

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF YOUNG INDIANS ON THE AMERICAN NETFLIX SERIES – 13 REASON WHY

NEETHU M KRISHNA

Student,

SRM Institute Of Science and Technology.

ABSTRACT

This paper on The Perception of Indian Youngster on the famous American Netflix Series – 13 Reasons why, tries to analyse theme and content shown in the series – Season 1 (2017) and Season 2 (2018). The contents are chosen after specific episodes of each seasons that shows relevant and impactful themes to study and discuss. The episodes are analysed in Qualitative and Quantitative method. The survey conducted shows the perception of Indian spectators on the American Teen drama Series. Specific episodes where chosen and studied through various criteria like Plot, Character, Generating Theme and reviewing the theme attained, defining and analysing the theme obtained by analysing the characters, situation and behaviour. The study helped in analysing how Media portrays teenage violence.

Key words: Indian Youngster, American Netflix Series – 13 Reasons why, Perception, characters, situation, behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The 2017 released American Netflix series – 13 reasons Why, has taken attention of many audience mainly the Generation Z and Generation Alpha group of millennials. By the time when Season 2 released in 2018 the show held around 6 million U.S viewers in first three days and, In India, by 2017, Netflix had 4.2 million prominent user's which made the reach of the series more powerful among the younger generations (*Todd Spangler, Variety.com*). The show is the story about a 17-year-old girl going through difficult stage of life by being isolated, misunderstood and frequently Bullied, which leads her in committing suicide. By Season 2, we can understand in depth on how a victim and everyone around that particular person goes through different mentally affecting circumstances in their education institutions. Suicides are crucial crimes that's being reported at a high range from all over the world.

In India as indicated by the National Mental Health Survey published by the National Institute of Mental Health And Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), the suicide rate per 1,00,000 populace for those beneath the age of 14 was 0.5, while those in the 14-17 age section recorded a suicide frequency rate of 9.52 - higher than the national individual average of 0.9%. The most recent NIMHANS study directed among 1,500 students found that 11% of college students and 7-8% of high school students have attempted suicide (2017-18 record).

Media plays a major role in teenage people as it helps in opening up door to realities of society. The need for good mental health is valuable in life and the series shows exactly how people lack the ability and how the society affects an individual's personal life. The series was in fact created to raise – Suicide awareness. The youth are most likely to be involved in suicide cases – that is bullies and victims of bullying – were more likely to think about and attempt suicide than youth who were not involved in bullying. In short, bullying is bad for everyone involved. The study would discuss crimes and activities shown through series which is clearly a reflection on our society and on how the India group of spectator's felts after watching the series. The researcher would analyze how much impact the India viewer had on their psychological thoughts while watching the series, and despite of the cultural differences are Indians students being bullied equally as shown in the series.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to encounter the psychological effect made on youngster's after watching the American Netflix Series – 13 reasons Why, mainly in Chennai. The research also aims in understanding the perception of Indian Group of spectators on the portrayal of sensitive contents about mental health in Series sourced from Media.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To study the Psychological Impact made on Indian Spectators (18-30) mainly in Chennai, after watching the American Web Series – 13 Reasons Why.
- To find out the Perception on the Portrayal of sensitive content about mental health in Media viewed by youngsters

RESEARCH DESIGN

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study the researcher has practiced Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis. Content Analysis and Survey are the methodology used for the research. Survey is the gathering of information achieved by asking people inquiries either face to face, on paper, by telephone or on the web. Coordinating surveys is one sort of fundamental research, which is the data directly from its source. The information accumulated may in like manner be gotten to thus by various social occasions in assistant research. Study research is used to collect the suppositions, feelings and notions of individuals.

Thematic analysis can be utilized to understand apparently random material that creates thoughts and emotions on the viewers. It tends to be utilized to break down qualitative data and to systematically pick up information and gain knowledge about an individual, a collaboration, a social issue, a circumstance, a group or a culture. Researchers utilize thematic study to pick up understanding and learning from information assembled. The strategy empowers the researcher to build up a more profound conclusion to the subject of interest. For further study of 13 Reasons Why, both Season 1 and Season 2, the researcher will be also using the tool from Thematic study, that is, an in-depth Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on the characters with help in understanding the character behaviour of the subjects from the series (characters), within the sub-divided thematic analysis.

There will be quantitative analysis conducted too. The motive is that through Survey conducted among 50 youngsters (18-30) from Chennai. The quantitative analysis will be conducted through online survey method. This is also one of the limitation due to time constrain. The survey assessment relies upon online surveys and the looking at of

individual units from a shut social event of people. The survey was conducted and the samples were collected from the youngsters of Chennai.

Every response was noted, and the behaviours of the participants are also analysed through the process.

PARAMETERS

Six parameters were taken for analysing the contents of advertisements. Season 1 (2017) and Season 2 (2018) of the Netflix Series 13 Reason Why were thematically analysed. Based on the six parameters, the thematic vibrance of Both the Seasons (1 and 2) have been analyzed to compare and understand the impact created among Indian spectator's despite of the cultural and geographical differences. The parameters are used are:

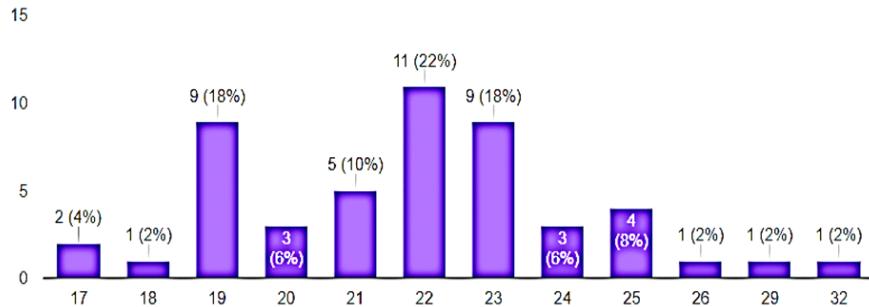
- Plot
- Character study
- Generating theme
- Reviewing theme

- Defining the theme

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective No: 1

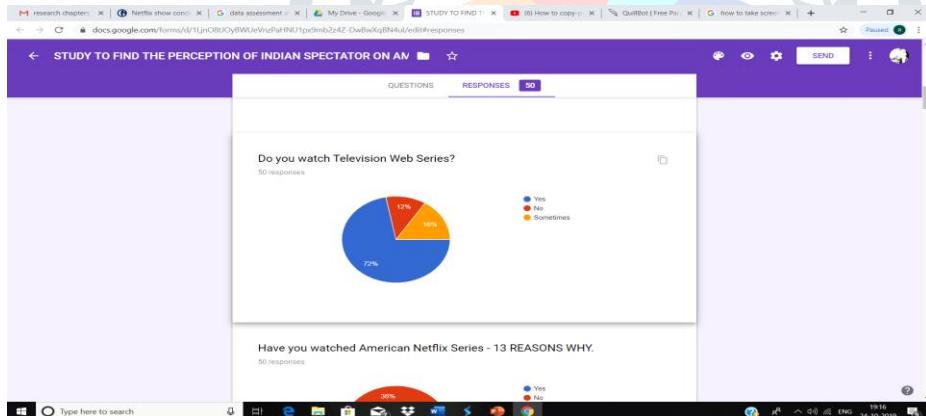
Show the Age group



From the above graph it is inferred that 22% of the youngsters are from the age group of 22 and youngsters from the age group 21 are 10% and 23 are 18% and also only 2% of people have watch Series between the age group of 26 and 29.

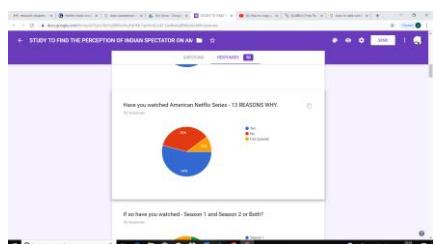
There is around 4% to 18% of the millennials too, that is from the age of 17 – 18. This shows that online television web series are mostly entertained by the people from the age group of 17 – 23.

show the percentage of Television web series viewers



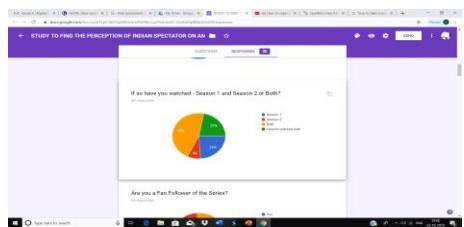
The figure shows exactly how many percentages of viewers are there to watch television web series within Chennai. The Blue portion with 72% is the percentage of viewers. Around 12% of people never watch tv series, and around 16% of people prefer the source, Sometimes.

shows how many percentages of youngsters have watched the American Netflix Series – 13 Reasons why.



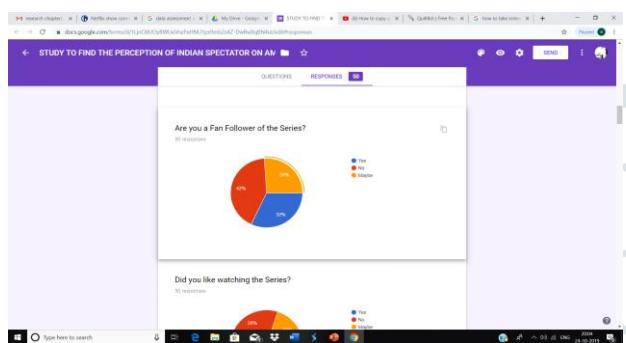
The figure clearly shows that around 54% youngsters have watched the American series. 36% have never watched 13 reason why, while 10% have watched few episodes of the series.

shows how many youngsters have watched Season 1 and Season 2 of the series.



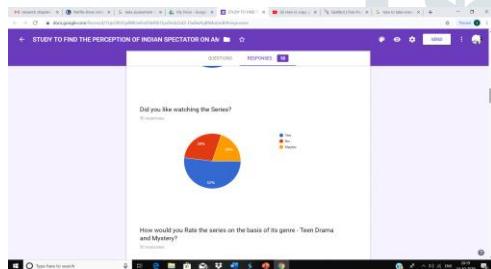
The study showed that around 46% of youngsters have watched Both – Season 1 and Season 2. Around 24% have watched only – Season 1. 8% have watched Season 2. This clearly shows that the series was not or did not receive any more hype and addiction among the viewers.

shows how many fan followers are there for the American series from Chennai.



This study analysis shows that 42% of youngsters are NOT fan followers of the series. Around 32% of people answered YES, claiming that they are fan followers of the series. Around 26% of youngsters claimed that they MIGHT BE fan follower of the series, yet unsure.

shows the response of the people on the study to find if they enjoyed watching the series



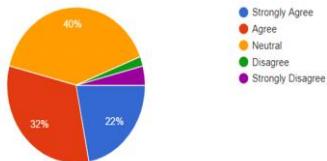
The study shows that 52% of youngsters enjoyed watching the series while 28% of youngsters did not. Around 20% answered – Maybe.

shows the rating of the series on the basis of its genre and content.

The study above shows the rating of the youngsters on the basis of the genre and content of the series. The scale starting from 1 – denoting INTERESTING to 10 denoting DISTURBING. Both being the emotions likely to be attained while watching the series.

16% of the youngsters answered INTERESTING and around 4% scaled the series as DISTURBING. There is more rise in scale from point 5 to point 8, scaling from 18% to 12% of youngsters answered a rating that inclines more towards Disturbing.

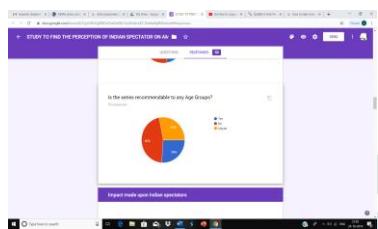
This shows that even though 16% of youngsters were Interested by the series, a high range of – 18% of youngsters felt both interesting and more Disturbed by the series.



study on if the series showing relevant content on Troubled Teenagers and their mental health that needs more attention and care.

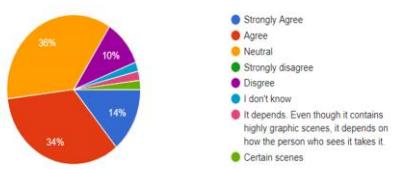
A percentage of 22 to 32, Agreed to the series in being relevant content on troubled teenagers and mental health. There are about 40% of the people who are Neutral or Unsure of how relevant the series is to our society.

A very few people disagreed to the series in being absolutely irrelevant content to be showed through media for youngsters.



shows how many people have felt the series recommendable for all age groups.

The figure shows that 46% of the youngsters felt that the series is not recommendable for all ages. While 26% of people answered Yes, Its recommendable.



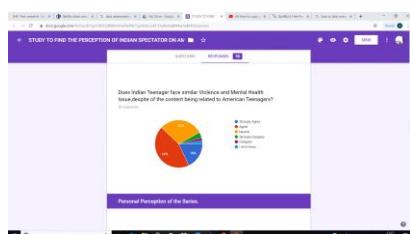
shows the opinion of youngster on the content being way too sensitive for the spectators.

The figure shows that around 14% of youngster Strongly agreed to the content being way to sensitive. There is around 345 of youngsters who still Agrees on the concept. 36% are shown as Neutrally agreeing to the concept of the series being sensitive and not.

10% of the have strongly disagreed to the fact that the series has nothing to be sensitive about.

On Other optioned answers Spectators have commented – “ *It depends. Even though it contains highly graphic scenes, it depends on how the person who sees it, takes it.* ”

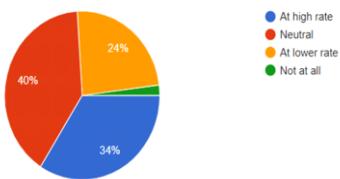
Few people said that only “*Certain Scenes*”, have triggered sensitivity and breakdown in them.



analysis on if Indian Teenager face similar Violence and Mental Health Issue, despite of the content being related to American Teenagers and placed in America.

Indian also seemingly face the same issue despite of the cultural geographical differences. Around 44% of youngster have Agreed to the fact, and 18% of youngsters are strongly agreeing to the fact the Indian youngsters also go through similar bullying and violence issues leading to psychological and mental stress and even suicide.

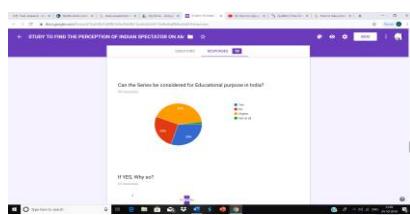
30% still Neutrally agree on the fact, and leaves around 1% - 2% on not agree to the fact that violence is strongly prevailing in educational institutions



shows the response of people on similar violence and bullying taking place among Indian Teenager.

A rate of 34% of youngsters said that violence is happening at a High Rate among Indian Teenagers. Around 40% of youngster scaled their opinion around Neutral, that means somewhat agreeing to the fact that similar violence take among Indian Teenagers.

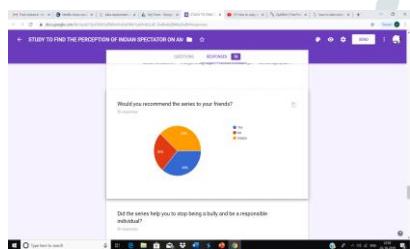
A scale of around 24% of youngsters commented that there is a lower rate in violence among Indian Teenagers.



JETIR

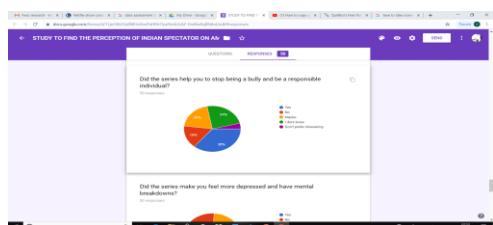
shows the analysis if the series can be considered as Educational Material in Indian Educational institutions.

There is almost 30% of people agreeing to the concept of using the series as Educational Material in Indian institutions. Almost 26% people said NO, while 42% people said, Maybe. A very few people Strongly Disagreed to the concept.



Around 36% of people said that they would recommend the series to your friends. 38% of the people said – Maybe, and around 26% of people said they wouldn't recommend the Series.

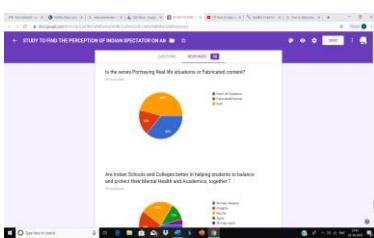
The response of spectators on them recommending the series to their friends.



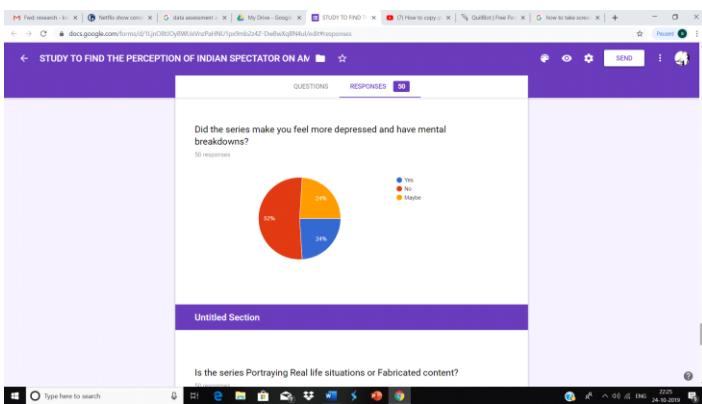
show the response on the query if the series changed any individual to stop being a bully and act as responsible individuals.

A positive ranking of almost 36% of people agreeing that the series helped them in self-assessment and to stop being a bully or in attempting other crimes and violence.

16% of the people said NO, while 20% might have or might not have been changed by the impact of the series.

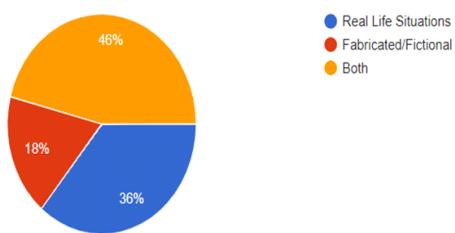


The study showed around 52% of disagreed to the series triggering make you feel more depressed and have mental breakdowns.



Around 24% of people said that they might have felt the same. Around 24% of people said No.

Analysis if the series gives depression and have mental breakdowns.

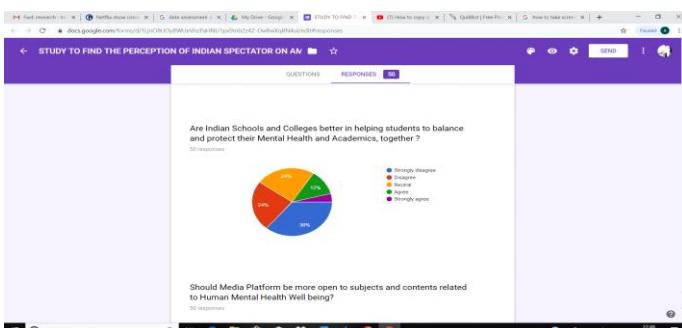


Analysis on the opinion of the series being realistic, fabricated or both.

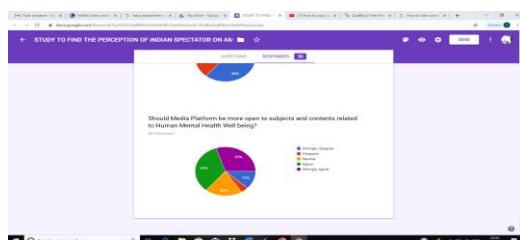
The study showed that 18% of the youngsters felt the series to be Fabricated / Fictional. Around 36% of the people said the content is Real Life based. 46% of people said Both.

Analysis to find if Indian Schools and Colleges better in helping students to balance and protect their Mental Health and Academics, together

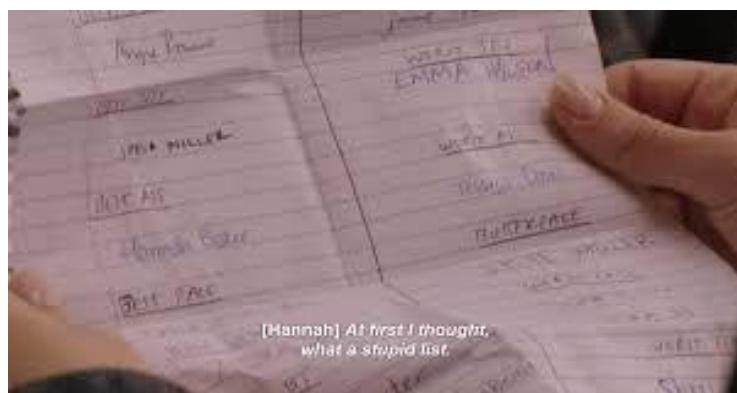
The analysis shows that 36% to 24% of youngsters felt that Indian Schools and Colleges are ‘NOT’ better in helping students to balance and protect their Mental Health and Academics, together.



Around 24% of people said Neutral and Only 12% of youngsters agreed in institution helping in balancing troubled teenagers’ issues with academics.



PLOT



REFERENCE: SEASON 1, Episode 3

In the Episode 3 of Season 1, Hannah Baker who is already introduced as the Girl who committed suicide is revealed to have been passing 13 tapes, each voicing her 13

Reasons to die and the people, that is her friends who led to her tragic decision in ending her own life. The character Clay Jenson seems to be the only person who did understand the reason for him being a part of the Tapes that's circulated among the students.

Hannah Baker's third tape is a ringing attack on boys who disrespect women's bodies. In the episode Hannah finds 'THE LIST' created by the senior football team players and the main protagonists of the series Justin, Bryce, Zach and other boys. This major scene shows how boys have subjectified young girls based on their appearance. On many occasions in Thirteen Reasons Why, young men entertain to control and manhandle the Hannah and different young ladies. Hannah first notices this treatment during the episode with Bryce at Blue Spot Liquor, when he smacked her butt. Since Alex named her "Best Ass in the Freshman Class," Bryce felt qualified for contact and control Hannah's body.



REFERENCE: Series Poster

In episode 10 – Tape 5 Side A, Bryce rapes his best friend's girlfriend, Jessica, while she's passed out on her bed. The second occurs about 42 minutes into Episode 12 when Bryce is alone with Hannah in the hot tub and forces himself on her. All these showing strong violence against female body.

In Season 2, the season build to the court room struggle to attain justice to Jessica after being sexually abused when she was unconscious. In this season especially there are several references showing how Young men treats girls in school. In episode 10 of season 2 – 'Smile, ****s', the chapter name itself shows subjectification of girl. In this plot we can see young girls being abused and mistreated in a shady clubhouse Bryce and his friends run within their school.

CHARACTER STUDY

In the above-mentioned scenes from both the seasons, the main characters introduced are:

Hannah, Jessica, Sheri, Bryce, Justin. All these characters span from the age of 16-20 and is shown as the victim or the creator of evil acts in school.

The victims are initially shown, 'Quiet' and its shown as the girls needed time to understand the situation.

The main male character who lead all the issue in the series is, Bryce, and he is shown more like his behaviour is 'Normal'. Bryce explicitly abusing Jessica, exhibited his bullheadedness and misogyny. He plainly has no regard for lady's self-governance and the human right to state NO. His experience with Hannah in the hot tub, where he endured with his lewd gestures even as Hannah cried, further cements these focuses.

GENERATING THEME

The above mention scenes and circumstances shows the particular theme as a form of – Men pushing woman down, mentally and physically. The behaviour and mannerism of the boys reveals that the series is showcasing the situation of young girls who is going to schools or colleges being subjugated, abused and harassed by their own friends and classmates.

REVIEWING THEME

From analysing the scene and character behaviour we can understand that one of the basic theme or content of the series is – Male Chauvinism or Female Body Subjugation.

DEFINING THE THEME

The theme analysed is – Male Chauvinism or Female Body Subjugation. The term Male Chauvinism means, any conduct throwing female points of view, suppositions, and perspectives as insignificant and unimportant fall under the closed-minded umbrella.

Female body Subjugation in the series is very strong. Girls being defined through Verbal and Disrespectful phrases

The analysis conducted helped in understanding one of the basic themes that has been linked into the series. The portrayal of female from a very young age is shown in the most vulnerable situation. This behaviour that prevails in educational institution inbuild in everyone a confidence to abuse and harass anyone. The theme has clearly played its part in the series, on the above mention Seasons and episodes.

PLOT

Everything in the series has a violent element to it. Sexual abuse, Physical violence and so on. In Season 1 – Hannah Baker, the girl committed suicide, before her death gave away 13 Recorded tapes, each voicing her reason to leading her death. The tapes don't just voice her pain but also the thing she found to be

injustice that happens with an educational institution. We will be analysing the areas where Hannah voice is played.

“no one knows how much of impact they have on others life” – Hannah Baker, reference from Season one, episode 4.

“A lot of you cared, just not enough.” – Hannah Baker, Season 1, episode 7.

CHARACTER STUDY

The character to be focused in this specific analysis is Hannah Baker, the girl with whom the whole series starts with. The girl who committed suicide in her own house reveals the darkest thoughts inside her that led her in ending her own life.

Hannah Bakers character can be analysed as a ,” Person of word”. She is shown to express her feeling in the best way through words. The power of the usage of verbal communication can be understood clearly. Some of the major thoughts that Hannah Shared was, Hannah has used different medium to share her feelings, and the recordings in the tape is one such. Hannah is shown as the new girl in town, quite shy and always loving to others. She is treated differently among the peer. But the tapes are more,’ true to not believe’, mainly because of how Hannah conversed. Her words are behaviour shows how depressed and in dark the 17-year-old was.

GENERATING THEME

The above mention character analysis reveals a very specific form of characterisation.

She is not just being using words to express her feelings but also using them to hurt and haunt the listeners.

“Words hurt”, and this is clearly expressed through the series

REVIEWING THEME

The theme here is the power of Verbal Communication and in the series the common form of verbal use was for – verbal abuses. Hannah even though she was expressing her feeling, she also intended in hurting the listener through harsh words. This is a form of mental treatment, to make the listener feel less powerful with the use of words and phrases.

DEFINING THE THEME

The theme can be defined as a form of Tactless behaviour or casual bullying through words. This theme is used by the series to make the viewers feel more connected to the stories expressed in the series. The series used this idea to convey the message that,” Words Hurt.”

PLOT



REFERENCE: season 1, ep 13



REFERENCE: season 2, ep 6

The subject of analysis is Season 1 (ep – 10) and Season 2 (ep – 13), the part where Jessica learns that she was raped at her own house when she was unconscious. Jessica is very late to know about the incident until Hannah's tapes reveal the truth that she witnessed.

In the scene where Jessica is getting raped, the visualisation is not at the harshest form. Jessica was unconscious due to overdose of alcohol and substance. In Season 2 – episode 3, we see that Justin rushes to smoke Heroin after a fight with Clay. Here also an excessive use of substance and its addiction is shown. Jessica and Justin are shown as lovers in Season 1.

CHARACTER

The character studied based on the referred scenes are – Jessica and Justin, both who started dated each other but broke up due to trust issues. Both the characters are shown as substance users that is consuming drugs and methadone's. with each episode we can understand the changes in the characters as an outcome of substance use.

Jessica who started as a very young and fun girl, ends up dating Justin who is a leading member so school football team. Justin who already had history in using substance and at the same time his family was abusive and used drugs in front of his own child. This clearly shows the chain that Substance usage created among the teenagers mentioned above.

Both Justin and Jessica is shown as living with the the guilt of being unconscious and missing out on almost all the important things in life, even themselves and their loved ones.

GENERATING THEME

Substance usage at a very young age (17-year-old) shows how they are moulded into different individuals with different personality and thought. The addiction has been one of the major themes in the series, showing how youngsters can blindly fall into the world of methadone and lose a great part of their own life.

REVIEWING THEME

The theme attained is clearly – Substance use or addiction among youngsters.

DEFINING THE THEME

The theme of Substance abuse in moulding individual characters. This theme is prevalent throughout the series. Each part showcases the amount of lose youngster make after being addicted to substance. Another understanding of the way the theme is portrayed is that – the addiction happens in a child's life after being motivated or pushed by someone's to start smoking and this theme is clearly showcased in the series.

PLOT



REFERENCE: season 1 ep,13

The last scene of season 1 portrays the suicide in full view, as Hannah slits her wrists and in the long run seeps out in a bath in a frightfully grim scene. The scene shows how numb and painless Hannah feels while dying.

CHARACTER STUDY

In the above-mentioned scene Hannah Baker who is shown as a very depressed girl with many issues within herself and around her. The people that involved in her mental health weakness and the lack of support and understanding comes to an end to Hannah Baker, as she decide to end her life after recording all the audios, revealing the truths only to the people that led her to such a situation.

By the last scene where Hannah decides to die her character is calmer and at ease. She seems to know exactly what she needs and what she had to do. There is a serene silence even at her pain. She doesn't cry or shout for help but sleeps to death in her bed of blood.

GENERATING THEME

The major understanding from this scene is how they have narrated and visualised the scene, each moment of the episode becomes more crucial and disturbing to watch. This sensitive content is a form of Borderline Depression and romanticising death happens with this mental state.

REVIEWING THEME

The theme attained and the episode before Hannah's death, clearly shows that she was at Borderline Depression state and this made her enjoy her own Death, as shown in the referred scene.

DEFINING THE THEME

The theme attained and through the analysis the researcher could understand that Hannah was facing borderline depression leading her to a drastic suicide. The series has shown exactly how an individual feel before dying. The romanticized visualisation in the series is quite disturbing but the theme of Borderline Depression is clearly evident in the scene.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The research focuses on the analysis of The Perception of Indian youngster around Chennai, on the Famous American Netflix Series – 13 Reasons why.to understand the concept and the perception of the youngster it was necessary to analyse the influencing factors from the series, thus through the thematic analysis , different plots and the character behaviour in creating the specific theme was analysed. On a qualitative understanding its very much clear that the series 13 Reasons Why has taken upon the attention of youngster, even around Chennai.

Through the quantitative analysis survey, an exact understanding of how the series, mainly, Season 1 and Season 2, that circulated around the concepts of Sexual abuse, Suicide, Troubled Teenager, and other violence's made an impact upon Indian Youngsters despite of the differences in the culture and geography. The series has given both an interesting and disturbing stir among Indians. Responses varied from one person to other from the 50 samples collected through survey conducted through online portal. Each sample shows different ideology of youngsters based on mental health and also on the portrayal of violence in media. Very few numbers of subjects denied on the Idea of not telecasting sensitive yet

important contents in Media. A great number of youngsters answered that the Series even helped them have a self-reflection and reduce bullying or other violence's among the same age peers.

On the analysis to find out if Indian youngsters also behaved similarly, almost half the responses scaled around in saying Yes. There by making it clear that no matter where or what culture we are in, acts of violence begin at a very young age.

Through thematic analysis where selected plots and episodes which held analytical worth content was taken out and studied separately, to identify, analyse and interpret patterns that created a specific theme and style. Through familiarizing different plot, the research headed to Character study, generating different themes. After analysing different themes identified, the researcher was able to analyse different behaviours of youngsters, that lead to fatal circumstances in the series.

By the responses collected from 50 samples, mainly youngster aging from 18-30 located in Chennai, we can understand that these violence's detailed in the series are prevalent at a high rate in Indian. Telecasting of such sensitive content is indeed a path for youngster to attain knowledge.

