

Hussain, Neelam, Simorgh Women's Resource and Publication Centre, Pakistan

Modernity, Tradition and Desire

This paper examines the methodologies employed for interrelated research projects on the impact of television narratives and popular religion on women's lives as they negotiate their space between modernity and tradition, mainly in Lahore's Walled City that is home to an underprivileged, upwardly mobile community comprising students and women in the informal workforce. Narratives arising out of group discussions, life histories, informal conversations as well as the research team's status as observers/participants in religious rituals provide unexpected insights into the ways in which power is negotiated between women and men where if access to resources is scarce, dreams are fed by the consumerism of television narratives even as gender roles are reinforced by them. The complexities and tensions of this dialogic space between popular belief systems and modern technology provides interesting insights into the uneven processes of change. It should be useful for students of media and religio-cultural studies.