

## **A Study on Life Satisfaction and Television Dependency among Urban Women in Chennai**

**Ms. M. Samandha Smith\***

*Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Sathyabama University*

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**Abstract:** *A woman in India is associated to the natural resources of the nation. Though, women still yearns to have a social status, she is not allowed to take decisions on her own; always the society expects her to remain silent as she is the weaker sex. The status of a woman and her quality of life gradually developed. Under the Indian context, Homemaker is mainly a woman who is confined to the domestic chores in a family. On the other way, men in order to provide his family a good standard of living and comfortable life, spend less quality time with their families. Therefore, women are left alone with less interaction. As a result this might make them to rely on television viewing for their psychological support, relaxation and a feeling of escapism. Thus it creates a strong affinity towards television. They believe that television is the simplest means of enjoyment. Therefore, they seek personal satisfaction through television viewing. Some studies suggest that 'life satisfaction' might be one of the motives of television use. Therefore the aim of the study is to test the association of life satisfaction and television dependency among urban homemakers. For this purpose a survey on 150 homemakers (women) of three parts of Chennai city were conducted, data gathered through structured questionnaire from urban homemakers.*

**Keywords:** *– Life Satisfaction, Television viewing, homemakers, soap operas, urban woman*

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### **I. Introduction**

Homemakers in India are confined to do the households. They do it as their natural responsibility. They are the primary source of satisfaction to their family members, whereas their satisfaction is not very much focused. Homemakers are alone after their spouse and children move to their respective work and education places. At this point of time, they have less or no interaction with others, so they entirely rely on television. Television is one of the mediums, which is viewed across all strata of society. There are a variety of television programmes such as sports, news, and current affairs, serials, sitcoms, talk shows, game shows, films, music videos, and some development oriented programmes. By watching these programmes they might experience some emotions, therefore this desire to experience the emotions may be a key factor for them to utilize television. As Kirk Johnson (2001) indicates that uses and gratification theory is a goal-oriented behaviour, therefore audiences are not passive but active in using media for some purposes, whereas media do not use them. Nevertheless, after the popularity of television in India, homemakers are spending lesser time in conversing with their family, relatives and friends and giving more priority for watching television (Kirk Johnson, 2000).

#### **1.1 Homemaker's in India**

In India, a woman who does homemaking had no strain in doing the household chores in those days, because the family structure was a joint family system. Nowadays nuclear families are on the rise however, the traditional joint family structures diminish gradually. Thus the feeling of togetherness decline in the minds of the people. Balachandran. M. Raj, et al., (2007) In India, a woman in a family undergoes mental pressures, whereas workingwoman eases from her routine life through the change attains at her workplace. She adjusts her character according to the situations she faces in both the places. Whereas a homemaker, as no transformation from her regular tasks. Her day starts and ends monotonously, under this circumstance a homemaker is left with the sense of loneliness. After the advent of the television, homemakers create a strong affinity towards television for a psychological support and relaxation besides being with their relatives. In Indian, the most popular television genre was the soap operas or serials. Homemakers were occupied in these programmes by doing their household chores. Jensen and Oster (2008) in their research has found that within 10-15 years of the arrival of television, the cable or satellite TV has reached 60 percent in Tamil Nadu, this shows that households are more dependent on television for their relaxation and other positive aspects of life.

## **1.2 Television and Homemakers**

Robert Jensen and Emily Oster (2008) in their study, conclude that the introduction of cable television had improved the status of women. In addition, satellite television increased the status of women and the decision-making authority within the family. Kirk Johnson (2000) Women have involved in television so much that they become dependent on television programmes. Viewing television is the most essential and frequent leisure activity. It is mainly considered as a source of relaxation and stress reduction. As quoted by Bettye A. Grable (2006) in her study, Rubin (1985) put forward that individuals' utility of television is focused on social interaction and life satisfaction characteristics. People tend to use television to get psychological enjoyment and escape from stress. Therefore, they seek personal satisfaction through television viewing. Some studies suggest that 'life satisfaction' might be one of the motives of television use, Bettye A. Grable (2006) suggests that television influences the satisfaction with life as the viewers compare themselves to and mimic the lifestyles of people they see on television.

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

Audiences depend on media to gratify their needs, wishes or motives. The approach to understand the uses of viewers of the available media and the gratification they get from the selected media resulted in the uses and gratification theory. Leibes and Katz (1989) say that media gratifies more compared to other sources in satisfying the needs. But the degree of needs gratification varies according to the medium. John.J.Davies (2007) in the study reported that the participants were dependent on television for psychological aspects i.e. relief from stress associated with television viewing. This finding further suggests that viewers who watch television in solitary tend to rely heavily on television to gratify their needs. This study also reports that respondents who never go out with friends tend to watch more television.

Therefore the researcher had applied the uses and gratification theory for this study, to understand the gratification sought and obtained through the utility of television among homemakers. By this theory, the examiner could study whether the homemaker's life satisfaction and their television dependency are related to each other.

### **2.1 Objectives of Research**

- To study the life satisfaction of homemakers in Chennai city
- To examine the correlation between life satisfaction and television dependency
- To find whether homemakers are addicted to the television
- To analyze the association of homemakers choice of predominant television programme

### **2.2 Limitations**

- The places used to gather data from respondents in the Chennai city where chosen unintentionally for convenient sake of the researcher.
- As the instrument is designed with close-ended questions, the respondents are limited from providing free expression of opinions.
- Since the study is specifically about homemakers, it would be a complete study if further research were conducted including working women in Chennai city.

## **III. Research Methodology**

To acquire self-report data from the respondents, structured questionnaire with close ended questions is obtained in this study. Questionnaires can assure respondents anonymity, which may produce more honest and accurate answers. This enables the instrument to have higher reliability. The examiner conducted a pilot study with 20 people to authenticate the television viewing and dependency scale in the questionnaire and a final scale were arrived. A total number of 150 samples of homemakers were surveyed in Chennai city those who were not over than the age of 60. Quota sampling was used to collect data. The Researcher will choose the samples, if the sample fits into the quota. The researcher analyzed the collected data through SPSS software (Software Package for Social Sciences).

## **IV. Results And Discussion**

Based on the survey method, in this chapter the graphical representation shows as follows: life satisfaction of homemakers and their dependency on television. The researcher as given the N value for the questionnaire those were incomplete to avoid error in the data.

4.1 Life Satisfaction of Homemakers

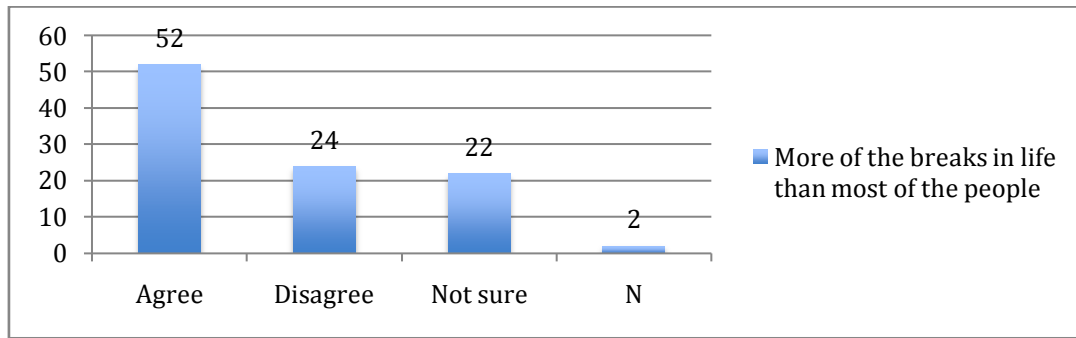


Figure 4.1.1

From the Fig.4.1.1, it shows that 52% of homemakers agree saying that as they have more number of breaks in life than most of the people, whereas 24% of respondents disagree to the statements and 22% were not sure about the statement. This chart shows that homemakers feel that their life is not has they expected rather has many hindrances compared to others.

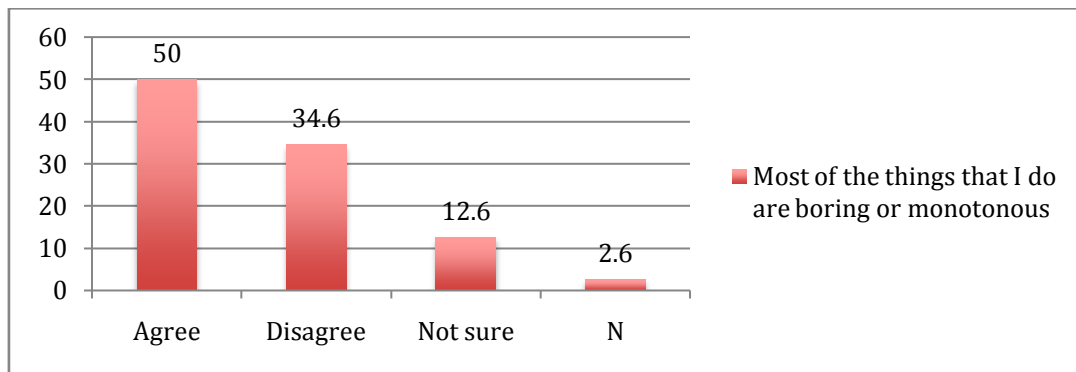


Figure 4.1.2

Above Fig.4.1.2, 50% of homemakers agreed ‘most of the things that I do are boring or monotonous’, 34.6% disagree and 12.6% of respondents were not sure for the statement therefore majority of the respondents feel monotonous of the work that they do mostly.

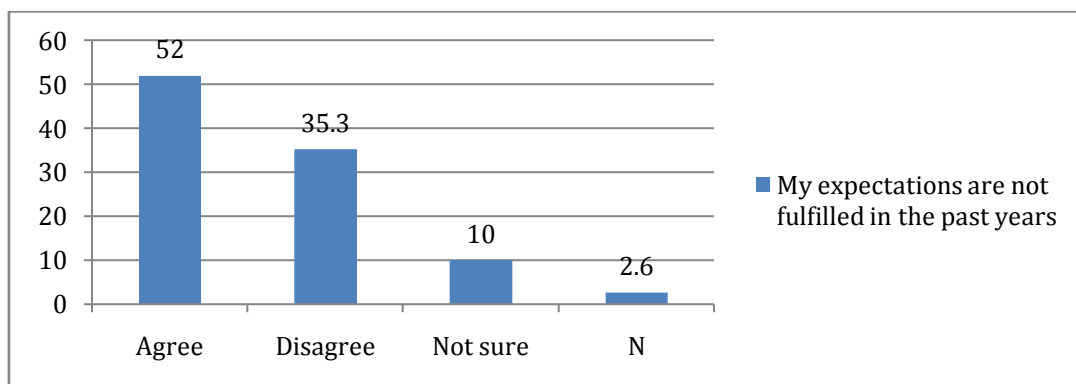


Figure 4.1.3

According to the Fig.4.1.3, it clearly states that majority of the homemakers nearly 52% agree saying that their expectations were not fulfilled in the past. 35.3% respondents disagree for the same, whereas 10% of the homemakers are not sure for the above said statement.

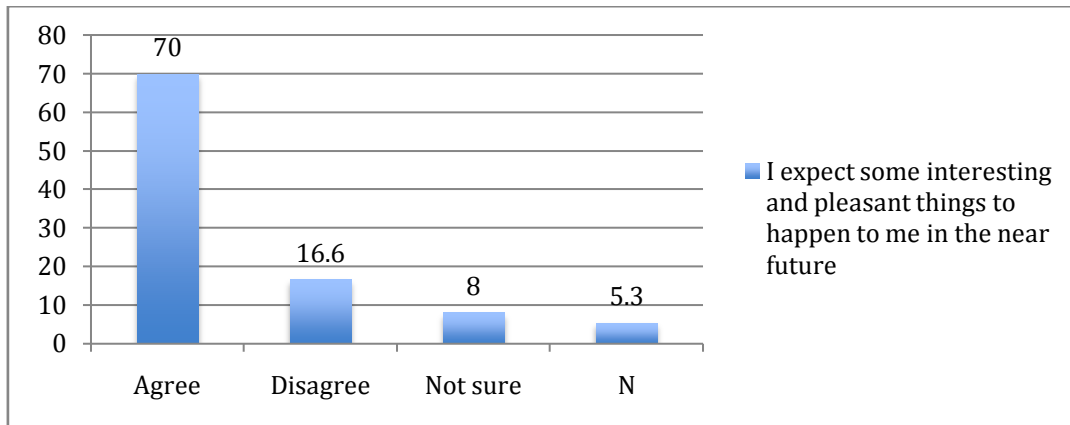


Figure 4.1.4

The above Fig.4.1.4 indicates 70% of homemakers agree to the statement that ‘I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the near future’ and 16.6% disagree to the statement, while 8% of homemakers are not sure for this statement.

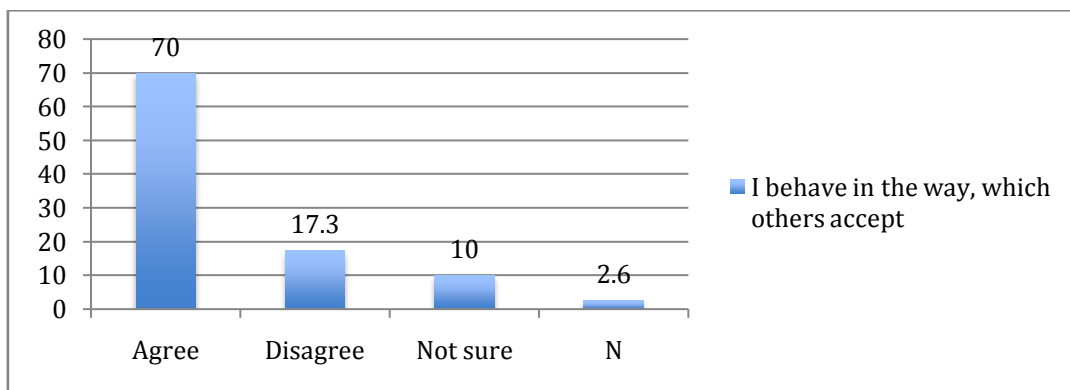


Figure 4.1.5

From the Fig.4.1.5, it shows that 70% of homemakers agree that they behave in the way, which others expect, 17.3% of the homemakers disagree and 10% of them were not sure it. This clearly states that people try to adapt things easily and lose their individuality in order to live a fake life that is been accepted by others.

#### 4.2 Television Dependency

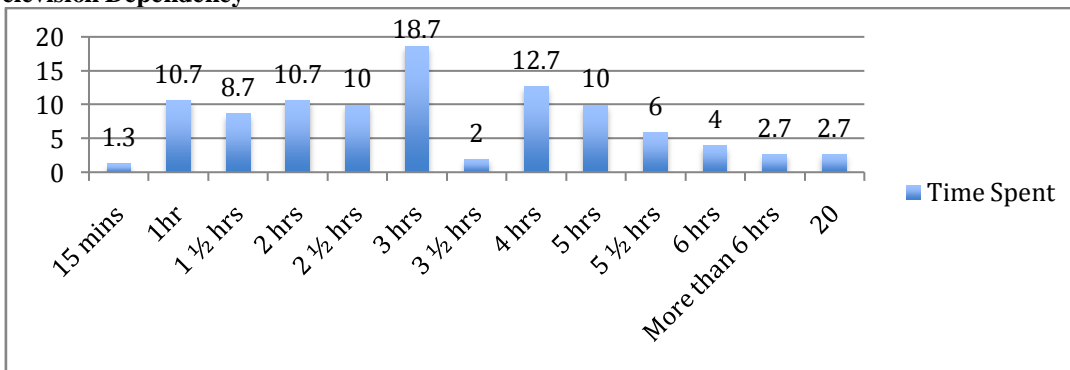


Figure 4.2.1

The above Fig.4.2.1 states that 18.7% homemakers watch television for 3 hours. Therefore most number of the respondents watches for 3 hours. Whereas the least number of homemakers 1.3% spend 15 minutes watching television programmes.

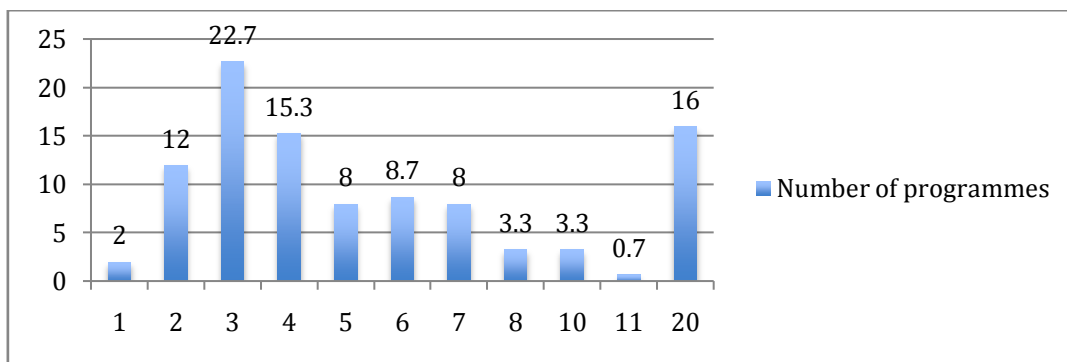


Figure 4.2.2

According to the Fig.4.2.2, 22.7% of the homemakers view almost three television programmes in a day, this is the majority of the strength among the entire respondents. Second largest quantity of 15.3% homemakers are interested to watch four programmes, in a day whereas 2.0% respondents state that they view one programme and 0.7% respondents view eleven programmes in a day.

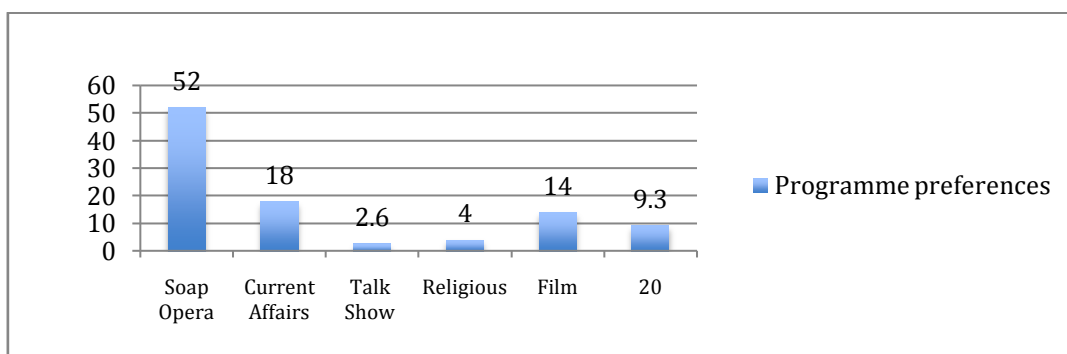


Figure 4.2.3

From the Fig. 4.2.3 it is stated that majority of the homemakers 52% prefer soap operas or serials compared to other sorts of television programmes. 18% of the respondents give importance to the currents affairs, this indicates that homemakers are keen to aware of the outside world that they live in and the least amount of 4% of the homemakers watch religious programmes.

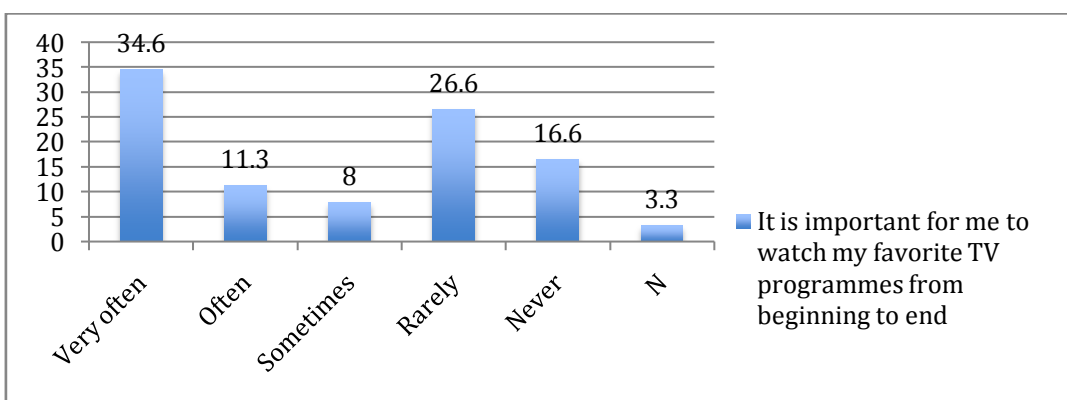


Figure 4.2.4

In the Fig.4.2.4 it shows that 34.6% of the homemakers responded very often for the statement that it is important for them to watch the television programmes from the start to end. 11.3% respondents stated often, 8% said sometimes they watch complete programmes whereas 26.6% responded rarely and 16.6% homemakers marked that watching complete programmes are not important.

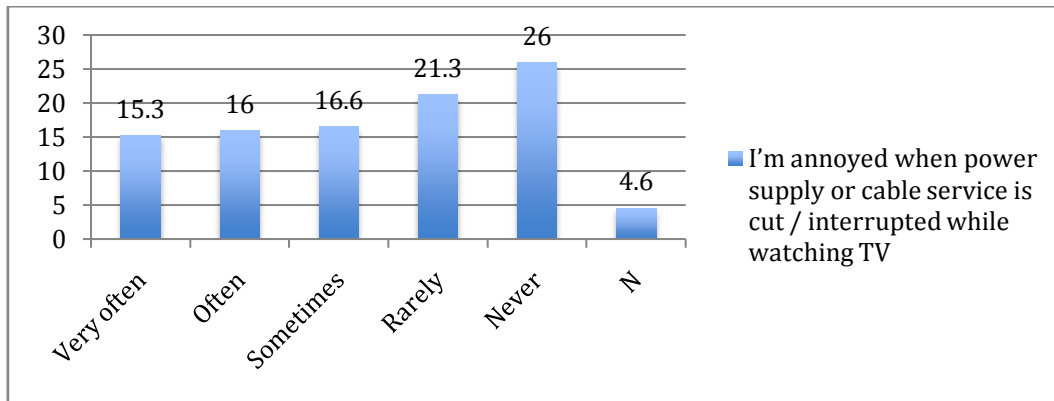


Figure 4.2.5

According to the Fig.4.2.5 majority of the respondents nearly 26% have marked that they have never felt annoyed for the interruption in the television programmes. 15.3% homemakers responded that they feel annoyed very often, 16% of the respondents often feel that state, 16.6% are annoyed sometimes and 21.3% of homemakers have never felt annoyed for interrupted service.

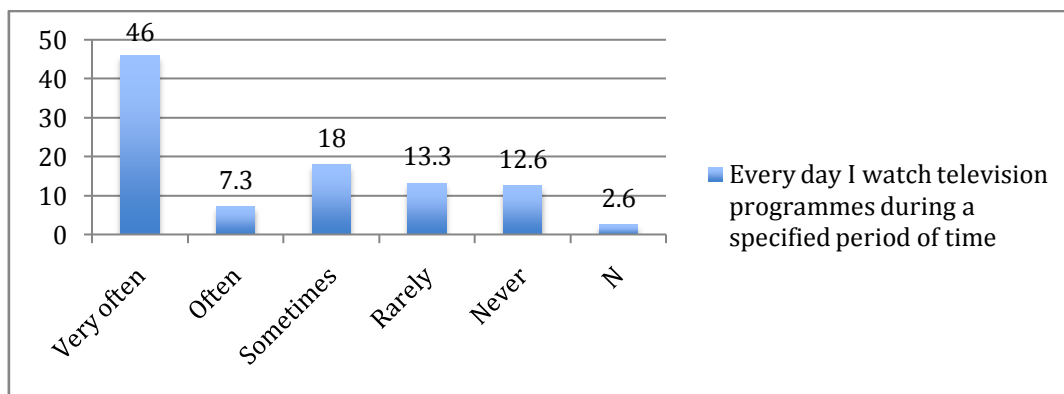


Figure 4.2.6

The above Fig.4.2.6 implies the graphical representation for the statement ‘everyday I watch the programmes during specified time’ 46% of the homemakers have responded very often. 7.3% often view at specific time, 18% of the respondents marked Sometimes, 13.3% and 12.6% homemakers stated that they watch TV programmes rarely and never respectively.

### 4.3 Correlation Test

		LS1	TVD
LS1	Pearson Correlation	1	.280(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	143	139
TV Dependency	Pearson Correlation	.280(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	139	142

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.3.1

The correlation ( $r=.280^{**}$ ) is significant at  $p<.01$  level. The Pearson correlation test between life satisfaction and television dependency shows positive correlation. Alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between the life satisfaction and television dependency among homemakers.

The Pearson correlation between life satisfaction and television dependency states that there is a relationship between life satisfaction and television dependency. Life satisfaction scale developed by Diener and Likert’s scale used to measure the television dependency has showed the significant correlations between homemaker’s life satisfaction and television dependency. The result of the present study has confirmed Kathryn E.A.Villani (1975) findings about life satisfaction, women and television utility, stated that women who are heavy television viewers were more dissatisfied with life and used television as a primary source of

entertainment. Also Bettye A. Grable's (2006), findings about life satisfaction and television dependency reported that dissatisfaction with life and the utility of TV for escape from the dissatisfaction was significantly linked. Further John.J.Davies (2007) interpretation about personal gratification and television affinity reported that there is a strong relationship between seeking personal gratification and television affinity.

- Majority of the samples' top priority for the programme preferences was given to 'Serial / Soap Opera' followed by 'Current Affairs' then by 'Films / Comedies'.
- Most Tamil soap operas revolve with the women characters has main plots. Therefore, it suggests that homemakers give first choice to women-centric programmes and also to a story plot where a woman is strong enough to challenge the domination of male genders.
- It states that homemakers who are not predominant decisive makers in real life feel gratified looking at the virtual women characters that act strong in decision making and remain bold enough.
- 'Current Affairs' being preferred in the next top priority range shows that homemakers are concerned to be knowledgeable in current affairs.
- Homemakers have films / Comedies as their third choice of preference; therefore this recommends that homemakers enjoy being happy looking at the comedies in the films that they watch to have stress relief in their life.
- Most of the homemakers have responded that their expectations are not fulfilled and their expecting for interesting things to happen in the near future, this state that respondents are less satisfied with the life that they dwell in.
- Homemakers' response for the television dependency statements obviously shows that homemakers do not compromise watching their favourite programme with anything.
- Majority of the respondents have marked 'never' for the statement 'I get annoyed for interrupted TV service', this shows that respondents are not addicted to TV, but they are just depended on television for their companionship.

## **V. Conclusion**

In urban areas, the family structure is mostly nuclear families and its population comprised of unlike people; homemakers tend to avoid interaction with their neighbours. They neither have change in their routine work nor have other activity to unwind from their household tasks. This state of monotony continued, they often seek extended opportunities outside their domestic sphere. At this juncture, television's novelty had brought tremendous changes in homemaker's habit. As the television sets are available at ease, homemakers watch them and simultaneously do their work. Furthermore, they tend to rely on television for relaxation. Therefore television acts as a pleasant gratifier.

Homemakers have possession over the television remote and they select programmes, hence, they solely decide what programme to choose, when to watch, how long to watch and when to switch off the television. This freedom of authority is unrestricted due to the absence of the rest of the family members. Therefore the autonomy in deciding what to do with the television might give them a sense of complete satisfaction. This deep involvement had set a long lasting bond between the television and homemakers.

The significant correlation in the present study between life satisfaction and television dependency among homemakers clearly states that homemakers who are busy with domestic chores allot their time for television programmes and watch their favourite programmes during a specified time. In spite of their busy household works, the respondent uses television for gratification of needs.

As said by McQuail, Blumer and Brown (1972), a person might be dependent on television for one of these four needs diversion, personal relationships, and personal identity: and surveillance. As quoted by Robert Jensen and Emily Oster (2008) television is an empowerment box for rural women and might be a gratifier box for urban women.

This study further suggests that the television programmes mostly watched by the homemakers are Soap operas. These serials are especially women-centric, thus it indicates that respondents associate their life to the protagonist women characters in order to overcome the role dilemmas and acquire efficiency in bringing the change in their frames of reference, as enacted by the virtual characters in the soaps that the urban homemakers often see.

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