educate, entertain and persuade. To perform its role to the society, television broadcasts different programs like news, views, documentary, daily soap, tele-film, drama, sports event, talk-show, cinema, advertisements, musical program, reality show, games show, coking program etc. In a survey, majority of the young people considered drama as the most popular TV program (Rahman, 2019). Since the independence, Bangladeshi viewers, even in the rural areas had only access to the state-owned Bangladesh Television (BTV) until the private TV channel started functioning in 1997. As of 2023, a total of 39 private TV channels were on-air (GOB, 2023). It is assumed that a large number of viewers have been attached with private TV channels as entertainment media. In BTV era, among all the programs, drama has been able to take a special place in the viewers' mind because of some classic, standard and quality drama. In 1985 family drama *Ei Shob Din Ratri* was so popular that during its screening the bustling streets of Dhaka used to be empty (Azad, n.d.). In 2000s, the dominant producer of drama of the private TV channels has been influencing millions of viewers daily (DW Akademie, 2020). But the viewers and the critiques have raised questions in quality of drama. The standard, storytelling, scripting, acting, casting, set designing, art direction, picture quality etc. have not been maintained in TV drama with same pace. So, viewer's preference and perception have shifted. Understanding preference and perception shows the content types of drawing mass attention and thinking about dramas that shaping morality, lifestyle and affecting cultural output and social disclosure. Since TV dramas have important far-reaching impact on culture, norms, values and entertainment, therefore studying preferences and perceptions of private TV Channels' drama is crucial. The data driven insights would help concerned understand and manage cultural and social issues of mass media including TV.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to the *Encyclopedia Britanica* (2024) perception is the process of sensory simulation that is translated into organized experiences in order to represent and understand the environment shaped by the recipient's learning, memory, expectation, and attention. Preference means a choice, priority, liking, desire, favor of one option from alternatives. However, the concept of perception of TV drama has been developed in the way where thinking of reception, construction, understanding on different TV drama issues is included (Ashrafi, 2017):

FIGURE 1. CLARIFYING CONCEPT



Source: Author's construct, 2025

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to analyze comprehensively the preferences and perceptions towards TV drama of private channels of Bangladesh in the eye of the audiences of Mymensingh division.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Nekmahmud et al. (2016) investigated the audience attitude towards satellite TV programs and advertising in Bangladesh and also examined the program preference. The results indicated that 90.9% of audiences watched private satellite TV channels. Thirty-six Per cent of audiences were more preferred watching news and drama in Bangladeshi TV channels. Ashrafi (2017) conducted a study aim to specify the factors affecting the viewers' attitude towards BTV. The affecting factors are entertainment, technology, information and program. The analysis showed that 20 of the independent variables influence the dependent variable. From the regression analysis, the independent variables have 93% impact over the dependent variable, the perception towards BTV. Islam et al. (2017) examined the television viewing habits of Bangladeshi and Indian soaps and its attraction among rural-urban and female-male audiences of Chattogram. It identified the immense popularity of Indian soaps in Bangladesh especially among women. Findings showed that 81% of the female respondents watched soaps. Seventy-six Per cent of the male respondents opined that female members of their families were attracted to Indian soaps. Helal (2014) also found Indian TV serial are immensely popular in Bangladesh. Tarannum & Siddiqa (2024) revealed in preferring entertainment content Indian serials fulfil social and gratification needs more to young Bangladeshi viewers. Kohinur (2016) mentioned TV as medium of information for social change in Bangladesh. Findings suggest that television acts as a powerful agent for modernization and empowerment in rural communities. The research concludes that greater access to television can bridge social and educational gaps in rural Bangladesh. Islam (2024) found that viewers prefer local dramas those are culturally relevance. Simultaneously viewers criticize about simple plots and weak production. To get audience satisfaction more, better technical quality and attractive storytelling are required so far.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural proximity and reception theory are base of the study. Cultural proximity theory, proposed by Joseph Straubhaar in 1991, mainly talked about viewers' preference on media content and its influencing factor. He mentioned that culturally familiar media contents are more preferable by the audiences. This familiarity could be in language, values, norms, social contexts (Straubhaar, 1991). The relation of this theory is that Bangladeshi viewers often perceive local TV dramas more positively having familiar lifestyles, social issues, humor, and dialects. According to reception theory by Stuart Hall (1972) the understanding of media messages and its process depend upon social and cultural context, experiences, social positions. Therefore, younger and older audiences have shown sharp difference on understanding the same drama or media contents. For example, one group of audiences might be seen TV drama as progressive and conservative by another.

METHODOLOGY

A social survey method has been applied to conduct the study. The locale of the study was Mymensingh administrative division. Questionnaire survey, FGD (Focus Group Discussion) and IDI (In-depth Interview) were applied to collect primary data. Five-point rating scale was formed and analysed accordingly. Furthermore, books, journals, websites, newspaper etc. are considered as secondary sources.

Sampling and Determination of Sample Size

All TV drama viewers of private TV channels living in Mymensingh administrative division are considered as population. To draw the sample, the applied formula is:

$$n = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Where, n= sample size, p= sample proportion = 0.5, q=1 - p= 1-0.5 = 0.5, z = 1.96 (95% confidence level of nominal curve worked out from table) e = error = 0.05 (error of 95% of confidence level). By calculation the total size of population is fixed on 384 (Kothari, 2003). The sample size of each study area of four districts has taken equally like 384/4=96. From each district, one Upazila was selected randomly through lottery process. In this way, four Upazilas viz. Sadar, Mymensingh; Sadar, Jamalpur; Jhinaigati, Sherpur; and Barhatta, Netrokona have been found. The viewers are stratified into mainly two strata viz. male and female. A total of 96 respondents has been selected from every Upazila and strata conveniently.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Collected data has been tabulated and analysed through IBM SPSS 25 version software. Per centage for analysis and graph, chart, table etc. are used to present analysed data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Profile

As demographic outline of the viewers, the study has covered age limit of 15 to 75 years. Almost 40% of the respondents has fallen into 15-25 years' age group. Majority of the respondents are male (67.4%) while 32.6% are female. Regarding occupational status, service holders to day labourers were included. But students were dominated which is 29.4%. It was also found that primary to only literate respondents were included where majority (26%) are BA/Equivalent degree holders. So, a variety of socio-economic status is reflected.

Preferences of TV Drama

Habit of Viewing TV Drama

The distribution on private TV channel drama viewing indicates almost half of the total respondents viewed drama on regular basis (47.1%) and the rest (52.9%) watched irregularly. It reflects that private TV channels drama still grasps significant audience interest.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF HABIT OF VIEWING TV DRAMA

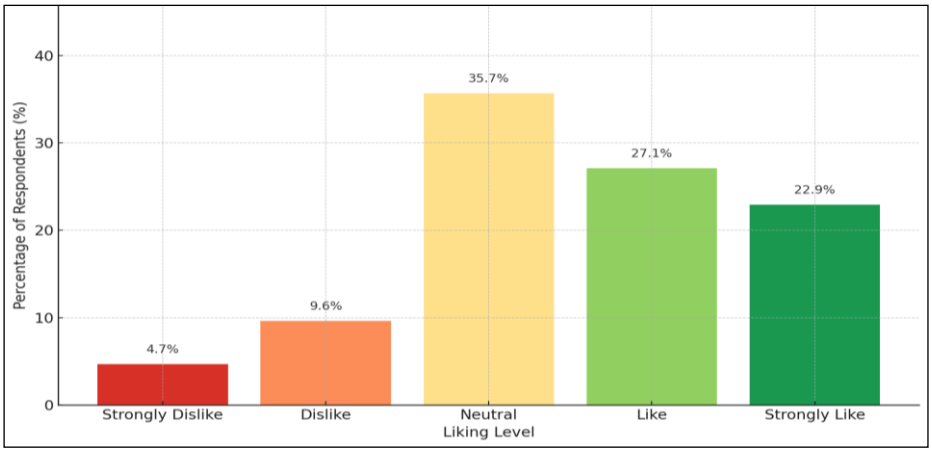
Types of Habit	Frequency	Per cent
Regular	181	47.1
Irregular	203	52.9
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Liking of TV Drama

Viewers like private TV channels' drama in different scale. The findings indicate that 50% of the respondents like TV drama as 'like (27.1%)', 'strongly like (22.9%)' and 35.7% show neutral. Only 14.3% dislike. The findings depict that the viewers prefer private TV channels' drama still now. But a large number of viewers neutral means reluctant.

FIGURE 2. PREFERENCE OF PRIVATE TV CHANNEL DRAMA



Source: Field Survey, 2025

Daily Time Spent for Viewing TV Drama

Viewers engage their time for watching TV drama every day. The findings show that 62% of the respondents spend less than one hour per day. It means they are light viewers. The findings mean that heavy viewers are not prominent for enjoying the private TV channels' drama.

TABLE 2. TIME SPENT TO WATCH TV DRAMA

Daily Time Spent	Frequency	%
Less than half an hour	120	31.3
Less than one hour	118	30.7
In between 1-2 hours	76	19.8
In between 2-3 hours	22	5.7
More than 3 hours	48	12.5
Total	384	100.0

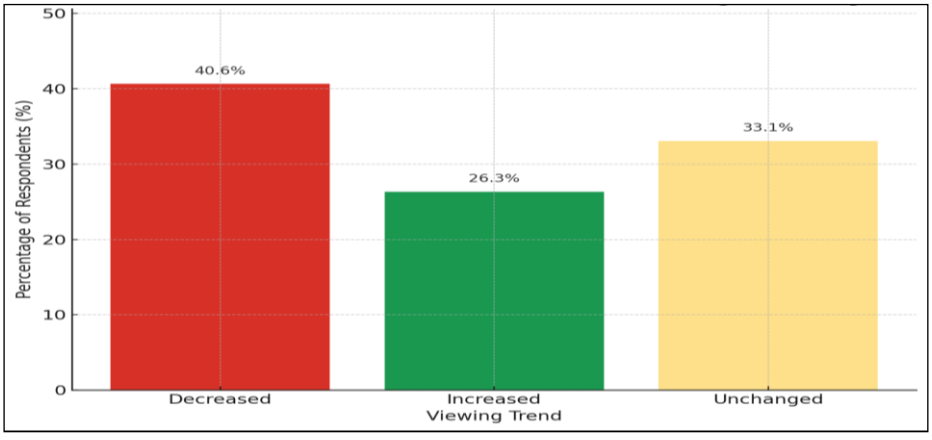
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Current Status of Viewing TV Drama

The majority of the respondents (40.6%) thought that the private TV channels' drama viewing has been in decreasing trend since only 26.3% of the respondent mentioned viewing is increasing. Another 33.1% mentioned unchanged.

Once we enjoyed TV drama more. Now viewers have alternatives due to mobile phones and social media. But we think it is still relevant for local viewers like us (IDI, Participant 4, 06 December 2025).

FIGURE 3. CURRENT SITUATION OF VIEWING TV DRAMA

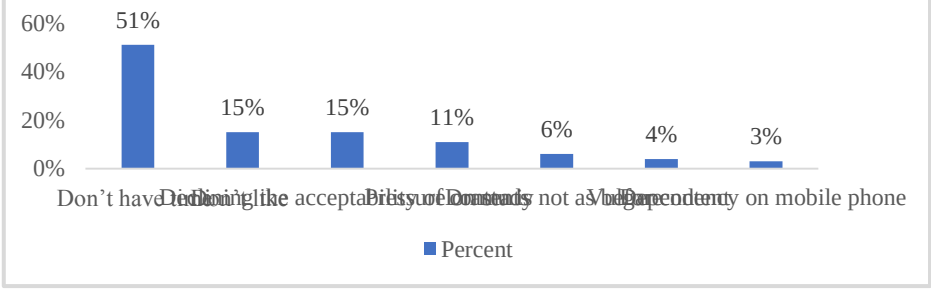


Source: Field Survey, 2025

Causes of Decreasing of Drama Viewing

The respondents identified some reasons for decreasing TV drama viewing. The findings reveal that the main cause is lack of enough time (51%) which hints that the viewers have other priorities in their daily life. A considerable portion also mentioned dissatisfaction with contents such as declining acceptability (15%), disliking (15%) and vulgar content (4%). Furthermore, study pressure (11%) and busy with mobile phone (3%) contribute to decrease the viewership of TV drama.

FIGURE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF CAUSES OF DECREASING DRAMA VIEWING



Source: Field Survey, 2025; Multiple responses, n= 156

Quality of TV Drama

Majority of the respondents (82.5%) mentioned the quality of private TV channels' drama as standard (40.1%), moderately (38%) and highly standard (4.4%). On the other hand, only 17.4% considered the TV drama quality substandard or less.

Drama quality is being tried to maintain but not having full satisfaction. Some are good and some are not. Still, we enjoy. We had strong affection towards TV drama. Viewers are now engaged with alternative sources of entertainment. Quality should be improved as per audience preferences (FGD-1, P-02, 21 November 2025).

TABLE 3. QUALITY OF PRIVATE TV CHANNEL DRAMA

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Sub-standard	25	6.5
Less quality	42	10.9
Moderately	146	38.0
Standard	154	40.1
Highly Standard	17	4.4
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Much Desired Elements in TV Drama

Viewers while watching TV drama search many things. Majority of the respondents (43%) hunted quality story while novelty is mentioned by 18.8% and quality acting and entertainment are mentioned by 16.1% and 15.9% respectively. The findings indicate that the drama viewers still desire quality story.

TABLE 4. MUCH WANTED ELEMENT DURING WATCHING

Much Wanted Elements	Frequency	Per cent
Novelty	72	18.8
Quality Story	165	43.0
Quality Acting	62	16.1
Entertainment	61	15.9
Proper Direction	24	6.3
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Perceptions towards TV Drama

Story

Boring and Flatness of Story

Story is one of the influential factors to view. The story differentiates the viewer's rating. The story of private TV channels' drama is found monotony and flat. The majority of the respondents (43.5%) agreed that the story of drama is boring and flat and 38.3% found as interesting and enjoyable.

> Story is the heart of drama. I love story of real life. Most stories of drama are similar style- love, affection, urban-focused, irrelevant comedy etc. Even storytelling is being flat and casual. Sometimes I feel uninterested and change channel (IDI, Participant 6, 29 November 2025).

TABLE 5. BORING & FLATNESS OF STORY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Highly Disagreed	13	3.4
Disagreed	134	34.9
Neutral	70	18.2
Agreed	144	37.5
Highly Agreed	23	6.0
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Standard of Script

The standard script inspires audiences. The respondents were asked whether the standard of script of drama is maintained or not. In response, a significant portion (40.1%) were agreed while 39.8% disagreed. Rest of the respondents (20.1%) were remained impartial. This leans slightly negative notion which indicates the standard of script has not been being maintained.

TABLE 6. STANDARDNESS OF TV DRAMA SCRIPT

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Highly Disagreed	10	2.6
Disagreed	143	37.2
Neutral	77	20.1
Agreed	137	35.7
Highly Agreed	17	4.4
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Storytelling

Realistic and quality story attract more viewers. Simultaneously it increases TV rating. The respondents were asked whether storytelling is out of reality. About 45.1% of the respondents disagreed. It means that the storytelling maintains reality. This portion may view storytelling as grounded in real-life experiences, emotions, or truths. But 35.1% agreed that the storytelling is out of reality and 19.8% are neutral.

TABLE 7. STORYTELLING WHETHER OUT OF REALITY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	24	6.3
Disagreed	149	38.8
Neutral	76	19.8
Agreed	105	27.3
Highly Agreed	30	7.8
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Monotonousness

Private TV channels' drama is somehow monotonous. Earlier it was heart-touching, but not now. A significant portion of the respondents (43.2%) agreed that the TV drama is monotonous. This indicates the viewers are not enjoying rather reluctant towards watching drama. On the other hand, 36.2% have felt that the drama is not monotonous at all.

> I still enjoy TV drama. But my feelings are mixed- sometimes I enjoy and sometimes I don't. My expectation is live story, real life story in drama (IDI, Participant 9, 28 November 2025).

TABLE 8. MONOTONOUSNESS OF TV DRAMA

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	4	1.0
Disagreed	135	35.2
Neutral	79	20.6
Agreed	131	34.1
Strongly Agreed	35	9.1
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Drama Story away from Life

Real life story is more attractive to view. The respondents were asked whether the drama story is far from human life or not. The majority of the respondents (47.4%) expressed that the TV drama story is associated with human life. It means that viewers are pleased to see drama story is involved with human life. On the contrary, 31.5% thought that the current TV drama story is far from actual human life. Moreover, 21.1% are found impartial. The viewers' overall perception leans TV drama as image of human life but there is also a significant portion being confused and questioned on pragmatism of drama story.

TABLE 9. TV DRAMA STORY WHETHER FAR FROM HUMAN LIFE

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	14	3.6
Disagreed	168	43.8
Neutral	81	21.1
Agreed	101	26.3
Strongly Agreed	20	5.2
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Diversity

Diversity requires for any TV show. Variety keeps viewers attached to TV channel. In regard to having diversity in TV drama, a significant portion of the respondents (36.4%) have agreed that TV drama is not diversified at all. But almost same portions (37%) found diversity. Again, notable portions (26.6%) were neutral. Since there is no full consensus, but

a slightly lean toward presence some diversity and a high neutral rate, recommends the need for further diversity such as cultural, socio-economic, ethic, gender, realism etc.

> I think diversity is essential in the story of TV drama. Everything is seen as similar types; variety is missing in TV drama. Very few private TV channels have shown to make variety in drama story. Our history, heritage and cultural diversity should be given priority in drama making (IDI, Participant 7, 29 November 2025).

TABLE 10. TV DRAMA WHETHER HAVING DIVERSITY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	7	1.8
Disagreed	135	35.2
Neutral	102	26.6
Agreed	115	29.9
Strongly Agreed	25	6.5
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Local Dialect based TV Drama

In Bangladesh, there is a strong trend to produce local dialect-based TV drama. Private TV channels are the pioneers in this regard. Majority of the respondents (78.4%) expressed very much satisfied with the drama having local language dialogue. This may reflect cultural connection, authenticity, relatability, or novelty associated with the use of local dialects in drama.

> We love local language-based drama more. We enjoy the dramas of local dialects of Pabna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Noakhali and even old Dhaka. Salhuddin Lavlu, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Chanchal Chowdhuri, Mosharaf Karim, Jahid Hasan and others are favorite to us. *Mymensingher Pola*, a Meymensingh local language-based drama is mentioned by one the of participants of FGD in Barhatta, Netrokona (FGD-2, P-10, 22 November 2025).

TABLE 11. OPINION ON LOCAL DIALECT BASED TV DRAMA

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	7	1.8
Disagreed	55	14.3
Neutral	21	5.5
Agreed	154	40.1
Strongly Agreed	147	38.3
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Acting

Quality Acting

Acting is an important part of TV drama production. As per findings, majority of the respondents (44%) expressed that TV drama acting maintains the standard. They are

comfortable and satisfied with the acting of the different casts. But significant portions (30.8%) opined that the standard of acting in drama has not been maintaining while 25.3% remain neutral.

> Experienced actors and actresses viz. Abul Hayat, Mamunur Rashid, Afzal Hossain, Suborna Mustafa, Dolly Zahur and others are still able to attract audiences with their quality acting. Dialogue pitching is attractive. Now overacting, ordinariness and exaggeration etc. can be found in many dramas (IDI, Participant 8, 06 December 2025).

TABLE 12. OPINION ON ACTING

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	14	3.6
Disagreed	155	40.4
Neutral	97	25.3
Agreed	102	26.6
Strongly Agreed	16	4.2
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Dialogue

Dialogue is the art of reflection of whole story and character. People love to enjoy dialogue and get pleasure. The respondents were asked whether TV drama dialogue is weak. Almost same portion of respondents agreed (36.2%) and disagreed (40.1%) while 23.7% were neutral. As slightly lean towards satisfaction with dialogue but still need to focus on improvement.

TABLE 13. OPINION ON WEAKNESS OF DIALOGUE

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	5	1.3
Disagreed	149	38.8
Neutral	91	23.7
Agreed	119	31.0
Strongly Agreed	20	5.2
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Entertainment

Enjoyable

Drama entertains people. In response to enjoyment, majority of the respondents (47.4%) expressed that they enjoyed TV drama while 32.3% didn't enjoy and 20.3% showed neutral who were still undecided. Combinedly two groups, a sizable portion of respondents, the drama of private TV channel doesn't show the universal taste.

TABLE 14. OPINION WHETHER TV DRAMA ENJOYABLE

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	11	2.9
Disagreed	171	44.5
Neutral	78	20.3
Agreed	96	25.0
Strongly Agreed	28	7.3
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Attractiveness

It is popularly saying that the attractiveness of private TV channels has been going down day by day. But majority of the respondents (46.4%) opined that drama has attracted them. This group has positive notion towards drama. But 30.7% expressed that drama has not been attracting them while 22.9% showed neutral.

TABLE 15. OPINION ON WHETHER TV DRAMA ATTRACTING

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	8	2.1
Disagreed	170	44.3
Neutral	88	22.9
Agreed	96	25.0
Strongly Agreed	22	5.7
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Entertaining

Drama entertains the viewers. In response to non-entertaining, majority of the respondents (53.4%) mentioned that TV drama has been entertaining them. They got amusements, recreation and pleasure. On the other hand, 24.7% weren't entertained while neutral portions were found 21.9%. The general trend leans a bit positive since most viewers are entertained. Since a quarter of the respondents are disagreed and notable portions are neutral, so there is a room for improvement towards audience preferences.

> I watch drama only for entertainment. I am not fully satisfied. I think improvement is needed. We like drama of having fun, entertainment, real life story, culturally associated story etc. We want to enjoy drama (IDI, Participant 2, 05 December 2025).

TABLE 16. OPINION ON TV DRAMA IS NOT ENTERTAINING

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	13	3.4
Disagreed	192	50.0
Neutral	84	21.9
Agreed	83	21.6
Strongly Agreed	12	3.1

Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Boring & Dullness

The respondents were asked whether TV drama is dull. In responses, majority of the respondents (40.9%) agreed that private TV drama is dull. They found TV dramas are unengaging or uninteresting. On the other hand, 32.9% still have found TV dramas at least not dull while 26.3% were neutral. So, the overall findings indicate the leaning towards dullness of TV drama, but the viewers were fairly split. Innovation in drama contents is needed to provide diversity in audience preferences.

TABLE 17. BORING & DULLNESS OF TV DRAMA

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	6	1.6
Disagreed	120	31.3
Neutral	101	26.3
Agreed	127	33.1
Strongly Agreed	30	7.8
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Costume

Appropriate Costume

Costume expresses the characters of drama. Its design, colour, texture etc. influence the characters and story. Majority of the respondents (45.3%) agreed that the costume is appropriate with characters. They did not find any flaws and faults in costume. On the other hand, significant portions (32.1%) opined that the costume was not suitable with the characters. Another 22.7% were neutral. The data reflects the moderate approval for how costumes fit to the characters.

TABLE 18. OPINION ON APPROPRIATENESS OF COSTUME

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	39	10.2
Disagreed	84	21.9
Neutral	87	22.7
Agreed	163	42.4
Strongly Agreed	11	2.9
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Costume Consistency with Culture

Costume reflects the culture. The findings indicate that majority of the respondents (46.1%) agreed costume consistency with culture while 28.2% expressed the costume is not suitable with our culture. Notable portions (25.8%) were found as neutral. The findings illustrate that a significant portion (54%) either disagreed or remained neutral, indicate the scope for enhancing cultural authenticity.

> Dress has been changing in drama. Modern and urban styles are dominating in dress selection. Sometimes it doesn't reflect our culture. Culturally consistent dress makes drama attractive and elegant (IDI, Participant 1, 05 December 2025).

TABLE 19. OPINION ON COSTUME CONSISTENCY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	29	7.6
Disagreed	79	20.6
Neutral	99	25.8
Agreed	169	44.0
Strongly Agreed	8	2.1
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Set and Art Direction

Location

Location must be selected according to the script. In response to the appropriateness of location, majority of the respondents (48.4%) mentioned that the location is found as per the story. Another portion (14.9%) disagreed while a significant part of the respondents (36.7%) was found neutral.

TABLE 20. OPINION ON LOCATION ACCORDING TO STORY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	8	2.1
Disagreed	49	12.8
Neutral	141	36.7
Agreed	179	46.6
Strongly Agreed	7	1.8
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Set Telling the Story

Appropriate set helps understand the story. As per study findings majority of the respondents (48.1%) agreed that the set tells the story. They had clear understanding on it. The significant issue is that a sizable portion found neutral (38.3%). Moreover, 13.5% thought that the set is not in line with story focus.

TABLE 21. OPINION ON SET TELLS THE STORY

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	12	3.1
Disagreed	40	10.4
Neutral	147	38.3
Agreed	176	45.8
Strongly Agreed	9	2.3
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Quality Airing

Advertisement Interval while Airing Drama

Advertisement interval has been severely criticized by the viewers. A prominent 94% of respondents mentioned that TV commercial intervals are too lengthy which indicates strong area of dissatisfaction among viewers.

TABLE 22. OPINION ON TV ADVERTISEMENT INTERVAL

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	1	.3
Disagreed	6	1.6
Neutral	16	4.2
Agreed	116	30.2
Strongly Agreed	245	63.8
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Advertisement Break Boringness

Majority of the respondents (94.3%) felt boring this commercial break. The findings indicate that the boringness makes this a critical issue. Broadcasting strategies, viewer-oriented ad formats and contents required significant improvement to hold attention of viewers.

> I feel bored in advertising break and it is a bit torcher to me. It hinders to enjoy. Frequently I used to switch over channels while advertisement on screen (IDI, Participant 3, 05 December 2025).

TABLE 23. OPINION ON TV ADVERTISEMENT BREAK' BORINGNESS

Opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagreed	3	.8
Disagreed	5	1.3
Neutral	14	3.6
Agreed	68	17.7
Strongly Agreed	294	76.6
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

MAJOR FINDINGS

The study has explored the preferences and perceptions of drama of private TV channels in Bangladesh. While all the respondents view TV drama, irregular viewers (52.9%) watch more than regular viewers. Fifty Per cent of the respondents prefer TV drama and 35.7% are neutral. The viewers enjoy TV drama, but they are light viewers since 62% of the respondents spent less than one hour daily.

I don't have enough time to enjoy TV drama. I don't find pleasure more rather I spent more time in social media. Occasionally, I watch TV drama for entertainment. I prefer quality story to enjoy (IDI, Participant 11, 06 December 2025).

The findings suggest that the viewer's involvements have significantly declined (40.6%), but interestingly 82.5% of the respondents mentioned that the quality of TV drama is standard (40.1% standard, 38% moderately standard and 4.4% highly standard). So, according to reception theory, preferences vary among the viewers and cultural proximity theory influences on local contents to prefer more. One young female respondent from Barhatta, Netrokona opined,

> I like TV drama that story is close to me, my local culture and language. It attaches me more and I feel pleasure. Netrokona is rich in local culture of *pala gan*, the folk drama. I love to see it (IDI, Participant 10, 22 November 2025).

Viewers always search for quality story (43%). Entertainment is considered as the main cause to watch TV drama (37%). Regarding preferences, it is clear that private TV channels' drama is still relevant among the viewers.

> TV drama is the oldest program we enjoy. Once we think TV means news at 8 pm and drama series. Traditional family story was dominated, but not now. Though dialog, set, costume have been changed, but we feel TV drama as our own program still now (IDI, Participant 5, 06 December 2025).

The analyses of perception are done on six factors having 19 sub-factors. Among 19, the majority of the respondents have shown positive responses towards 14 sub-factors. These are 'TV story out of reality', 'story away from real life', 'liking of local dialect-based drama', 'quality acting', 'dialogue', 'enjoyable', 'attractiveness', 'entertaining', 'appropriate costume', 'costume as per culture', 'location', 'set telling the story', 'commercial break during airing' and 'boringness of commercial break'. Among sub-factors like unrealistic story, away from life, local dialect drama liking, acting, dialogue, costume, location etc. are closer according to cultural proximity theory so that viewers have shown positive responses. Moreover, it is important to notify that among these 14 sub-factors, only 04 sub-factors have responses more than 50% separately. If majority responses are considered, the findings indicate alarming for TV drama industry. Because other 10 sub-factors along with 05 negative perceived sub-factors ('boring and flatness of story', 'less quality of script', 'monotonous', 'lack of diversity', and 'dullness to enjoy') responses are more than 50% individually. It means the perception leans towards negative. Therefore, it can be said that the existing perception of private TV channels' drama from viewers' perspective is not up-to the marked, rather it suggests a huge improvement scope for the producers, content writers, creators and other concerned.

Two FGDs' major findings are shown below:

FGD-1: Zainul Park, Mymensingh Sadar, 21 November 2025, 11:00 am to 12:15 pm., 11 viewers participated, 4 females and 7 males.

Theme-1: Causes of Drama Viewing

Entertainment is the one of the majors causes for viewing TV drama. They search good story-based drama where real-life experiences would be focused. They also like local dialect drama and mentioned the name of some famous actors like Chanchal Chowdhuri, Mosarraf Karim.

"I love to watch funny TV drama of local language. It gives me more pleasure. But TV drama is not appealing me as before" (FGD-1, P8).

Theme- Perception on TV Drama

Once TV drama was most attractive program. "I still remember the starting time of Ekushey TV when TV drama was a real appealing program, we felt" (P4). The standard has been lessening gradually. Now lot of private TV channels having a number of dramas have been telecasting daily, but only a few is considered popular. Improvement is required.

FGD-2: Monas, Barhatta, Netrokona, 22 November 2025, 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm., 10 viewers participated, 5 females and 5 males.

Theme- Causes of TV Drama Viewing

The viewers like private TV channels' drama due to pass their leisure. TV drama is one of the major entertaining programs in family. It can be enjoyed together with family. It entertains and gives fun, especially local dialect TV drama. The drama story gives them pleasure. Watching TV drama has become their habit.

"I have been watching TV drama since BTV era while I was about 10 years of age. We don't have TV set, but I used to go to my neighbour's house almost every night to enjoy drama series of BTV. Now I am enjoying private TV drama and it turns into a habit" (FGD-2, P2).

Theme- Perception on TV drama

TV drama is very popular program. Viewers were accustomed with TV drama in BTV era. In early stage of private TV channel, TV drama has maintained quality and standard. But gradually quantity of drama has been increasing side by side the quality has been decreasing except few during celebration of festivals.

"We had strong feelings to BTV drama. Viewing drama was our enormous source of joy and pleasure. Now-a-days, the quality of private TV drama is decreasing. Necessary steps could be taken to maintaining quality" (P7).

LIMITATIONS

Only Mymensingh division is considered for study, not the entire country. Applying simple random sampling, more FGDs and constructing composite scale, the study would be more scientific. Using only Likert-scale could be another limitation of analysis.

CONCLUSION

Television is the powerful mass medium in the world. It has two sides- audio and visual which make the medium stronger and influential to its audiences. Before entering into private TV channel era, BTV's one of the popular genres was drama. When first private TV channel in Bangladesh, ATN Bangla started in 1997, daily drama has been keeping top program in private channel. The trend has also been continuing in all the private TV channels. But it has been losing its quality compare to early stage. The analyses and discussions have explored the mixed situation of private TV channels' drama. The viewers' preferences, mind set and their attitudes have identified that situation of TV drama is leaning a bit positive considering the opinion of majority of the respondents but not smooth. The size of majority in the most cases is below 50% indicating a considerable size of respondents holds either negative insights or neutral. Some findings are found not favourable for the producers or content creators. Another alarming finding is that the time engaged daily is not sufficient for viewing TV drama rather they became light viewers. Apart from these, 19 sub-factors viz. storytelling, quality acting, entertainment, costume, appropriate set and quality airing have clear influences on perception and preferences of viewers. A significant portion of respondents has shown the disagreed or negative attitudes and neutral in responses of 19 sub-factors. This means, in the eye of viewers, the situation of existing private TV channels' drama is not so satisfactory at all. It indicates the opportunity to improvement. Otherwise, the viewers' satisfaction would decrease day by day.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings, the following suggestions are made:

a) The producer, content creator, and concerned should consider the findings and thrive for continuous improvement in storytelling, acting & casting, entertainment, makeup & costume, set & art direction and quality airing.

b) Local dialect-based drama should be made more in numbers not compromising the quality and standard of the culture.

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